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Unethical Leadership, Moral Disgust, and Workplace Deviance in the Public Sector Universities of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Purpose-The research is intended to find out the impact of unethical leadership on workplace place deviance and moral disgust. Furthermore, the study also evaluated the impact of moral disgust on workplace deviance. The study also evaluated the mediating role of moral disgust in the relationship between unethical leadership and workplace deviance.

Design/Methodology/Approach-This longitudinal study is quantitative. The study utilized existing scales to test the proposed mode. Data for the study was gathered from 305 faculty members of different universities in Pakistan.

Findings-Results of this study show a positive relationship between unethical leadership with workplace place deviance and moral disgust. In addition, the data also supported a positive relationship between moral disgust and workplace place deviance. The findings of this study also indicate that the relationship between unethical leadership and workplace place deviance is mediated by moral disgust.

Originality/Value of research-The results of this study is important because this is the first study in the context of the public sector universities of Pakistan that investigates the interrelationship between unethical leadership, moral disgust, and workplace place deviance.

Limitations-The sample size, a limited number of variables involved in constructing the model of the study, and data collected from one education sector only are some of the limitations of the current study.

Keywords: Unethical Leadership; Moral Disgust; Workplace Deviance.

1. INTRODUCTION

WD has emerged as an important issue requiring the attention of researchers and organizational leaders after the debacles of many strong companies such as Enron and, WorldCom, Lehman Brothers. Specifically, in the context of Pakistan, previous literature indicates there exist several forms of WD particularly in public sector organizations, such as frequently arriving late and leaving the workplace early, and taking extended lunch

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and prayer breaks during work for lunch and socializing. Workers polluting workplaces (38 percent), departing offices earlier (66 percent), and consuming lengthy break times are some of the irregular job attitudes documented by [Ahmed et al. \(2012\)](#) in Pakistan's government firms (90%), trying to steal official property (45%), misusing computers in gaming/ chatting instead of doing work (49%), personal lengthy calls by using official phones (94%), arriving late often (82%) and doing personal affairs during office hours (75%). Besides it, in public sector organizations, corruption has become a norm. Day-to-day issues such as reporting an (incidence) incident to the police; getting a new connection for utilities such as electricity, gas, and water; and winning a contract for a local construction project might require bribing the relevant officials failing which, could lead to an unnecessary delay or even denial of services by the authorities. In today's business, loyal employees are important to retain in institutions as value congruence examined by ([AL SHAHER & ZREIK, 2022](#)). There is great importance in the relationship between value congruence and public relationships as referred by ([Bazaa, 2021](#)).

A general problem of public sector universities of Pakistan as identified by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) is the unsatisfactory performance of University faculty, particularly in terms of their attitude toward learning, personality development, and career development of students ([Shaheen et al., 2021](#)). If the other way around the leader is caring the results would be better as referred by ([Ali et al., 2021](#)). Furthermore, prior research indicates that aberrant workplace behaviors are prevalent at Pakistan's public universities. There is a positive relationship between value congruence has family well-being as discussed by ([Flurry et al., 2021](#)). As a result, practitioners and academics say it is critical to investigate the variables that lead to WD and how to manage it.

As far as ethical standards are concerned, both developed and developing nations are facing issues of compliance with these standards. However, a considerably greater difference exists in developing countries between standard organizational ethics and real organizational and work ethics. Procrastination should be taken differently from laziness as studied ([Dautov, 2020](#)).

As identified by [Ahmed et al. \(2012\)](#) developing societies can follow the organizational ethics and work values of the developed countries to improve ethical practices in their

organizations. Employees distinct from organizations as discussed by Unethical behavioral practices such as abuse/ misuse of power, harassment, falsifying documents, and theft, are some of the several deviant behaviors reported in the workplace, particularly in developing countries. These deviant behaviors are negatively affecting the performance and reputation of the organizations. [Robinson and Bennett \(1995\)](#) define WD as "voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the wellbeing of the organization, its members, or both." In countries like Pakistan, these deviant behaviors are a serious challenge for the top management of organizations as they lead to poor work performance. Therefore, management practitioners and scholars are striving to limit the occurrence of WD by finding practical solutions for deviant behaviors.

Furthermore, distaste dwells on the base and is disgusting, whereas morality is seen as one of humanity's most refined qualities. Additionally, morality supports the functioning of cultures, whereas disgust in its purest form protects a person from dangerous parasites and microbes. Moral dilemmas frequently lead to debate and the balancing of several norms against one another. Disgust, on the other hand, is an instinctive reaction that defies cognitive explanation, leading some to classify it as a reactive drive instead of an emotional one. There is a significant effect on academic performance and specific direction as referred to by ([García-Ros et al., 2022](#)).

There is a good deal of research and literature available on ethical leadership but a dearth of both theoretical and empirical contributions on UL. As explained by [Brown and Mitchell \(2010\)](#) in their pioneering study, UL is, "behaviors conducted and decisions made by organizational leaders that are illegal and/or violate moral standards, and those that impose processes and structures that promote unethical conduct by followers." There is a negative impact on the employees' emotions due to job insecurity as examined by ([Yu et al., 2021](#)). A closer examination of the definition given by [Brown and Mitchell \(2010\)](#) indicates that despite the lack of availability of literature on UL, there are several issues highlighted in the existing literature that could be linked to the theory of UL.

This research intends to investigate MD as a mediating variable in the relationship between UL and WD. This study proposes that leaders who consistently engage in UL

behaviors will create MD of the employees, thereby increasing the level of WD. Hence, while focusing on the public sector universities of Pakistan, this research will contribute to the existing endeavors of researchers on the concept of UL, WD, and MD.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Unethical Leadership and Workplace Deviance

Scholars have discovered that when leaders treat their followers properly and convey the significance of ethics, people are less likely to participate in illegal activities. Employee deviance aimed against the company and supervisor is adversely related to ethical leadership, as argued by ([Gok et al., 2017](#)). There is also knowledge hiding the action of leaders' negative effect on employees, resulting in workplace deviance as studied by ([Agarwal et al., 2022](#)). As a result, prior research has found a link between ethical leadership as well as deviant workplace behavior. Nevertheless, little research on the link between UL and WD has been undertaken. There are positive and negative relationships between Emotional Intelligence and the role of individual elasticity as discussed by ([Zhao et al., 2020](#)). As a result, the purpose of this study is to look into the link between UL and WD extensively, based on the hypothesis as follows:

H1: *Unethical leadership is positively and significantly related to workplace deviance.*

2.2. Unethical Leadership and Moral Disgust

Moral emotions, according to [Keltner and Haidt \(2003\)](#) are "emotions that go beyond the direct interests of the self." Employees' emotions are greatly influenced by leadership style. According to [Zineldin and Amsteus \(2014\)](#), toxic and disruptive leaders generally compromise their relationship with followers by avoiding their emotions. Despotism leaders can influence people's moral emotions (e.g., rage, disdain, and scorn) in this way. Employees express feelings of wrath and contempt when things don't go as planned, according to ([Greenbaum et al., 2020](#)). Workers will be disgusted and angry below a dictatorial leadership (bossy, arrogant, and expecting unquestionable loyalty). Individuals who have a poor level of empathy for others will feel scorn toward them ([Chita-Tegmark & Scheutz, 2021](#)). There is also needed to curtail the Unethical behavior of employees as mentioned by ([Zonghua et al., 2022](#)).

As a result, followers lack empathy for a despotic leader because of their belief that the leader is to blame for the blockage, and therefore they are filled with scorn and loathing. Thus, this research proposes that:

H2: *Unethical leadership is positively and significantly related to moral disgust.*

2.3. Moral Disgust and Workplace Deviance

According to [Tang et al. \(2022\)](#), people express feelings at work daily, and their conduct is influenced by their emotions wherein; moral conduct is driven by morals. Personal moral research has found a link between aggressive behavior and moral feelings. Moral anger, according to [Lindebaum and Geddes \(2016\)](#) is “an aroused emotional state stemming from a primary appraisal of a moral standard violation that impacts others more than oneself and prompts correct behavior intended to improve the social condition even in the face of significant personal risk.” (p. 743). Since angered people believe someone else (a dictatorial leader) is to blame for their bullying conduct, anger contributes to the breakdown of social connections. Research such as Novin, Walters, and Espelage proved a link between anger and bullying behavior. Anger, disgust, and contempt are moral emotions that have a strong and beneficial impact on retribution, such as bullying conduct. Generally, WD is a stand-productive reaction as examined by ([Zappalà et al., 2022](#)). Thus, this study proposes that:

H3: *Moral disgust is positively and significantly related to workplace deviance.*

2.4. Moral Disgust as a Mediator

Things occur in the workplace, and people react emotionally as a result of these affective experiences. Workplace stress causes unpleasant feelings, which leads to unproductive job actions. In various ways, ethical feelings (anger, disgust, and contempt) buffer the link between UL and bad conduct. The dictatorial leader is domineering, tries to manipulate other people, and abuses the employees for their benefit. When things don't go their way, employers will become enraged and disgusted and exhibit dominating behavior, such as "teasing and calling the individual nasty names" (one of Thornberry and Jungert's scale items). Authoritarian and violent attitudes are typical of a despotic leader, which may potentially elicit followers' wrath, disdain, and contempt. Then, as one item on Thornberg and Jungert's scale suggests, followers participate in bullying behavior

by "making fun of or joking about the individual in a way he or she does not enjoy." Third, workplace pressures trigger emotional responses that contribute to affecting- or behavior that is judgment-driven. Moral Disgust is a controlled establishment of emotions as referred to by ([Zupan & Eskritt, 2020](#)).

Thus, it could be the hypothesis that:

H4: *Moral disgust mediates the relationship between unethical leadership and workplace deviance.*

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sampling

This study will utilize a convenient sampling technique (non-probability sampling). Participants are picked depending on the convenience of the researcher, as this method saves time, is less expensive, and lets researchers investigate hard-to-reach groups. Furthermore, there is no scientific consensus on the suitability of sample size, and methodologists disagree. For instance, ([Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999](#)) identified a minimum of 150 to 300 cases. [Guilford \(1954\)](#) identified at least 200 cases. [Cattell \(1978\)](#) argued that the minimum case number should be 250, whereas, [Norušis \(2005\)](#) asserts at least 300 cases. Thus, in this research, a minimum of 300 cases will be selected from the academic and administrative staff of the public-sector universities of Islamabad and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

3.2. Measurement Instruments

The scales shown in table-1 are used in this study, and all of the items are fixed at a five-point scale. On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, 1. Strongly agree, 2. Agree, 3. Neutral, 4. Disagree, 5. Strongly disagree.

Table 1 <i>The scale of the study</i>		
Construct	Number of Items	Reference
Unethical leadership	6	De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008)
Workplace deviance	10	(Qin et al., 2020)
Moral disgust	7	(Tybur et al., 2009)

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Demographics Statistics

The total of participants in this study was 305. The gender participation in this study indicated that male respondents 107 (35.08 %) while females 198 (64.92 %). The majority of the participants have the age between 20 to 40 years (n=229; 75.08 %). 18.69% (n = 57) have an age of fewer than 25 years while 6.23% (n = 19) of participants' ages were greater than 40 years. 43.93% (n=134) of the respondents were graduated, 54.10% (n=165) were postgraduates, and 1.97% (n=6) have other educations. The respondents were asked about their work experience. The proportion of respondents with 1-5 years of working experience was 51.48% (n=157). 19.02% (n=58) have experience of 5-10 years. The respondents having work experience of less than one year and greater than ten years were 14.43% (n=44) and 15.08% (n=46), respectively.

4.2. Common Method Bias

Harman's single-factor test was run on the dataset in SPSS using principal component analysis to check for common method bias. The research revealed that six components had eigenvalues larger than 1. The first component only accounted for 44.47 % (50 %) of the variation. This demonstrated that there was no issue with CMB influencing the statistical outcomes.

4.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Convergent and discriminant validity, as well as construct composite reliability, were used to determine the measurement model's goodness of fit. Composite reliability is used to assess the construct's reliability ([Fornell & Larcker, 1981](#)). [Liu and Wang \(2016\)](#) state that composite reliability requires a value larger than 0.70. There was a significant increase in all constructs' reliability over the cut-off value of 0.799, ranging to 0.923. (See Table 2). Each construct's Cronbach's Alpha was likewise higher than 0.70. The AVE and factor loadings are calculated to assess the concept's convergent validity ([Fornell & Larcker, 1981](#)). Both the AVE and the loading on the components should be more than 0.60. AVEs for all constructs were greater than 0.50, while loadings for all items were greater than 0.60, falling in the range of 0.674-0.875. Because of this, the instrument's convergent

validity was not in question. Also, both the MSV and MaxR(H) values passed the cut-off.

Table 2
Factor Loadings, CR, AVE, and Sqr. AVE

Predictor	Outcome	Std Beta	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)
WD	WD10	0.745	0.915	0.518	0.454	0.916
	WD8	.763 ***				
	WD1	.740 ***				
	WD5	.678 ***				
	WD2	.746 ***				
	WD3	.714 ***				
	WD7	.704 ***				
	WD9	.733 ***				
	WD6	.683 ***				
	WD4	.687 ***				
MD	MD4	0.724	0.89	0.537	0.477	0.891
	MD5	.756 ***				
	MD7	.749 ***				
	MD3	.735 ***				
	MD1	.741 ***				
	MD2	.732 ***				
	MD6	.690 ***				
UEL	UEL6	0.769	0.88	0.54	0.53	0.876
	UEL5	.774 ***				
	UEL4	.806 ***				
	UEL3	.789 ***				
	UEL1	.674 ***				
	UEL2	.732 ***				

The square root of the average variance extracted ([Nagaraju & Chikkegowda](#)) was often compared to construct a correlation to evaluate the instrument's discriminant validity. Numerous academics found fault with it and concluded that it was not a reliable indicator of discriminant validity. The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was suggested for use in evaluating concept discriminant validity by ([Henseler et al., 2015](#)). Under normal conditions, the HTMT ratio should be less than 0.85. Table 3 displays the HTMT ratios for the study's constructs, which ranged from 0.316 to 0.732 (0.85). That proved no issues for discriminant validity as well.

Table 1 <i>Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio</i>			
	UEL	MD	WD
UEL			
MD	0.638		
WD	0.568	0.592	

Further, the goodness of fit for the structural model was measured to ensure that the hypothesized relationship in the model was not spurious. The results of Goodness of fit measured through various model fit indices are presented in the following Table 4. In terms of CF1 = 0.985, NFI = 0.898., and TLI = 0.985, all three values were determined to be within the generally recognized ranges for a reasonable model fit (see Table 4). Similarly, RMSEA = 0.023 and SRMR = 0.040 indicated good model fitness per previous studies' recommended thresholds. The threshold conditions are satisfied by all fit indices. The structural model, therefore, appears to be a good fit and may be utilized further for inferential statistics.

Table 4 <i>Detail of Model Fit Indices</i>		
Indices	Estimate	Threshold
CMIN	1076.075	--
DF	930.000	--
Relative Chi-Square (χ^2/df) (CMIN/DF)	1.157	Between 1 and 3
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.985	>0.95
Square Root Mean Residual (SRMR)	0.040	<0.08
Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA)	0.023	<0.06
PClose	0.974	>0.05
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.898	>0.90
TLI	0.985	>0.90

4.4. Mean, SD, and Correlation

Descriptive statistics and the results of correlation analysis are given out in Table 5. Kurtosis and skewness are used to test the assumptions of normality in indicators ([Kline, 2005](#)). A positively skewed distribution has more points below the mean than above it, whereas a negatively skewed distribution has more points above it. A normal uneven curve can be made by joining these two curves. Assessing skewness and kurtosis may be done with descriptive statistics. Skewness levels between -3 and +3, and kurtosis values between -10 and +10, are considered acceptable when utilizing SEM ([Brown & Mitchell,](#)

2010). The SEM is a fairly reliable method of analysis. As a result, minor variations may not necessarily indicate major violations of assumptions if they fall outside of these bounds. Table 5 displays the resulting skewness and kurtosis. The skewness values ranged from a low of -0.642 to a high of 0.250, which is within the allowable range. However, Kurtosis values fell within the acceptable range of -1.366-0.639%, demonstrating that the distribution was otherwise normal. It proved that the information had a normal distribution.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics and Correlation analysis

	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis	UEL	MD	WD
UEL	2.97	1.057	0.250	-0.937	0.735		
MD	3.35	0.945	-0.393	-0.946	0.636***	0.733	
WD	3.35	0.947	-0.331	-1.088	0.563***	0.590***	0.72

To examine the correlation between the variables, Pearson correlation coefficients were generated. Table 4 presents the findings. According to the correlation analysis, UEL and MD have strong and favorable associations ($r = 0.636$, $p < 0.001$). The correlation between UEL and WD ($r = 0.563$, $p < 0.001$) is likewise favorable and substantial. And MD was found to be positively associated with WD ($r = 0.590$, $p < 0.001$).

4.5. Multivariate analysis

Structural equation modeling was employed to go even further into the study model. Multiple regression analysis was used to further examine the study's premise.

4.6. UEL's direct effect on WD

The standardized results are reported in table 6. The direct effect of UEL on WD is examined. UEL was found to be significant ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$) and positively associated with WD. The R-square of this model is 0.42. This confirms a 42% variation in WD due to UEL. It accepts H1.

Table 6
Direct Effect of UEL on WD

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Hypothesis	R-Square
WD	<---	UEL	.65	.074	9.110	***	H1 Accept	0.42

4.7. Effect of UEL on MD

The results presented in Table 7 indicate a positive effect of UEL on MD ($\beta = 0.64$, $p < 0.01$) the MD. The value of regression in this relationship is 0.41, which indicates 41% variations in MD due to UEL.

Table 7

Direct Effect of UEL on MD

MD	<---	UEL	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value	Hypothesis
MD	<---	UEL	0.64	.065	8.824	***	H2 Accepted

4.8. Effect of MD on WD

The standardized results are reported in table 8. The direct effect of MD on WD is examined. MD was found to be significant ($\beta = 0.66$, $p < 0.01$) and positively associated with WD. The R-square of this model is 0.43. This confirms a 43% variation in WD due to MD. It also accepts H3.

Table 8

Direct Effect of MD on WD

Outcome		Predictor	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Hypothesis
WD	<---	MD	0.66	.077	9.309	***	H3 Accept

4.9. The mediating effect of MD between UEL and WD

Mediation analysis was performed in the final SEM model. The mediating role of MD between UEL and WD was examined using AMOS based on Hayes Process Model. Table 9 explains the results of the mediation analysis. The direct effect of UEL on MD is significant ($\beta = 0.634$, $p < 0.01$) and positive. The R-square of this relationship is 0.40. MD has a significant positive effect on WD ($\beta = 0.410$, $p < 0.01$). This shows that the paths from UEL to MD and MD to outcome variables WD is significant. The direct association of UEL with WD ($\beta = 0.339$, $p < 0.01$) is also positive and significant by incorporating mediator MD. The R-square changes after incorporating mediator MD for 0.50 and 0.46 for WD.

Table 9

The mediating effect of MD between UEL and ODI, PRO & WD

Outcome	<---	Predictor	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
MD	<---	UEL	.634	.067	8.742	***
WD	<---	UEL	.339	.075	4.567	***

Table 9
The mediating effect of MD between UEL and ODI, PRO & WD

Outcome	<---	Predictor	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
WD	<---	MD	.410	.082	5.413	***

Furthermore, to analyze the indirect effect from UEL to MD and outcome variables WD, Hayes process bootstrapping procedures are applied. The indirect effect result is reported in table 10. The indirect path (UEL to MD to WD) is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.261$, $p < 0.01$). This further confirms that MD mediates the relationship between UEL and WD. H4 is accepted.

Table 10
The indirect effect of mediation

Parameter	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P	Hypotheses
UEL→MD→WD	.261	.156	.370	.001	H4 Accept

5. DISCUSSION

The study supported the first hypothesis (H1) that UL significantly positively affects WD. The findings were consistent with earlier studies. The research aimed to identify the factors that contribute to UL and how those factors affect workers' propensity for misbehavior in the workplace. We used the Affective Event Theory to argue that UL leads to increased deviance in the workplace.

This led to the development of Hypothesis 1, which claims that UL is related to increased levels of WD. According to the findings of this research, there is a relationship that can be considered positive and significant between UL and deviant behavior in the workplace. The findings of the study provide evidence in favor of the second hypothesis. This study is consistent with other research studies. The way employees regard their managers and supervisors has a significant impact on the actions and attitudes of those employees.

The relationship between an employee and the organization's leaders is a crucial factor in determining the performance of employees and their conduct inside the firm. If the relationships are good and healthy, then the attitude and behavior of the workers will also be pleasant and favorable. This is because positive and healthy attitudes and

behaviors are contagious. On the other hand, if the relationship is not favorable, workers tend to participate in despicable actions, and the employee will also search for reasons to hurt the organization and the other members.

If they are not treated fairly, their dedication and loyalty to the organization may drop. Prior studies also endorsed that employees exhibit deviant conduct after being abused by their superiors in the workplace. It has been discovered, both conceptually and experimentally, that workers react to destructive supervisory behaviors in the workplace in the same way as they react to damaging deviant behaviors at the workplace, which is harmful not only to the employees but also to the business. Employees are also likely to act like what they observe their bosses doing in the workplace. The Affective Event Theory explains that when employees are treated fairly in the workplace, they behave positively, while in the case of mistreatment from their leaders, the reactions are adverse. In addition, unethical leaders exploit their power and position to advance their personal goals, and their subordinates respond by becoming less cooperative. The power differential in this transaction makes it challenging for employees to express their displeasure with their leader openly. However, they may do so indirectly by engaging in deviant conduct at work. This study describes how UL in Pakistan impacts the behavior of their subordinates and how those subordinates then take steps towards behaviors that are not desirable and that prove harmful to the organization. The study applies Affective Event Theory to the context of Pakistan.

The second hypothesis states that UL has a positive and significant relationship with MD. The findings supported the H2. The significant relationship was consistent with the prior research. Leaders that are unethical (toxic and disruptive) disregard their followers because they don't connect with them on an emotional level. This is one method despotic leaders may use to manipulate the moral feelings of their followers, such as anger, contempt, and scorn ([Khattak et al., 2020](#)). It has been found that when things don't go as planned, employees display sentiments of anger and disdain. As a result of working under a dictatorship, employees will feel humiliated and outraged (bossy, arrogant, and expecting unquestionable loyalty).

The third hypotheses postulate that MD is positively and significantly related to

supervisor WD. The findings revealed that MD significantly positively affects WD. The results accept the H3. These results validate the existing literature. According to the findings, employees with a higher level of MD exhibit a larger degree of WD within their organization than those with a lower level.

The mediation analysis was performed in AMOS v 24 by calculating conditional indirect effects according to Hayes process macro model 4. The statistical results of conditional indirect effects (UL $\rightarrow$ MD $\rightarrow$ WD) were significant. The prior literature validated the findings. MD mediates the relationship between UL and negative employee outcomes in the workplace. We propose that followers' levels of organizational deviance are more directly related to their MD due to unethical leaders. According to recent research, unethical leaders are egotistical, controlling, and unforgiving and are more likely to exploit others and act unethically ([Naseer et al., 2016](#)). They also have poorer leader-follower relationships and lessen the opportunity for their subordinates to have a say in critical organizational matters. This could increase the MD among the employees.

Researchers into abusive and immoral leadership have found that AET theory helps explain the fallout from such regimes. When a leader acts arrogantly, angrily, or without empathy toward an employee, that worker views the exchange relationship as unbalanced or exploitative and has a diminished sense of belonging to the organization. It becomes less invested in its work and more likely to be morally disgusted ([O'Boyle et al., 2013](#)).

The consequences of UL might also be explained using self-resource concepts. For instance, studies have shown that employees' attention, willpower, and self-esteem are depleted under UL. As a result, being bullied or intimidated by a dictator can severely limit or eliminate an employee's ability to work for organizational accomplishments. When victims' ability to self-regulate is diminished, they are more vulnerable to the negative effects of abuse, such as increased feelings of insecurity, inappropriate conduct, and even criminal activity.

For similar reasons, people become abusive, angry, and emotionally exhausted with their bosses and colleagues at the workplace. In the workplace, employees who have experienced psychological unsafety (MD) have less interest in organizational identification, which has a ripple effect that makes it harder for them to keep a positive

attitude toward their work and leads to an increase in WD and procrastination behaviors. It is also tested in prayers and self-controlled as described by ([Zarzycka et al., 2021](#)).

This research posits that the patterns of conduct typical of UL positively impact workers' MDs, increasing their propensity to break the rules. Workers who don't have a strong connection to their organization are more likely to have doubts about the validity and fairness of company policies and the actions of their superiors. As an outcome, Unethical Leader procrastination has a negative effect on performance even in hospitals as researched by ([Babaie et al., 2022](#)). They may be aggravated by UL practices increasing negative outcomes in the workplace. The value of congruence is reflected in knowledge workers as quoted by ([Bayona et al., 2020](#)). Therefore, it is concluded that UL is positively associated with an increase in MD, which has a further positive impact on WD in the educational sector of Pakistan.

5.1. Implications

Understanding the impact of leadership in influencing workplace deviant behaviors among educational sector employees in Pakistan is a significant addition to the current study of management practices. Studying the effects of UL is difficult for researchers in developed and developing nations like Pakistan and the businesses that operate there. However, the results of this study add to the body of human resource management literature since it explores the function of MD as a connecting mechanism between UL and bad outcomes for employees, such as WD. It offers a comprehensive and detailed look at the relationship between UL and employee misconduct in the workplace. The research also shows that unethical management is a primary factor in a dysfunctional work environment.

Furthermore, the research shows that corrupt management practices can seed an environment of illegality in the workplace. This study's findings also have practical implications for firms, suggesting that they should review their human resources policy considering the causes of problematic employee conduct and inappropriate supervisor treatment. For instance, businesses need to implement measures to reduce interpersonal mistreatment. [Thau and Mitchell \(2010\)](#) provide a similar set of recommendations, arguing that people who exhibit negative or abusive conduct should not be assigned as

supervisors to mitigate the damaging impacts of such behavior.

Also recommended is training for managers, which might encourage more moral decision-making in firms. Businesses should foster an approachable culture where trust may flourish, and workers feel valued. The result will be a reduction in harmful managerial practices like UL and the eradication of undesirable behaviors like WD.

The findings highlight the significance of UL conduct as it is positively related to and strongly influences unfavorable employee outcomes such as delay in completing tasks, a lack of identification with the company, and deviant behavior in the workplace. As for the management ramifications, businesses may limit the damage caused by evil top brass. Therefore, according to the results of this study, businesses need to implement effective policies and build solid workplace cultures. The bad actions in the workplace can be decreased if effective checks and balances are maintained.

Since the growth of a business depends on its employees' efforts, businesses must recruit and designate leaders and supervisors with strong care for their employees and workers. To the greatest extent possible, it is important to meet the needs and expectations of staff members. When a business and its management care about their employees and treat them properly, the workers respond favorably and view the company as Honorable and respectable.

5.2. Limitations of the Research and Future Directions

The findings of our research highlighted some potential future avenues as well as many possible limitations. Self-reported data were used to determine how much of an effect UL had on the undesirable outcomes experienced by employees. Therefore, all the questionnaires were filled out by the staff members. In this instance, social desirability bias may have influenced the respondents. Because of this impact, it would have caused the respondents to manipulate realities when answering the supplied questions to avoid becoming the target of criticism. Because of this, the replies provided by the employees may be skewed, which would, in turn, have an effect on the actual data and the correlations between the variables being investigated.

However, in many incidents of employees experiencing bad results because of UL, thus outcomes of this behavior go undetected and unreported, calling into question the

truth and authenticity of the claims. To prevent these kinds of errors in the future, researchers should make an effort to gather information on negative effects from a variety of different sources. Second, it's possible that this information doesn't accurately represent the workforce at Pakistan's educational institutions because it was collected using a convenient sample method for researchers. However, future studies should be conducted in a broader context, combining alternative data collection techniques from diverse populations, and validating the impact of UL influence on negative employee behaviors through MD and value congruence.

Third, the study focused on the detrimental effects of UL in the workplace rather than other potential workplace factors. Therefore, it would be beneficial to expand the scope of the study to account for the impact of additional individual-related variables, which may provide a complete and more accurate picture of the causes of deviant conduct in the workplace.

In addition to exploring this using MD as a mediator, researchers may also examine this phenomenon with additional mediators and moderators. UL has been linked to negative outcomes, although this relationship may be studied by considering other context-specific elements as mediators and moderators. Moreover, in the future, researchers can look at the role those other elements, such as supervisory empowerment and rigorous organizational norms, play in the rise of UL.

In addition, all the participants in the data-gathering process were from the field of education, which suggests that the findings cannot be extrapolated to other fields or businesses. Because the participants were only drawn from Rawalpindi and Islamabad, it is possible that the findings cannot be applied to other areas of the country. In further research studies, it may be useful to collect data from several different businesses or sectors to assess the results of using an integrated model like the one this study used.

6. CONCLUSION

The current research is an attempt to identify and evaluate the impact of unethical leadership on workplace place deviance and moral disgust and found that all the relations are significant. The study also tested the impact of moral disgust on workplace deviance

and concluded that the said relationship exists. Furthermore, the mediating role of moral disgust in the relationship between unethical leadership and workplace deviance was tested and supported by the data collected from the faculty members of universities in Pakistan. Along with other implications, the study provided the basis for a new stream of research.

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