

Impact of Leaders' Negative Behavior on Employee Silence with the Mediating role of Psychological Safety: A Study on Teachers of Higher Education Institutes of Pakistan

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Abstract: *Leaders' negative behavior is a dysfunctional leadership behavior that impacts its targets badly as well as the whole organization. On the basis of the conservation of resources (COR) theory, the present study adds knowledge on the impact of leaders' adverse behavior. Mainly, a mediation model has been proposed wherein negative leadership predicts employees' silent behavior through psychological safety, with the leader. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaire from 643 teachers working in the thirty-one private sector universities of Pakistan through proportionate and convenience sampling approach. Results show a positive relationship between leaders' negative behavior (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Authoritative and Abusive) and Employee Silence. Further Psychological safety significantly mediates relationship between leaders' negative behavior and employee silence. When psychological safety is reduced due to negative behavior, it contributes in increasing employee silence. The findings imply that negative behavior of leaders is prevailing in higher education institutes that requires immediate attention stressing the need of psychological trainings in higher education institutes of Pakistan.*

Keywords: *Leaders' Negative Behavior, employee silence, Psychological Safety*

INTRODUCTION

Several management scholars have taken notice of the leaders' unfavorable actions during the last ten years (Campbell et al., 2010; Judge et al., 2009). Machiavellianism, narcissism, domineering and negative leadership styles have been linked to the leaders' negative behavior and subsequent behavior (Mousa et al., 2021). Because negative leadership behavior is becoming more common in the workplace, there has been a significant interest in it from both the academic community and the general public over the past ten years (Xu et al., 2015b). The organization has suffered significant hidden costs as a result of leaders' negative behavior, including a rise in unproductive work behaviors and a increase in employee disengagement with work and organization (Martinko et al., 2013a). Such leadership has also been conceptualized in recent research as a prominent source of workplace stress that negatively affects workers' psychological well-being (Aryee et al., 2008; Chi & Liang, 2013; Whitman et al., 2014).

Negative leadership conduct has been linked to behaviors such as criticism avoidance (Xu et al., 2015b) and regulative techniques (Tepper et al., 2017), which involve attempting to maintain ties by minimizing interaction. Consequently, another worker's natural and reasonable response to the negative acts of leaders would be to remain silent. Unfortunately, not much is known about the relationship between submissive workers and a leader's negative behaviors (Morrison, 2014). The current study proposes psychological safety as a crucial mediating component to advance this area of investigation. Hence by simultaneously considering leaders' bad behavior and psychological safety and investigating their interacting effects on subordinates from a resource conservation viewpoint, the present study significantly contributes to the existing leadership literature. By examining the leadership impact (i.e., bad leadership) and the underlying psychological safety mechanism, the current study significantly adds to this deficiency. Practically stating, the findings highlight the debilitating effects of negative leadership and offer crucial recommendations for organizations to avoid being silent. It also helps institutes become more conscious of how their actions as leaders affect their team members. The objectives of the research are to study the effect of leaders' negative behavior on employee silence and the mediating impact of psychological safety between leaders' negative behavior and employee silence.

Recent research adds to the body of literature in several ways. It first expands on what is already known about the harmful effects of leaders' negative behavior. The majority of studies on leadership presently have been limited to two areas: the supervisor-subordinate dyadic connection (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Lian et al., 2012) or leadership style (i.e., leader-based domain). As a result, the present study significantly advances the body of literature on leadership by including the negative behavior of leaders and investigating how this interacts with subordinates from the standpoint of psychological safety. By examining the leadership influence (i.e., bad behavior) and the underlying mechanism of psychological safety, the current study adds significantly to this deficiency. It also helps executives become more conscious of how their actions affect the welfare of their workforce and influence decisions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Silence

Employee silence is a phenomenon that occurs in organizations when workers choose not to voice their opinions which may be a sign that they are rebelling against the company (Brinsfield, Lewicki, et al., 2009). Pinder and Harlos (2001) defined silence to be an intentional, deliberate, and active behavior. According to Van Dyne et al. (2003), employees can prefer to stay silent for one of three reasons: pro-social, defensive, or acquiescent. Workers who silently accept their circumstances are hesitant to change their workplaces. This results from the reason that workers conceal work practices since managers don't react to their reports, discouraging them from bringing up organizational problems (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). Silent employees hide facts and ideas out of fear of being emotionally attacked (Van Dyne et al., 2003). This is because workers are aware that reporting organizational issues can have negative effects (such as termination, disciplinary action, etc.). Lastly, workers are pro-socially motivated to remain silent because they worry about losing the support of their coworkers or being isolated from the group (Milliken et al., 2003; Van Dyne et al., 2003).

LEADERS NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR

Machiavellianism

The negative aspects of the bureaucratic climate that are typical in public service and can occasionally lead to unfavorable employee interactions—like employee silence and workplace mistreatment help to explain Machiavellian traits. (Ghulam Murtaza et al, 2021). Employee silence is the lack of employee opinion that results from a deliberate action to suppress subordinate's voice due to fear, futility, inefficiency or potential negative consequences. This is especially true when speaking up would come at an intolerable expense to the subordinate (Morsch et al., 2020). According to Duan et al. (2022), submissive quiet can also refer to the withdrawal of actions and is frequently observed in organizations that exhibit Machiavellian tendencies. Additionally, abuse at work is one of the outcomes of Machiavellian tendencies (Duan et al., 2022). Workplace incivility is a type of unproductive behavior that occurs in the workplace and causes mental or bodily harm to employees. It typically takes the form of violence, threats, harassment, discrimination, and bullying (Spector, 2006).

When employees exhibit Machiavellian traits, they may be more likely to manipulate, exploit, and prioritize their wealth, power and influence for personal gain. This can hurt their coworkers and the overall effectiveness of the organization as well as set the stage for general organizational lethargy (Kwak & Shim, 2017). According to Zainun et al. (2021), public service delivery may continue to be ineffectual if appropriate work ethics—like ethical supervision which can possibly be codified in the public service act—are not upheld to control employee behavior and lessen the occurrence of Machiavellian qualities. A worker's work ethic is value-driven and dependent on their commitment to adhering to the rules and guidelines that have been set forth (Marek et al., 2014). It is also known as an expected behavioral standard for employees and a workplace norm (Sharma et al., 2015).

Narcissistic Leadership

According to Bushman and Baumeister (1998), exaggerated self-views, grandiosity and self-importance are characteristics of narcissism as a personality trait. Because narcissistic leaders are frequently driven by their desires and beliefs, they frequently disregard the requirements of their followers and the organizations they oversee (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). Narcissists are perceived as frigid and egoistic because they frequently exhibit additional leadership and employee confirmation of status (Paulhus, 1998). In addition, they feel extremely special, demand a lot of respect and frequently take advantage of other people in social situations (Keith Campbell et al., 2004; O'Boyle et al., 2012; Van Gerven et al., 2022). Narcissists with these traits frequently misuse their power and harm other people. For instance, when narcissists perceive that their ego is inflated, they may attack without warning (Lobbestael et al., 2014), behave unethically (Wales et al., 2013), or act aggressively towards others (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). Their propensity for domineering and haughty behavior may cause individuals to act in ways that are deemed abusive and damaging (Martinko et al., 2013a). According to Campbell et al. (2010), narcissism generally benefits the narcissists but harms others. Therefore, it appears from a lot of empirical research that employees suffer from the narcissism of their bosses. According to (Cohen, 2016; Ouimet, 2010), these unfavorable associated effects include decreased job satisfaction, mistrust of the

supervisor, abusive working circumstances, and the encouragement of unproductive behaviors.

Authoritative Leadership

According to Hamrin (2016), authoritative leaders exhibit complete control and authority and demand unwavering submission and loyalty from their subordinates. Employees who experience this leadership style believe they have very little independence and very little right to question their bosses' authority at work (Humphreys et al., 2014). Moreover, powerful leaders hardly ever want contradictory advice (Li & Sun, 2015). Therefore, employees who experience authoritative leadership are more afraid to speak up (Duan et al., 2022).

Absolute compliance under supervision is emphasized by authoritative leadership (Hamrin, 2016). According to Tian and Sanchez (2017), authoritative leaders seldom give their staff members information and knowledge about their work and they frequently disregard suggestions made by staff members (Ekrot et al., 2016). When followers disobey or make mistakes, authoritative leaders punish them and exhibit authority and control over them (Chen et al., 2019). Accordingly, an authoritative leader may make subordinates feel more uncomfortable challenging authority (Duan et al., 2022), which would exacerbate subordinates' anxiety about raising concerns (Brinsfield, Edwards, et al., 2009).

Abusive Leadership

Abusive supervision has drawn a lot of attention from researchers due to its negative effects on both individual and organizational outcomes. It is defined as "subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact" (Mackey et al., 2017; Martinko et al., 2013b; Tepper et al., 2017; Zhang & Liao, 2015). It has been hypothesized that abusive supervision causes workplace stress, which makes workers react negatively to their work. Indeed, prior study has explained that leaders' negative behavior adversely affects attitudes and motivation at work, including job satisfaction and work engagement (Mackey et al., 2017; Yu et al., 2023; Zhang & Liao, 2015). Less is known about the causes of the consequences, despite their being understood.

Psychological Safety

Associate (2002) asserts that teams that provide a psychologically safe space allow members to express their opinions, voice problems and acknowledge mistakes they have made regarding their work without fear of repercussions. This fosters a creative environment. Knowledge sharing, creative performance and innovation have all been linked to increased degree of psychological safety in teams (Kessel et al., 2012). As it reflects the idea that if an employee gets involved in "risky" behaviors like raising considerations, this won't harm them—rather, it should benefit the organization and their well-being—psychological safety is identified to be a critical factor influencing silence behaviors (Detert & Burris, 2007).

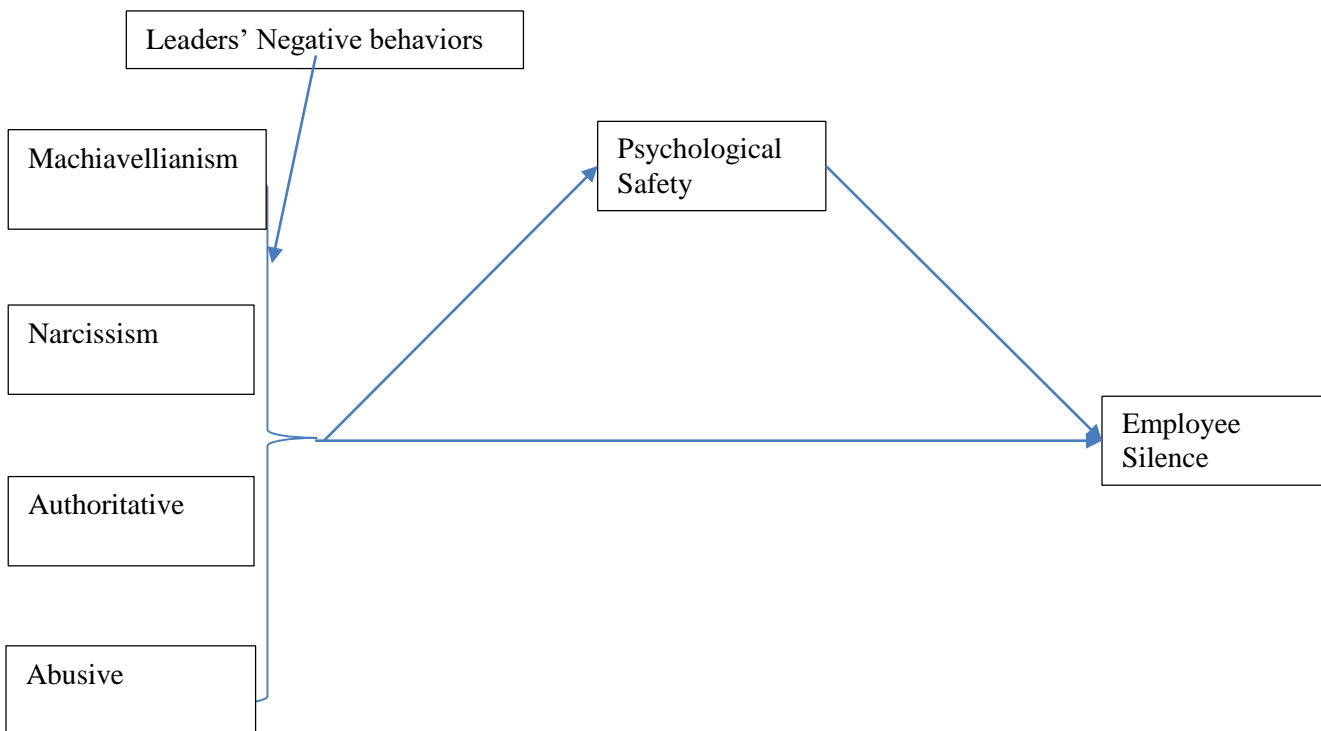
Employees who feel that speaking up could put them in danger or harm their standing are likely to be more reluctant to do so in workplaces with inadequate psychological safety (Qin et al., 2014). Employee silence, as per Knoll and van Dick (2013), is a multifaceted construct that may be categorized into four groups depending on the reasons behind the behaviors that constitute it. Because they think change won't happen, people have refused trying to communicate or make changes (Pinder & Harlos, 2001).

CONSERVATION OF RESOURCE THEORY

The conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) states that, even in the event of a resource shortage, workers will be more involved in their work when assets are plentiful (e.g., when one's employment is fulfilling and helpful coworkers or superiors) (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). However, when resources of job are few (due to factors like increased job demands or an absence of assistance from coworkers or superiors), individuals tend to be less concerned about their work to prevent more use of the company's resources (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Personnel under negative leadership directly deplete their physical and emotional assets as well as their energy since they have to work hard opposing the psychological stress (such as emotional disturbance) brought on by perceived negative behavior of leadership (Whitman et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2015). Workers who have been abused may also fear that their leaders' absence of support would result in their loss of possession of resources (Whitman et al., 2014). Because of the real or projected lack of resources, workers will become less aggressive at work to stop additional resource depletion. (Bashir, S., Khan, J., Danish, M., & Bashir, 2023).

Based on the COR perspective, we view employee silence as an immediate result of leaders (Hobfoll, 1989). For two reasons, we also look into it as a possible method connecting workers' motivation and attitudes at work with abusive supervision. Initially, it has been suggested that rigorous monitoring wears out employees' mental and physical reserves and contributes to stress at work (Whitman et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2015).

2.5 Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development



Machiavellian Leadership and Employee Silence

Bullying is typically the most obvious form of workplace abuse, but other instances of physical and

psychological violence take place in quieter areas of the office as well, according to Ballard & Eastal (2018). For example, Pellegrini et al. (2021) argued that workplace emotional bullying and harassment are common routes and can be linked to specific organizational factors that may be employee- or climate-related. From this angle, we believe that a common denominator among these abuses is the Machiavellian trait. As for the consequences, Cho et al. (2020) noted that abuse among employees has an impact on worker efficacy and efficiency, including safety and care quality. Workplace abuse can take many different forms, including insulting comments, verbal or physical abuse, actions that appear menacing, frightening, or dehumanising and willful disruption or undermining of an employee's productivity (Nowrouzi-Kia et al., 2019). Thus, it is hypothesized that

H1a: Leaders' Machiavellian behavior impacts employee silence

Narcissistic leadership and Employee Silence

Few researchers have found a connection between organizational silence and narcissistic bosses. For example, in a sample of Chinese enterprises, Wang et al. (2018) discovered a positive correlation among the narcissism of managers and workers quiet. Additionally, in Chinese manufacturing businesses, Duan et al. (2022) discovered a strong correlation between employees' quiet and negative leadership behavior. Liao et al. (2019) discovered that employees' voice in Chinese enterprises is severely impacted by the narcissism of executives. Thus, it is hypothesized that

H1b: Leaders' Narcissism behavior impacts employee silence

Abusive Leadership and Employee Silence

When people are afraid of their surroundings and attempt to defend themselves from any dangers, they become silent as employees (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Supervisors are especially considered abusive by staff members when they act in a hostile manner, including making fun of and humiliating staff members, calling them names, publicly criticizing them and threatening to fire them (Tepper, 2000). Aggression is a component of abusive supervision, whereby supervisors utilize abusive behaviors to exert control over their subordinates. Employees are hesitant to confront abusive supervisors due to the power differential between them and their superiors. They fear losing important resources, like career opportunities and promotions (Tepper, 2000), or they fear being reprimanded for their defiant behavior (Tepper et al., 2007). One typical emotional reaction to hostility is fear of future violence, particularly if the act is committed by a dominant person in the hierarchy (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009). Fear triggers employees' self-defense mechanisms and increases the likelihood that they will remain silent, or "lay low" (Van Dyne et al., 2003; Xu et al., 2015b). Employees who have experienced abuse can worry that verbally challenging their managers will incite them even more, leading to more abuse.

H1d: Abusive Leadership impacts employee silence

Authoritative Leadership and Employee Silence

Studies have found that supervisors' authoritarian behavior evoked negative emotions in subordinates, such as anger, hostility and fear (Wilkinson, 1996; Wu, Hsu, & Cheng, 2003; Farh et al., 2006). Others have found that authoritarian leadership can cause employees to suppress negative emotions which can have deleterious effects on well-being (Chu, 2014). Authoritarian leadership has also been found to be

negatively associated with team members' commitment to and satisfaction with, team leaders (Cheng, Huang, & Chou, 2002), loyalty towards leaders, trust in leaders and organizational citizenship behavior (Cheng, Shieh, & Chou, 2002). Moreover, many of these same outcomes also have been shown to be associated with employee willingness to express themselves (e.g., Brockner et al., 2001; Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003; Detert & Burris, 2007; Kish-Gephart, Detert, Trevino, & Edmondson, 2009). Authoritarian leaders expect unquestioning obedience and hence, may signal to employees that challenging them would be met with retribution. The decision to remain silent in such situations can be explained by a wide range of theory that demonstrates that people are motivated to engage in behaviors that lead to desired outcomes or prevent undesired outcomes (e.g., approach-avoidance, expectancy theory, James, 1950; Vroom, 1964). Hence, when people expect that speaking up will be met with an undesirable outcome (e.g., reprisal) they choose silence as the behavioral option (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

H1c: Leaders' Authoritative behavior impacts employee silence

Psychological Safety as mediator between Leaders' Negative Behavior and Employee Silence

Psychological safety was increasingly utilized as a mediator in the literature relevant to management and organizations (e.g. (Lyu et al., 2019; Zhou et al., 2021) and much particularly in the employee silence/voice literature (Elsaied, 2018). Based on Sherf et al.'s meta-analytic findings, it was anticipated that employee anticipation of psychological safety environment would be negatively correlated to the employee silence.

Leadership behavior affects psychological safety because leaders have the authority to administer rewards and punishments and this power over subordinates' promotions, pay and job assignments makes leaders' actions very salient as cues for acceptable behavior (Depret & Fiske, 1993). Edmondson (2004) proposed three aspects of leader behavior that will promote psychological safety: being available and approachable, explicitly inviting input and feedback and modelling openness and fallibility – all of which appear to be antithetical to authoritarian leadership. In contrast, authoritarian leaders often emphasize their authoritative positions and abuse power to perform tasks regardless of subordinates' feelings. They may excessively criticize or rebuke subordinates for minor mistakes as a warning to others. They rarely model openness, vulnerability, or admit mistakes (see Farh & Cheng, 2000). Such leadership behaviors send clear and threatening signals to subordinates and generate a fearful working environment, creating low psychological safety (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008).

Psychological safety has been widely implicated in employee silence and voice (Detert & Edmondson, 2011). In fact, Kahn's description of psychological safety as 'feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career' (1990: 708), reflects the defensive motive for employee silence identified in the literature (see Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003; Brinsfield, 2013). Moreover, much of the prior research on employee voice and silence has explicitly or implicitly placed psychological safety as a mediator between antecedent variables and voice or silence behavior (Detert & Edmondson, 2011). This is because psychological safety can decrease the amount of risk perceived in the cost-benefit equation of the voice or silence decision (see Edmondson, 2003). Detert

and Burris (2007), for example, showed that employee perceptions of psychological safety mediated the positive relationship between managerial openness (i.e., subordinates' perceptions that their boss listens to them and gives fair consideration to the ideas presented) and employee voice. Research focused specifically on employee silence has generally found a negative relationship between psychological safety and employee silence. For example, Brinsfield (2013) found that psychological safety was negatively related to the relational, defensive and diffident employee silence motives. Considering the potential for authoritarian leadership to impact psychological safety and the subsequent impact of psychological safety on employee silence, we propose

H2: Psychological Safety mediates the relationship between leaders' negative behavior and employee silence

H2a: There is significant mediation of Psychological Safety between Leaders' Machiavellian behavior and employee silence.

H2b: There is significant mediation of Psychological Safety between Leaders' Narcissism behavior and employee silence.

H2c: There is significant mediation of Psychological Safety between Leaders' Authoritative behavior and employee silence.

H2d: There is significant mediation of Psychological Safety between Leaders' Abusive behavior and employee silence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to substantiate the relationship between Leaders' Negative Behavior and Employee Silence with mediating effect of Psychological Safety. Quantitative research method was chosen because it provides various methods to carry out research in a systematic way and test hypotheses (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2018). Within quantitative design the descriptive and relational approach was opted with survey technique which is highly used method in behavioral sciences because large number of population can be approached within a limited time period and less cost (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The teachers (lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor) of private universities in Pakistan are considered as targeted population. Only private universities situated in Capital of Provinces and Capital of Pakistan were selected due to the heterogeneous nature of rules and regulations and organizational structure, heterogeneous cultural and social dynamics and as universities operate in departmental setting where the head of department is considered a leader. Thereby within homogeneity the varied outcomes are considered more weighted in quantitative research. Thirty-one private sector universities which fulfill the stated criteria have been shortlisted as clusters for the study. Further, only main campuses were contacted for on campus data collection. Total population of teachers in thirty-one HEIs were estimated fifty thousand. The 96.5% confidence interval and 3.5% error of Margin was used to calculate sample size via sample size calculator (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The total sample size was 772. The multi-stage sampling design was followed. First the proportionate stratified technique was applied where each university was given sample based on their participation in total population. Second the convenience approach was opted to reach respondents because the sampling frame was not available

due to security reasons. The data enumerator visited all departments and handed over the questionnaire to available teachers. Out of 772 questionnaires, 643 was returned having 83% return rate which is quite high in quantitative research because of self-administered questionnaire.

The data was collected through questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of two sections. The first section contains information about demographic variables (Gender, designation, experience) and second section contain items to measure variables. All the items and scales were adopted from earlier studies measured on seven-point Likert scale are as follows;

Machiavellianism Leadership: Sixteen items were adapted from the Machiavellianism Personality Scale developed by Dahling et al. (2009). Sample items include “My department chair is willing to be unethical if he/she believes it will help him/her succeed” and “My department chair enjoys having control over other people.” The scale’s reliability was 0.80.

Narcissism Leadership: Six items were adapted from the Supervisor Narcissism Scale developed by Hochwarter and Thompson (2012). Sample items include “My boss is a very self-centered person,” and “My boss has an inflated view of him/herself.”. The reliability values of this construct are .75.

Authoritative Leadership: Five items were adapted from Zhou and Long’s (2007). Sample items include, ‘In meetings, it is always according to his (her) will to make the final decision,’ and ‘He/she never reveals information to us. The Cronbach’s α is 0.78.

Abusive Supervision: Fifteen items were adapted from Tepper (2000). Sample item includes, “My supervisor ridicules me” and “My supervisor tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid.”. The Cronbach’s α is 0.88.

Psychological Safety: Five items were adapted from Liang, Farh and Farh (2012), which is based on Edmondson’s (1999) group psychological safety. Sample items include, ‘I can express my real feelings about work’ and ‘Nobody in my unit will pick on me even if I have different opinions.’. The Cronbach’s α is 0.71.

Employee Silence: Thirty-one items were adapted from Briensfield (2013). Sample item includes, “I am unwilling to speak up with suggestions for change because I am disengaged,” and “I do not speak up and suggest ideas for change, based on fear” and ‘I keep quiet in group meetings about problems with daily routines that hamper performance.’ The Cronbach’s α is 0.84.

Results

The quantitative method is used to interpret the results of the collected data which is primary and is comprised of facts and figures by collecting data/sampling, observing and measuring then analyzing and interpreting accordingly. To examine the hypothetical model, Descriptive statistics, Karl’s Pearson Correlation Coefficient test was performed on IBM SPSS Statistics and CFA and hypothesis testing was analyzed through it. Data is analyzed using the SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) technique as it helps to evaluate the validity of the collected facts and figures (Ringle et al., 2005) and this is considered an accurate technique which gives precise results.

Demographic Profile

Respondents were asked personal questions about their province, gender, education, work experience and designation in the demographic questionnaire. The tabular data indicates that 23% of the participants are from Baluchistan, 25% from Sindh, 14% from KPK and 24% are from Punjab.

Table I: Respondents Profile

<i>Demographic</i>	<i>Balochista</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Sindh</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>KP</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Punjab</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Islamaba</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>c</i>	<i>n</i>		<i>h</i>		<i>K</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>d</i>		
Respondents from											
Province	150	23%	160	25%	91	14%	152	24%	90	14%	643
Gender											
Male	84	56%	89	56%	50	55%	93	61%	53	59%	369
Female	66	44%	71	44%	41	45%	59	39%	37	41%	274
Qualification											
Masters	39	26%	41	26%	22	24%	38	25%	18	20%	158
M.Phil.	97	65%	104	65%	55	60%	102	67%	53	59%	411
PhD	14	9%	15	9%	14	15%	12	8%	19	21%	74
Designation											
Lecturer	65	43%	71	44%	41	45%	62	41%	31	34%	270
Assistant Professor	47	31%	45	28%	23	25%	51	34%	26	29%	192

Associate	19	21	19	30	20%	18	20%	126
Professor	28	33	17	30	20%	18	20%	126
Professor	10	11	10	9	6%	15	17%	55

The table I illustrates the gender distribution of the sample indicating that there are more men than women. According to the results, 44% of the responses were provided by women and 56% by men. A higher percentage of male respondents indicates a higher proportion of male workers in the relevant industry. The respondents' educational data are displayed in the table above. The findings indicate that, of the respondents, 3.1% held a master's degree, 37.6% had finished an M.Phil. and just 21% had a Ph.D. Concerning the respondents' designations, 43% were lecturers, 31% were assistant professors, 19% were associate professors and 7% were professors.

Measurement Model Assessment

The "Measurement Model Assessment" component of a study usually concentrates on assessing the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments employed. Reflective constructs' convergence and discriminant validity were assessed using factor loadings from the SmartPLS4. The values of Cronbach's α , rho_A, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extraction (AVE) are displayed in the table below. Smart PLS4 considers Cronbach's α value >0.70 to be acceptable and this number falls within an acceptable range for our variables. Composite Reliability, AVE and rho_A all fall within the acceptable range. The internal consistency reliability of items is estimated using Cronbach's α (α) and the coefficient of composite reliability (CR). According to Hair et al. (2011), the α and CR coefficient values ought to be at least 0.70 or higher.

Table 2: Evaluation of the Measurement Model

Variables	Cronbach's α	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
AL	0.937	0.938	0.952	0.798
ES	0.964	0.965	0.969	0.758
ABL	0.918	0.923	0.939	0.754
ML	0.948	0.958	0.955	0.575
NL	0.958	0.96	0.967	0.828
PS	0.946	0.947	0.959	0.823

Note: Authoritative Leadership (AL), Employee silence (EL), Abusive Leadership (ABL), Machiavellianism Leadership (ML), Narcissism Leadership, Psychological Safety (PS)

Discriminant validity

The table mentioned below represents the results of each variable's discriminant validity. Every variable

ought to be greater than all other variables. The square root of the AVE figures in bold were all higher than the correlation with other parameters, as our data demonstrate.

Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Criterion:

When the HTMT score approaches 1, it suggests that discriminant validity may be compromised. In particular:

HTMT = 1: The constructs under comparison may not be sufficiently distinct if the HTMT value is close to or equal to 1. As per this study’s findings, almost all the values below 0.85 (some sources suggest 0.90) are often considered indicative of discriminant validity, suggesting that the constructs are distinct from each other.

Table 3

Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3	4	5	6
AL						
ES	.801					
ABL	.662	.818				
ML	.610	.785	.695			
NL	.645	.783	.653	.654	.764	
PS	.718	.857	.767	.737	.782	.716

Note: 1=Authoritative Leadership (AL), 2=Employee silence (EL), 3=Abusive Leadership (ABL), 4=Machiavellianism Leadership (ML), 5=Narcissism Leadership, 6=Psychological Safety (PS)

4.4 Structural Model Assessment

The link between independent and dependent variables is depicted in the below figure. Each relationship's path coefficient is displayed in the table below.

Hy	Relation	β	Std. Error	t	p	CI LL	CI UL	Outcome
HIa	AL-> ES	.294	.027	10.983	<.001	.242	.345	Supported
HIb	ABL -> ES	.269	.027	9.830	<.001	.217	.323	Supported
HIc	ML -> ES	.260	.028	9.395	<.001	.205	.313	Supported
HI d	NL -> ES	.246	.025	9.713	<.001	.198	.297	Supported

Table 4 reveals that there is a substantial correlation between authoritative leadership and employee

silence ($\beta = 0.294, p < 0.001$), as well as a significant correlation between abusive leadership and employee silence ($\beta = 0.269, p < 0.001$). Additionally, employee silence is significantly impacted by the leaders' Machiavellian behavior ($\beta = .260$ and $p < 0.001$). Likewise, there is a discernible influence of narcissism in leaders on employee quiet ($p < 0.001$ and $\beta = .246$).

Table 5: Testing Hypothesis Using Path-coefficients (Mediation)

Hy	Relation	β	Std. Error	t	p	CI LL	CI UL	Outcome
H2a	ML -> ES	.197	.030	6.480	<.001	.136	.256	Mediation) (Partial Complementary
	ML -> PS	.265	.043	6.132	<.001	.182	.353	
	PS -> ES	.233	.035	6.748	<.001	.167	.301	
	ML -> PS -> ES	.062	.014	4.267	<.001	.038	.095	
H2b	ABL -> ES	.205	.028	7.385	<.001	.152	.260	Mediation) (Partial Complementary
	ABL -> PS	.279	.046	6.099	<.001	.189	.369	
	PS -> ES	.233	.035	6.748	<.001	.167	.301	
	ABL -> PS -> ES	.065	.014	4.587	<.001	.041	.096	
H2c	NL -> ES	.197	.025	7.997	<.001	.150	.245	Mediation) (Partial Complementary
	NL -> PS	.211	.031	6.849	<.001	.152	.272	
	NL -> ES	.233	.035	6.748	<.001	.167	.301	
	NL -> PS -> ES	.049	.010	4.998	<.001	.032	.071	
H2d	AL -> ES	.243	.028	8.638	<.001	.186	.296	Mediation) (Partial Complementary
	AL -> PS	.220	.042	5.296	<.001	.136	.299	
	PS -> ES	.233	.035	6.748	<.001	.167	.301	
	AL -> PS -> ES	.051	.013	4.053	<.001	.030	.080	

The first path results show that a leader's Machiavellian behavior has an impact on psychological safety ($\beta = 0.265, p < 0.001$), psychological safety has a strong impact on employee silence ($\beta = 0.233, p < 0.001$), whereas a leader's Machiavellian behavior has a positive and direct impact in the presence of psychological safety on employee silence ($\beta = 0.197, p < 0.001$). The indirect effect also has a strong impact on employee silence ($\beta = 0.062, p < 0.001$) which supports the mediation of psychological safety between a leader's Machiavellian behavior and employee silence. Hence, H2a is accepted. The results are

given in the table 5.

The results in the table above also show that a leader's abusive behavior has an impact on psychological safety ($\beta = 0.279$, $p < 0.001$), psychological safety has a strong impact on employee silence ($\beta = 0.233$, $p < 0.001$), whereas leaders' abusive behavior has a positive and direct impact in the presence of psychological safety on employee silence ($\beta = 0.205$, $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect also has a strong impact on employee silence ($\beta = 0.065$, $p < 0.001$) which represents partial mediation of psychological safety between a leader's abusive behavior and employee silence. Hence, H2b is accepted.

Similarly, it can be seen that the leaders' narcissism has an impact on psychological safety ($\beta = 0.211$, $p < 0.001$), psychological safety has a strong impact on employee silence ($\beta = 0.233$, $p < 0.001$), whereas leaders' narcissism has a positive and direct impact in the presence of psychological safety on employee silence ($\beta = 0.197$, $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect also has an impact on employee silence ($\beta = 0.049$, $p < 0.001$) which represents partial mediation of psychological safety between a leader's abusive behavior and employee silence. Hence, H2c is accepted.

Table represents that authoritative leadership has an impact on psychological safety ($\beta = 0.220$, $p < 0.001$), psychological safety has a strong impact on employee silence ($\beta = 0.233$, $p < 0.001$), whereas authoritative leadership has a positive and direct impact in the presence of psychological safety on employee silence ($\beta = 0.243$, $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect also has an impact on employee silence ($\beta = 0.051$, $p < 0.001$) which represents partial mediation of psychological safety between authoritative leadership and employee silence. Hence, H2d is accepted.

Discussion

The current study adds to the body of knowledge in multiple ways. Firstly, this study adds to the knowledge on styles of leadership. A different theory said that employee quiet is strongly positively impacted by integrating all of the bad attributes of the leader, such as their abusive behavior, their domineering leadership, their perceived narcissism and their Machiavellian behavior. The hypothesis (H1a) has come to pass and is consistent with every earlier study. Submissive quiet, as defined by Duan et al. (2021), can also relate to the retreat of actions and is often seen in organizations that have Machiavellian tendencies. The current study also found that employee silence was impacted by Machiavellian behavior, with a p-value of less than 0.001. As per earlier research (Park et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2015), our findings indicate a favorable correlation between employee silence and harsh supervision. This shows that employees prefer to remain silent more often at work to deal with their abusive supervisor, indicating that H1b is accurate. According to the study, employee silence is positively impacted by leaders' narcissism ($\beta = 0.197$, $p < 0.001$), which leads to the acceptance of H1c. The previous research by Wang et al. (2018), who discovered a positive association among leaders' narcissism and worker's silence, supports it as well. Employee quiet is positively impacted by authoritative leadership behavior ($p < 0.001$), indicating that H1d is accepted. This is also consistent with earlier research by Duan et al. (2017), which found that workers who work under authoritative leadership are less likely to speak up.

According to the second hypothesis, psychological safety plays a mediation function in the association between a leader's poor behavior and employee silence. According to the current study, employee quiet

is significantly impacted by the indirect effect ($\beta = 0.062$, $p < 0.001$), which suggests that the leaders' macho behavior and staff silence mediate psychological safety. H2a is therefore approved. Furthermore, the partial mediation of psychological safety between the aggressive behavior of the boss and the quiet of the employees is indicated by the indirect impact ($\beta = 0.065$, $p < 0.001$). The association among abusive leaders' behavior and employee silence is somewhat mediated by psychological safety, as indicated by the indirect impact ($\beta = 0.049$, $p < 0.001$). Comparably, the indirect impact ($\beta = 0.051$, $p < 0.001$) shows that employee quiet and authoritative leadership partially mediate psychological safety. Every hypothesis, ranging from H2a to H2b, is accurate. This is also consistent with earlier research by Qin et al. (2014), which found that workers in environments with insufficient psychological safety are likely to be less inclined to speak up if they believe doing so could put them in danger or damage their reputation.

The finding that psychological safety has a partial mediation impact suggests the existence of additional explanatory processes that connect employee silent behavior and bad leadership. Prospective investigations may broaden the understanding through exploring additional potential mediators, including perceptions of justice (Tepper, 2000), negative emotions of fear (Kish-Gephart, Detert, Treviño, & Edmondson, 2009), avoidance orientation (Ferris et al., 2011), autonomous self-construal (Johnson & Lord, 2010) and fundamental psychological needs (Lian et al., 2012). When a leader exhibits bad behavior, for example, employees may probably feel unfairly treated, which may cause them to purposefully withhold important information so that the company or the leader would suffer. People probably choose to keep quiet instead of question the status quo when working with a leader that exhibits negative behavior because they want to avoid facing consequences. Additionally, a leader's unfavorable actions may set off an individual mode in their followers, causing them to become mute or uninterested in issues at work and concentrate more on their interests.

Conclusion

In organizations, the connection among a leader's negative behavior and Employee Silence is significantly influenced by psychological safety. The significance of psychological safety, quiet, Machiavellian behavior, abusive behavior, narcissism and authoritative leadership were all emphasized in this study. The purpose of the current research is to find how psychological safety functions being a mediator among Negative leadership and employee silence. The findings showed that the association between negative leadership and employee silence is mediated by psychological safety. Therefore, the organizations must implement the required measures to reduce the negative behaviors of the leaders. These measures should involve the introduction of leadership development programs and the establishment of diagnostic processes for the detection of negative leadership behaviors. Conversely, companies ought to develop policies and processes that guard against exposing staff members to harmful behaviors. For leaders and workers to collaborate on organizational learning and the performance of the organizations, this research recommends the creation of organizational interventions to raise employee coping and well-being levels.

Since leadership affects followers' responses and behaviors at work, it is essential to the survival and success of an organization. The current study investigates how negative leadership behavior affects employees' perceptions of psychological safety and their subsequent silence response using the theoretical

foundations of COR. By examining both leadership behavior and the nature of the relationship between a leader and their followers at the same time, it is expected that the findings will inspire more research into the broad and dynamic ways in which leadership influences others.

Firstly, by studying the impact of a leader's negative behavior on employee's silent response, it adds to the expanding body of knowledge on the subject. While earlier research by has linked employees' opinions on leadership abuse to their subsequent emotional exhaustion, the relationship between leadership abuse and silence and the fundamental mediation effect of psychological safety has not been proven. According to this research, when abused employees choose how to deal with a leader's negative behavior in their day-to-day jobs, employees decide to keep quiet to preserve their resources and prevent losing them in the future.

Findings reflect very significant management ramifications. Organizations should prioritize preventing abusive behavior by supervisors since it can have costly repercussions. Leaders must be made fully aware of the negative effects of inappropriate behavior by their organizations and laws or policies that penalize leaders' negative behavior may be implemented. Given that abusive victims are more likely to remain silent compared to reporting the dysfunctional behavior of their leaders, organizations need to establish secure mediums for workers to report or voice out any negative leadership behavior in the organization, as well as safeguard regulations to shield them from reprisals.

Future research on various industries, regions and negative leadership characteristics would corroborate these findings. Furthermore, the fact that the poll of the current study was limited to Pakistan means that the results cannot be applied to different cultural situations. The research in the future can look into if the connections found here can also be used in a cross-cultural setting.

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