

**JRSS**  
**JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Volume 9

Jan 2021

Number 1

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Curtailing Job Insecurity and Counterproductive Work Behaviours as Bullying Effects in Pakistani Academia: Work Engagement as a Moderator

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**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES**  
**ISLAMABAD**

**ISSN: 2306-112X (E)**

**ISSN: 2305-6533 (P)**

**Journal of Research in Social Sciences  
(JRSS)**

JRSS is indexed in international databases: ProQuest, ULrich-Webs, Research Bible, Directory of Research Journal Indexing (DRJI), Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Open Academic Journals Index (OAJI), Global Impact Factor (GIF), Oxford Collections (University of Oxford), and WorldCat. It is recognized in ‘Y’ category under the HEC Journal Recognition System (HJRS).



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## Head's Leadership Styles and Effectiveness of School Teams: Exploring the Role of Motivational Mechanisms

Allah Wasaya Anjum<sup>1</sup>, Riffat un Nisa Awan<sup>2</sup> and Muhammad Zulqarnain<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

*The literature reveals that participative leadership style (PLS) is overwhelmingly advantageous over the contrasting directive leadership style (DLS). Therefore, the key objective of this study was to find out the relative effect of a PL style as compared to a DL style on the motivational mechanism (organizational commitment and empowerment) and effectiveness (innovation and in-role performance) of school staff teams. However, the mediating role of motivational mechanism in the relationship between school heads' leadership styles and effectiveness of school staff teams had also been studied. The data were collected through a questionnaire based cross-sectional survey. The data were collected from the 402 teachers working in 80 academic teams. The SEM results revealed that DLS was significantly related to teams' in-role performance and organizational commitment. While, PLS was significantly related to in-role performance, team's innovation, organizational commitment and personal empowerment. Teachers' personal empowerment partially mediated the relationship between heads' PLS and team innovation. But, organizational commitment fully mediated the relationship between heads' PLS and teams' in-role performance. However, organizational commitment partially mediated the relationship between heads' DLS and teams' in-role performance. It is suggested that heads might concurrently combine participative and directive leadership behaviors to make their school teams more effective.*

**Keywords:** participative leadership style, directive leadership style, organizational commitment, empowerment, team innovation, team in-role performance.

### Introduction

Based on the site based management concept and educational reforms insisting school restructuring for today's schools, the educational leadership of the twenty first century was visualized as the participative leadership (Somech, 2002, 2005; O'Hair & Reitzug, 1997). The educational management theorists reached a substantial agreement about using more collaborative strategies as a decisive factor in managing teams

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effectively (Blase & Blase, 1996; Fransen et al, 2011; Wall & Rinehart, 1998; Odoardi et al, 2019).

Scully, Kirkpatrick, and Locke (1995) pointed out that participative leadership has a significant and positive association with quality of the decisions made by school leaders. Somech (2002) highlighted the contribution of participative leadership to the quality of teachers' work lives. Yammarino and Naughton (1992) described the effects of participative leadership's role in increasing teachers' motivation, whereas Ngotngamwong (2012) discussed the positive impact of participative leadership on teachers' satisfaction. These currents in the literature pointed to the widely held belief that participative leadership is overwhelmingly meritorious in contrast to the directive leadership style as far as the team and overall organizational effectiveness is concerned.

Stogdill (1974) and Fiedler (1989) defined directive leadership as framework through which the members of team act and decide as per vision of the leader (Sagie, 1997). It was linked with declining performance by the school staff teams due to defective decision making attributed to this style of management (Gaziel, 1998). Lewis, Welsh, Dehler, and Green (2002) noticed that though most of the previous research posed directive and participative leadership as two contrasting leadership styles which were regarded as mutually exclusive.

The meta-analyses and reviews of the literature conducted recently, however, showed that both styles are effective in increasing employees' productivity and an appropriate leadership style can make teachers more effective (Van Jaarsveld, et al. 2019). Wagner III (1994), for instance, deduced that there is an overall positive influence of participative leadership on worker performance and attitudes although this effect was small. Likewise, the directive leadership was positively linked with employees' performance (Murphy, Blyth, & Fiedler, 1992; Sagie, 1996, 1997; Sethuraman, & Suresh, 2014).

Sagie et al. (2002) pointed that if we put the contradiction between participation and directing styles of leadership aside, both these leadership styles were found successful in improving employees' outcomes. Now pondering over all these research findings mentioned above, we may raise a question whether both of these participative and directive leadership styles are compatible or incompatible, contradictory and congruent. Keeping in view the fact that each of these leadership styles has weaknesses and strengths, the researcher proposed this study to find out what advantages each of these leadership styles have on outcome variables in the schools.

This research study thus has the following twofold purposes. First, this research specifically aimed to find out the benefits of each of the leadership styles by assessing the relative effectiveness of these leadership styles on team outcomes in schools. These



outcomes were innovation of the teams and in-role performance in secondary schools. Lovelace, Shapiro, and Weingart (2001) described that these dimensions indicate the stress and strain that schools had to experience while doing out of the box thinking at the time of doing in-role routine duties.

The second purpose was to identify and assess the motivational mechanisms specifically stimulated by each of the participative versus directive leadership styles. The researchers has benefited and drawn on the models proposed by Sagie et al. (2002) and Somech (2005) stating that leadership style per se does not increase the effectiveness solely, rather it does so by triggering certain motivational mechanisms. In this regard, the researcher proposed that each of the leadership style (whether directive or participative) triggers a specific motivational mechanism or process that in turn simulates innovation and in-role performance in school staff teams. The researcher identified and hypothesized two mechanisms which especially seemed relevant to this research. These two underlying mechanisms were organizational commitment and teachers' empowerment which were built into the design as mediating variables in this study (c.f. research model of this study in Figure 1).

As mentioned earlier there were numerous studies on the effects of either participative or directive leadership styles on the individual as well as team outcomes but studies comparing and contrasting the effects of these leadership styles on outcomes are rare especially through the underlying mechanisms of such effects (Sagie et al., 2002; Somech, 2005). Keeping in view this gap in the previous literature, the purpose of this study was to explore the contrasting direct effects of leadership styles (participative and directive) of the secondary schools leaders on the team innovation and in-role performance of school staff teams along with the mediating effects of school teachers' perceived empowerment and organizational commitment in the relationships between leadership styles and team outcome variables in the secondary schools operating in Lahore Division of the Punjab province of Pakistan.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of the study were:

1. To find out the direct effects of school heads' leadership styles on school team members' empowerment, organizational commitment, in-role performance and innovation behavior.
2. To explore the underlying mechanisms of these effects by studying the mediating role of school teachers' perceived empowerment and organizational commitment in the relationships between leadership styles and team outcome variables.

## Research Model of the Study

The following diagram (Figure 1) displays the research model of this study along with the hypothesized paths/relationships.

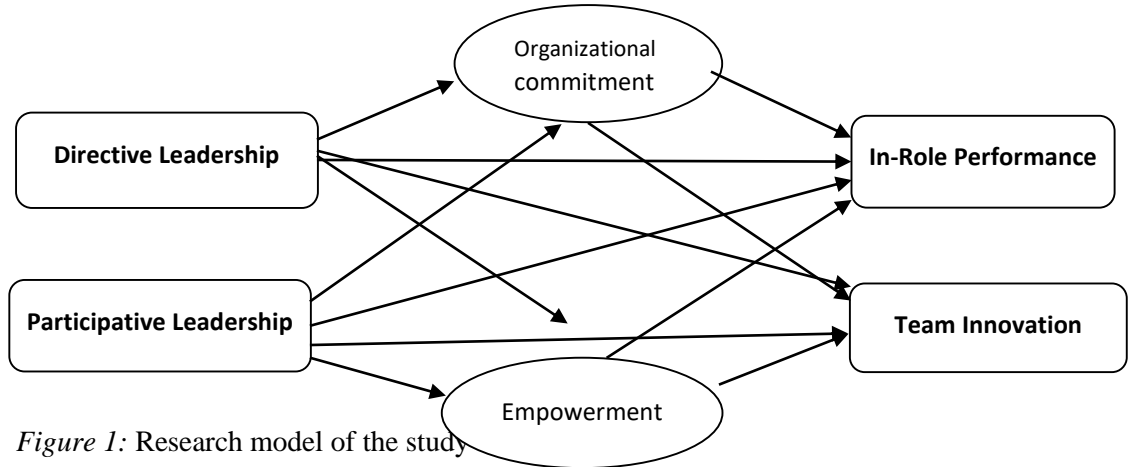


Figure 1: Research model of the study

## Methodology

All the secondary school teachers working in the public sector schools operating in the Lahore division of the Punjab province of Pakistan were the target population of this study. The accessible population of this study from which the sample of the study was actually drawn, comprised of all the secondary school teachers currently serving in the public sector schools of District Lahore. The sample of the study comprised of 500 male secondary school teachers purposively selected from eighty (80) boys' high schools operating in district Lahore.

The researcher distributed 500 questionnaires as per the sample selected for this study. This number of sample was targeted in order to achieve the normal distribution properties of the data to enhance the representation of the sample because we used purposive sampling technique. Out of these 500 questionnaires distributed in person only 415 filled in questionnaires were returned out of which 13 questionnaires were having more than 50 percent of questions unanswered. So we dropped these 13 questionnaires from our analysis and used only 402 filled in questionnaires. This made up  $402/500 * 100 = 80.4\%$  or 80 percent response rate which is quite high in survey as per the standard mentioned in the texts like Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2011).

A questionnaire was developed comprising scales for measuring key variables (i.e. participative and directive leadership styles, empowerment, organizational commitment, in-role performance and innovation behavior) of the study along with demographic variables. The data were thus collected in the form of teachers' responses or ratings of the statements about key variables on a 7-point rating scale ranging from

1 to 7 on the Likert format. It is to be mentioned that in order to ensure complete anonymity of the respondents they were strictly prohibited to mention their names or IDs. The data were then entered into the IBM SPSS 24 data editor spread sheet.

### Descriptive Statistics

The following Table showed the descriptive statistics of the data obtained in this study mainly mean, standard deviation and correlations between the pair of variables.

**Table 1** Mean, standard deviation and correlations among variables

Variables	M (SD)	Directive Leadership	Empowerment	Organizational Commitment	Team In-role Performance	Team Innovation
1. Participative Leadership	5.21 (1.20)	0.093	.681**	.241**	.186**	.654**
2. Directive Leadership	4.87 (1.40)		0.065	.518**	.519**	0.073
3. Empowerment	5.06 (0.99)			.173**	.171**	.779**
4. Organizational Commitment	5.14 (1.23)				.686**	.186**
5. Team In-role Performance	5.30 (1.20)					.160**
6. Team Innovation	5.11 (1.10)					

*N.B.* Where; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ .

The Table 1 indicated significant inter-correlations between the pairs of variables except between directive and participative leadership styles, directive leadership and empowerment, and finally directive leadership and team innovation. Another important insight was about the mean values on almost all the variables were above 5 with standard deviations almost 1 or above except one variable i.e. directive leadership.

### Psychometric Properties of Scales

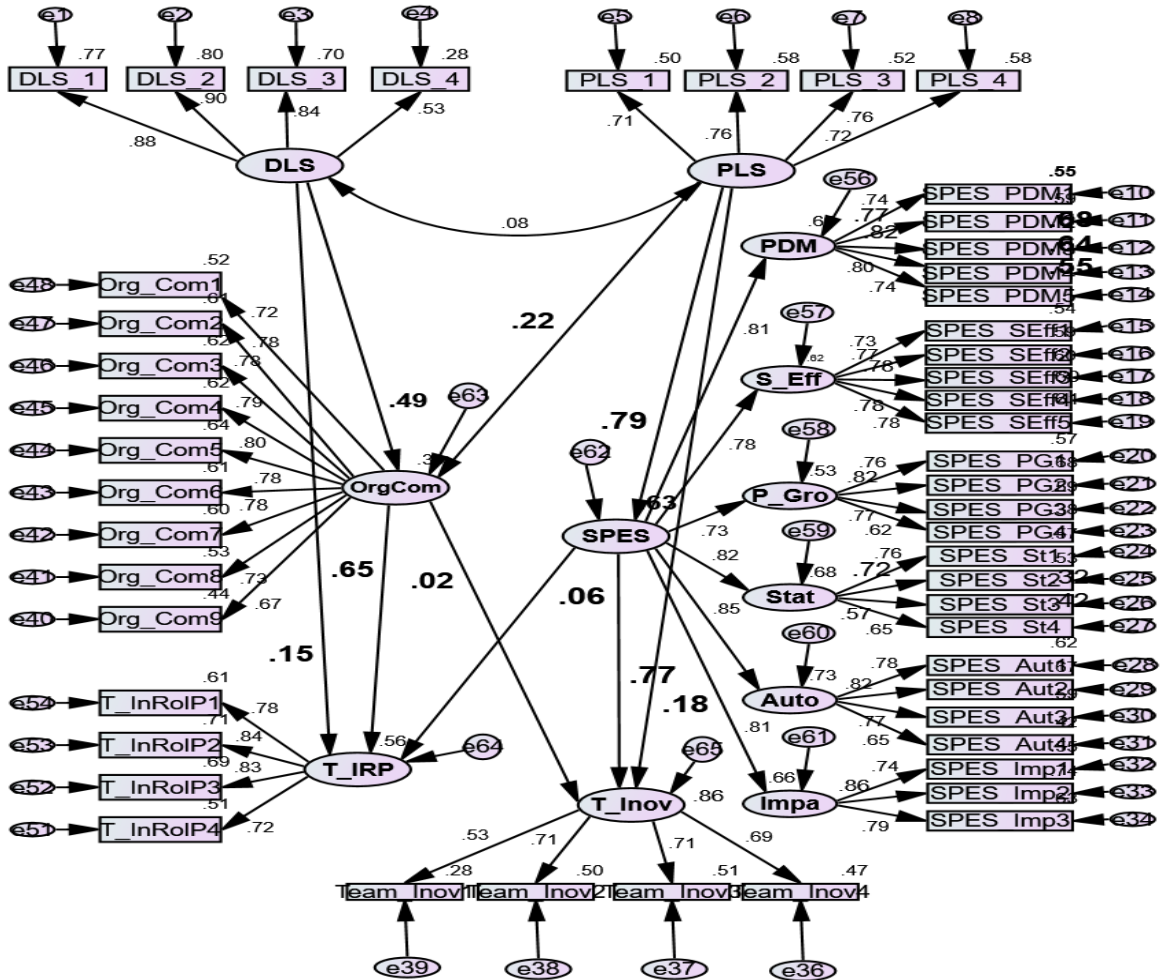
The psychometric properties of the scales used in this study were measured in terms of their factor structure, indicator loadings, inter-item consistency (Cronbach Alpha), construct reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity as described in the following sections.

### Factor Structure and Indicator Loadings

Mostly the constructs used in our study were unidimensional i.e., participative leadership style (PLS), directive leadership style (DSL), organizational commitment (OrgCom), team in-role performance (T\_IRP) and team innovation (T\_Inov). There was only one multidimensional construct used in this study i.e. teachers personal empowerment (SPES). Though this multidimensional construct had six dimensions but it was included as a second order construct in our analytical model (it means that wherever the effect of this construct on other variable was considered it was taken as a second order factor).

The following Figure 2 showed the factor structure and factor loadings of each indicator on its respective dimension or underlying factor. This diagram also exhibited the second order loadings and path coefficients or effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables. This figure is produced by the IBM AMOS version 24 with key output.

Figure 2: The SEM structural regression model tested in this study with all the hypothesized paths along with indicator loadings and path coefficients.



The following Table 2 is generated by using the output produced with the help of the above diagram based on SEM structural regression model. First, we saw the indicators of each construct were significantly related with it because the t-values of the

indicators of any construct did not exceed the critical values for the significance levels of .01.

**Table 2** Significance of the loadings of indicators to their respective constructs in terms of their Unstandardized and Standardized regression weights (Factor loadings).

Sr. No	Constructs	Indicators	Unstandardized Regression Estimates				Standardized Regression Weights (Factor Loadings)
			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p-value	
1		PLS_1	1				0.707
2	Participative Leadership	PLS_2	1.102	0.081	13.658	***	0.761
3		PLS_3	1.058	0.081	13.061	***	0.723
4		PLS_4	1.047	0.076	13.722	***	0.765
5		DLS_1	1				0.876
6	Directive Leadership	DLS_2	0.922	0.039	23.45	***	0.895
7		DLS_3	0.863	0.04	21.367	***	0.838
8		DLS_4	0.507	0.045	11.204	***	0.531
9	Organizational Commitment	OrgCom 1	1.041	0.08	12.975	***	0.719
10		OrgCom 2	1.473	0.106	13.888	***	0.778
11		OrgCom 3	1.319	0.094	13.986	***	0.784
12		OrgCom 4	1.261	0.09	14.013	***	0.786
13		OrgCom 5	1.175	0.083	14.176	***	0.797
14		OrgCom 6	1.188	0.085	13.9	***	0.779
15		OrgCom 7	1.104	0.08	13.87	***	0.777
16		OrgCom 8	1.073	0.082	13.131	***	0.729
17		OrgCom 9	1				0.665
18	Team In-role Performance	T_IRP 1	1				0.780
19		T_IRP 2	0.935	0.053	17.696	***	0.844
20		T_IRP 3	0.987	0.057	17.362	***	0.829
21		T_IRP 4	0.838	0.057	14.692	***	0.717
22	Team Innovation	T_Inov 1	0.773	0.08	9.636	***	0.530
23		T_Inov 2	1.088	0.087	12.562	***	0.708
24		T_Inov 3	1.063	0.084	12.636	***	0.713
25		T_Inov 4	1				0.686
26	Partipation in Decision Making	PDM 1	1				0.743
27		PDM 2	0.921	0.06	15.267	***	0.771
28		PDM 3	0.996	0.061	16.355	***	0.823
29		PDM 4	0.999	0.063	15.863	***	0.800
30		PDM 5	0.912	0.062	14.678	***	0.743
31	Professional Growth	PG 1	1				0.758
32		PG 2	1.107	0.07	15.722	***	0.822
33		PG 3	1.074	0.072	14.827	***	0.770
34		PG 4	0.91	0.077	11.863	***	0.620
35	Self-Efficacy	S_Eff 1	1				0.733
36		S_Eff 2	1.02	0.069	14.85	***	0.769
37		S_Eff 3	1.029	0.069	15.009	***	0.777
38		S_Eff 4	1.006	0.067	15.027	***	0.778
39		S_Eff 5	0.997	0.066	15.061	***	0.779
40	Status	Stat 1	1				0.758
41		Stat 2	0.958	0.071	13.395	***	0.725

42		Stat 3	0.932	0.088	10.543	***	0.568
43		Stat 4	0.829	0.069	12.066	***	0.650
44	Autonomy	Aut 1	1				0.784
45		Aut 2	1.042	0.061	17.032	***	0.821
46		Aut 3	0.947	0.06	15.764	***	0.766
47		Aut 4	0.959	0.074	12.962	***	0.646
48	Impact	Impac 1	1				0.744
49		Impac 3	1.12	0.068	16.36	***	0.862
50		Impac 4	1.01	0.066	15.263	***	0.792

*N.B.* Where; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ .

The above Table 2 demonstrated each construct's Unstandardized and Standardized estimates of the regression weights, their critical ratios (C.R), standard errors (S.E) and probability level (p). Table 2 showed that the indicators of each construct were significantly related to its specified construct, and this is true even at the significance level of .001. Thus, our hypothesized relationships among indicators and constructs were verified. The values of standardized regression weights of all the indicators on their respective constructs exceeded the recommended value of .50 showing that they explained at least more than half of the total variance in the model.

### Construct Reliability, Cronbach Alphas and Convergent Validity

The researcher calculated the construct reliability of a construct by using the formula proposed by Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998). The output displayed in Table 4 was generated by WarpPLS software version 4.

**Table 3** Internal consistency ( $\alpha$ ), Construct Reliabilities (CR) and convergent validity (CV) of the six constructs used in the study.

Sr. No	Construct	Cronbach Alphas ( $\alpha$ )	Construct Reliability (Joreskog's Rho)	Threshold Value for both CR and $\alpha$ to exist	Convergent Validity (in terms of Rho VC)	Remarks about $\alpha$ , CR and CV
1	Participative Leadership	0.826	0.885	$\geq 0.70$	0.658	The values of $\alpha$ , CR and CV for each construct are above the thresholds. Hence, internal consistency, construct reliability and convergent validity for each construct are confirmed.
2	Directive Leadership	0.857	0.906	$\geq 0.70$	0.709	
3	Empowerment	0.889	0.915	$\geq 0.70$	0.642	
4	Organizational Commitment	0.923	0.936	$\geq 0.70$	0.620	
5	Team In-role Performance	0.868	0.910	$\geq 0.70$	0.718	
6	Team Innovation	0.732	0.835	$\geq 0.70$	0.566	

The Table 3 showed that all the six constructs used in this study possessed construct reliabilities as all the values were well above the threshold/cut point values. It was

therefore concluded that the measures/scales used in this study possessed internal consistency (because the Cronbach  $\alpha$  for all constructs were above .70), and construct reliability (because the Joreskog’s Rho values for all constructs were above .70), as proposed by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) and Nunnally and Bernstein (1978).

The above Table 3 displayed the convergent validity (CV) values of six constructs used. It was evident from this table that all constructs possessed Rho VC values well above the threshold of 0.50 or 50%. Hence, the CV for each construct was confirmed. The construct “Participative Leadership”, for instance had Rho VC value of 0.658 {which meant that its indicators explained almost 65.8% variance of this construct while rest of 34.2% of the variance was not accounted for by the specified indicators.

**Discriminant validity of Constructs using AVE Method**

The stringent method of (AVE) proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) was applied to estimate the discriminant validity of the six constructs used in this study. (Zulqarnain, 2011) suggested that as per the AVE-criterion any set of two constructs are considered to be different if the shared variance of the two constructs is lesser than the average variance extracted for one construct.

**Table 4** *Estimated Squared Correlation Matrix of Constructs with Average Variance Extracted by each Construct at the Diagonal*

SN	Constructs/Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Participative Leadership	<b>0.811</b>					
2	Directive Leadership	0.090	<b>0.842</b>				
3	Empowerment	0.241	0.510	<b>0.788</b>			
4	Organizational Commitment	0.680	0.060	0.174	<b>0.802</b>		
5	Team In-role Performance	0.641	0.079	0.191	0.752	<b>0.753</b>	
6	Team Innovation	0.183	0.499	0.678	0.168	0.160	<b>0.847</b>

**Note:** Square roots of average variances extracted (AVEs) shown on diagonal whereas the off-diagonal values are the correlations among latent variables

Table 4 displayed the AVE of each construct at the diagonals of this matrix, whereas the off-diagonal elements represented the squared correlations of the constructs with each other. All the off-diagonal values were less than their respective diagonal values; hence, the discriminant validity for each pair of the constructs was confirmed in our study. It meant that all these constructs measured different things/phenomena in our study and were quite distinct from each other from the measurement point of view and as required for a rigorous study, and that we could count on these measurement scales.

**Inferential Statistics for Testing Hypotheses**

For hypothesis testing using inferential statistics, the researchers applied structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis using IBM AMOS 24. The researchers first ran the

SEM-based full model with all possible relationships but later on retained only the significant paths and reran the model given in Figure 2. The following Table 5 was then generated for testing the direct and indirect effects proposed in this study. The next section described the key results of our analyses along with interpretation of the results. The table 5 reveals the results for following research hypotheses.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between school heads’ participative leadership style and team members’ perceived empowerment, organizational commitment, in-role performance and innovation behavior.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between school heads’ directive leadership style and team members’ perceived empowerment, organizational commitment, in-role performance and innovation behavior.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between school staff team members’ perceived empowerment and team members’ in-role performance and team members’ innovation.

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between school staff team members’ organizational commitment and team members’ in-role performance and team members’ innovation.

**Table 5** Results of SEM Analysis regarding hypothesized relationships between demographic, predictors and criterion variables

Sr. No.	Independent Variables	Hypothesis	Dependent Variables (Path Coefficients i.e. Betas)			
			Empowerment	Organizational Commitment	Team In-Role Performance	Team Innovation
1	Age				0.029	0.088*
2	Experience				-0.076	-0.034
3	Qualification				0.008	0.007
4	Participative Leadership	H1	.772***	.215***	-.070	.172*
5	Directive Leadership	H2	-.009	.304***	.113**	.013
6	Personal Empowerment	H3			.067	.754***
7	Organizational Commitment	H4			.775***	.021
	R <sup>2</sup>		.628	0.303	0.562	0.855

*Note.* N = 402. **Unstandardized** coefficients (betas) are reported above along with R<sup>2</sup>.

Where: \*\*\* p < .001; \*\* p < .01; \* p < .05. Our SEM model demonstrated a strong fit with the data which was evident from the fit indices e.g., CMin/Df = 2.915; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .03; TLI= 0.83; CFI = 0.84.

### Effects of Control/Demographic Variables

Some demographic variables were built in the design of this study for assessing their potential effects on the dependent variables, if any. Our results shown in table 5



revealed that our control variables i.e. *age level, experience and qualification* of the respondents had no significant relationships with or effects on the dependent variables (empowerment and organizational commitment). Similarly, respondents' *experience and qualification* had no significant effects on team in-role performance and team innovation but respondent age level had significant but very weak effect on team innovation as was evident from the Beta value. Thus we concluded that these demographic variables of *age, experience and qualification* had no noticeable effects on the DVs and that their effects on the criterion variables could be considered as controlled. It is also important to mention that we did control the effects of the gender in this study by design as we did not collect data from female teachers.

### **Direct Effects of Predictor Variables on Criterion Variables**

As shown in the Table 5, our hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> was about the relationships of participative leadership on the dependent variables (empowerment, commitment, team performance and innovation). This overall hypothesis was mostly supported because secondary school head's participative leadership had a strong significant positive relationship with teachers' empowerment ( $\beta=0.772, p<0.001$ ), teachers' organizational commitment ( $\beta=0.215, p<0.001$ ), and team innovation ( $\beta=0.172, p<0.05$ ). On the contrary, secondary school head's participative leadership had a non-significant relationship with team's in-role performance ( $\beta= -0.070, p>0.05$ , showing that participative leadership style has no effect on team in-role performance).

Our hypothesis H<sub>2</sub> was about the relationships of Directive leadership on the dependent variables. This overall hypothesis was partially supported because secondary school head's directive leadership had a strong significant positive relationship with teachers' organizational commitment ( $\beta=0.304, p<0.001$ ), and teams' in-role performance ( $\beta=0.113, p<0.01$ ). But contrary to this, school head's directive leadership style had a non-significant relationships with personal empowerment ( $\beta= -0.009, p>0.05$ ), and team innovation ( $\beta= 0.013, p>0.05$ ), showing that directive leadership style has no effect on teachers' personal empowerment and team innovation.

In hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>, we proposed the significant positive relationship between personal empowerment and team in-role performance and personal empowerment and team innovation. This hypothesis was also partially supported because teachers' personal empowerment had a non-significant relationship with team in-role performance ( $\beta=0.067, p>0.05$ ) but a strong significant positive relationship with team innovation ( $\beta=0.754, p<0.001$ ). It meant that teachers' personal empowerment strongly affects team innovation but not team's in-role performance.

Through hypothesis H<sub>4</sub> we proposed significant positive relationships between teachers' team in-role performance and organizational commitment, and significant

positive relationships between teachers’ organizational commitment and team innovation. This hypothesis was also partially supported because teachers’ organizational commitment had a strong significant positive relationship with team in-role performance ( $\beta=0.775, p<0.001$ ) but a non-significant positive relationship with team innovation ( $\beta=0.021, p>0.05$ ). It implied that teachers’ organizational commitment strongly affects team in-role performance but not team’s innovation.

**Indirect Effects of Mediating Variables**

The following Table 6 showed the output of the mediation analysis conducted through IBM AMOS 24. The two tailed significance levels or probabilities were determined by applying Monte-Carlo Bootstrapping using 500 bootstrapped samples. The Table 6 reported the direct, indirect and total effects of IVs on DVs in this study for the following hypothesis.

- H<sub>5</sub>: The school staff team members’ empowerment significantly mediates the relationship between school heads’ participative leadership style and team members’ innovation.
- H<sub>6</sub>: The school staff team members’ empowerment significantly mediates the relationship between school heads’ participative leadership style and team members’ team performance.
- H<sub>7</sub>: The school staff team members’ organizational commitment significantly mediates the relationship between school heads’ participative leadership style and team members’ team performance.
- H<sub>8</sub>: The school staff team members’ organizational commitment significantly mediates the relationship between school heads’ directive leadership style and team members’ in-role performance.

**Table 6** Results of SEM based mediation analysis of hypothesized relationships between IVs (predictors), mediators and criterion (dependent) variables

Sr. No.	Hypo-thesis	Mediated Relationships	Effects <sup>a</sup>		
			Direct	Indirect	Total
1	H <sub>5</sub>	PLS → Empowerment → Innovation	.180*	.455**	.707**
2	H <sub>6</sub>	PLS → Empowerment → Performance	-.05	.083	-.037
3	H <sub>7</sub>	PLS → Commitment → Performance	.04	.147**	.183**
4	H <sub>8</sub>	DLS → Commitment → Performance	.153**	.328**	.358**

*N.B.* a = All these effects are the standardized (betas) effects along with significance level. Where;

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ .

The results mentioned in Table 6 revealed that our hypothesis H<sub>5</sub> (proposing that personal empowerment significantly mediates the relationship between PLS and team innovation) was supported because the indirect effect of PLS on team innovation through empowerment was significant (with  $\beta=0.455$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). As the direct effect of PLS on team innovation was also significant (with  $\beta=0.180$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), hence, the mediation found in this case was a partial mediation. It clarifies the fact that teams where the PLS enhances the sense of personal empowerment in the team members, were more innovative than the teams with lower levels of empowerment.

The results did not support the hypothesis H<sub>6</sub> (proposing that teachers' personal empowerment significantly mediates the relationship between PLS and teams' in-role performance) because the indirect effect of PLS on teams' in-role performance through empowerment was not significant (with  $\beta=0.083$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). As the direct effect of PLS on teams' in-role performance was also not significant (with  $\beta=-0.049$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), hence, there was no mediation at all. It implied that teachers' personal empowerment did not mediate the relationship between school heads' PLS and teams' in-role performance. So our hypothesis H<sub>6</sub> was rejected.

Moreover, our hypothesis H<sub>7</sub> (proposing that teachers' organizational commitment significantly mediates the relationship between PLS and teams' in-role performance) was fully supported because the indirect effect of PLS on teams' in-role performance through organizational commitment was significant (with  $\beta=0.147$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). As the direct effect of PLS on teams' in-role performance was not significant (with  $\beta=0.04$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), hence, the mediation found in this case was full mediation. It further clarified the fact that teams where the heads' participative leadership enhances the sense of commitment to the school among the team members performed higher than the teams with lower levels of organizational commitment induced by the leadership.

Similarly our hypothesis H<sub>8</sub> (proposing that teachers' organizational commitment significantly mediates the relationship between DLS and team in-role performance) was supported because the indirect effect of DLS on teams' in-role performance through organizational commitment was significant (with  $\beta=0.328$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). As the direct effect of DLS on teams' in-role performance was also significant (with  $\beta=0.153$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), hence, the mediation found in this case was also a partial mediation. It further clarified the fact that teams where the heads' directive leadership enhances the sense of commitment to the school among the team members performed higher than the teams with lower levels of organizational commitment induced by leadership.

## **Discussion and Implications**

The researchers in this study had tried to juxtapose the PLS and DLS in an integrated model of effectiveness of the school teams. This study also attempted to

advance our understanding about the costs and benefits of each of these leadership styles. It was posed that by arousing a motivational mechanism in the form of organizational commitment; directive leadership targets to boost school-staff teams' in-role performance. The participative leadership, on the other hand, focuses on teams' innovation by enhancing teachers' personal empowerment as a motivational/mediating mechanism.

The findings of this research supported the notion that examining PLS and DLS as two contrasting approaches could not fully capture the leadership phenomenon. Our results proved that directive and participative leadership styles had a complex pattern of effects on school staff teams' effectiveness in terms of performance and innovation of the teams (Somech, 2005).

Our study revealed that each leadership style serves as a different but potentially complementary way of managing school-staff teams. This study, however, provided a solid ground for further conceptual development on this topic because it can help the researchers and practitioners to go beyond an "either/or" approach toward a "both/and" way of thinking and working as proposed by Lewis et al. (2002). This research thus added to our knowledge about school effectiveness in several ways.

First, the participative leadership served as a preferred strategy of achieving school improvement goals in the recent educational reform movements in many countries (Sagie et al., 2002; Somech, 2005). The results of the previous research, however, suggested that the advantages of participative over the directive leadership were not definite. Thus the effectiveness of either leadership style is contingent upon the determined measures of effectiveness (Olson, Walker Jr, & Ruekert, 1995).

Such findings are important, especially for the schools possessing typical loose structures, quite common in third world countries like Pakistan. These loosely couples structures are characterized by the schools where an employee has a slight effect on other employee's performance (Greenfield Jr, 1995; Weick, 1976). In such organizations, the teachers working in ambiguous work environment may take advantage of the directive leadership style more than the participative one. With calculated step-by-step implementation and extensive planning a directive leader may guide them towards a disciplined problem solving and the provision of the best practices e.g. setting clear milestones converting school objectives into short-term goals (Lewis et al., 2002; Zirger & Maidique, 1990).

Mischel (1977) propounded the theory of strong/weak situations, according to which a strong situation conveys strong signals/cues for desired behaviors whereas a weak situation does not convey clear support messages, incentives or normative standards about the desired behaviors. This theory supported our findings about the

advantages of directive leadership style in promoting in-role performance by settling undesirable attributes of work environment like role ambiguity and uncertainty about the rewards by providing clear guidelines for teachers' in-role performance. In the weak situations, however, work conditions become ambiguous when desired behaviors are not clearly defined and actions directly rely on individual's predispositions to act in certain direction (Sagie et al., 2002). In this way, the directive leadership style facilitates performance by creating a strong situation and hence increasing the importance of the situational cues for expected behaviors. This advantage of using a directive leadership style, however, is attained at a cost or price. This cost or price is associated with the limitations of applying a directive leadership style in enhancing the school-staff teams' innovation.

Our results also emphasize the use of participative leadership style instead of the directive leadership style because it was found to promote innovative practices in pedagogy and decision making in curriculum. In the recent times, the researchers and practitioners (Andrews & Rothman, 2002; Maes, Vandenberghe, & Ghesquiere, 1999) have emphasized school administration has to be creative and innovative to increase or maintain the effectiveness of their schools in this rapidly changing and turbulent environment (De Dreu & West, 2001). The findings of this study were in conformity with other studies (Carter & West, 1999; Carter & West, 1998) which highlighted the role of teacher involvement or participation as a critical factor in enhancing a team's ability to generate new ideas using individually possessed knowledge for creating innovative products and services through creative procedures.

Cohen and Levinthal (1994) pointed out towards enhancing individual participation among the groups because each group member possesses diverse knowledge and skills and can contribute towards an organization's capacity to develop novel associations and linkages beyond any individual's capabilities. The innovation, thus, encompasses the team members' absorptive capacity to identify, understand, and apply the creative and innovative ideas. Team members' participation in the process of decision making enhances their absorptive capacity because participation in decision making encourages the information sharing and integration in the groups (Stasser & Titus, 1987). Information exchange through participation reduces resistance to change by developing among the team members, a sense of commitment to team decisions (Marks & Louis, 1997).

Regarding the theoretical significance, this study had an important contribution to the advancement of OB theory in the field of educational management. It encompassed the comparative effects of directive vs. participative leadership on important outcome variables. Regarding practical significance testing such models in local context would

be helpful in application of HR theory and practice in our country. As far as the general significance is concerned, our study would help school managers in understanding and improving the teachers' empowerment, team innovation and performance.

## **Conclusions**

Day by day, the school work environment is becoming more and more dynamic and competitive and leaders are facing new challenges like tackling the continuous pressures of innovation and in-role performance of school staff teams. In this study we tried to juxtapose conceptually and practically the participative and directive leadership styles of the secondary school heads in order to study the possible differences in their relationships with a set of depending variables. Instead of depicting these leadership styles as mutually exclusive, our findings suggested that each of these leadership style exerts a distinctive yet complementary way of enhancing team effectiveness in the schools. Our findings provided important insights in arranging a more elaborate and flexible repertoire of activities in dealing with the distinct demands of team innovation and in-role performance in the schools (Lewis et al., 2002).

This study recommended that school heads might concurrently combine participative and directive leadership behaviors to make their school teams more effective. In order to manage the tensions between participative and directive leadership behaviors top-down and bottom-up processes; discipline and flexibility might play a key role in improving teachers' performance. This study Joined the recent call about "both/and" approach of the researchers e.g., Sagie et al. (2002) and Lewis et al., (2002) and reconsidered certain other researchers' sweeping suggestions (Short et al., 1994) of giving preference to participative over the directive leadership style.

The results of this study suggest school leaders to participate in arousing motivational mechanisms instead of stressing only on teachers' bottom-line outcome variables. The findings also recommend to school leaders to manage the effectiveness of groups in schools by boosting task motivation of the teachers and enhancing teachers' commitment with the school. It was further recommended that school leaders should focus on teachers' feelings about their schools that might be indicated in the form of their in-role performance (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). The school teachers' self-efficacy might be manifested in higher levels of team innovation (West, 2002). In a nutshell, the results of this study further emphasized the role school leaders in shaping the work conditions in their schools that could enhance teachers' motivations which in turn might trigger the effectiveness of schools and teams.

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# **Curtailing Job Insecurity and Counterproductive Work Behaviours as Bullying Effects in Pakistani Academia: Work Engagement as a Moderator**

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## **Abstract**

*Judging from persistent changes, drive for performance and widespread uncertainty that characterize the Pakistani higher education system, this study sought to confirm whether workplace bullying – a by-product of relentless change – triggers job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours in the bullied faculty, and whether these damaging outcomes are moderated by work engagement. Using convenience sampling, we sought data from 337 faculty members from the higher education sector. Analysis confirmed that bullying triggers job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours while mixed findings emerged for the hypothesized moderation effects of work engagement. The study mainly stresses infusing work engagement within a work environment where bullying prevails. Managers may design jobs to augment engagement in a pressurized work environment with an aim to curtail job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours for sustained performance in a changing work environment.*

**Keywords:** Workplace bullying, psychological capital, work engagement, job insecurity, counterproductive work behaviours, higher education, Pakistan.

## **Introduction**

The academic system within Pakistan has been pressurized to link up to the global system of science, research, and knowledge focus since long (Nasir & Bashir, 2012; Shaikh & Khoja, 2011). These transformations have pressurised higher education faculty as they face consistent reorganisation, multiple performance criteria, politics, status disparity amid professional rankings, while funds fluctuate and job contracts are short-term (Hollis, 2015; Keashley & Neuman, 2010). While education institutions are considered ripe bullying grounds, (Barratt-Pugh & Krestelica, 2019) empirical investigations conducted within

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Pakistani higher education (Hussain, Gulrez, & Tahirkheli, 2012; Kashif, Ali, & Kelly, 2013) indicate prevalence of bullying practices in the sector.

Multiple studies (Ashraf & Khan, 2014; Baillien, Bollen, Euwema, & De Witte, 2013; Balducci, Fraccaroli, Schaufeli, 2011; Mawritz, Folger, & Latham, 2014) have clearly confirmed workplace bullying as a worldwide organisational practice with detrimental employee outcomes. Literature suggests that bullied employees suffer decreased worker satisfaction, sleep disturbances, psychological disorder, inferior performance, and lowered worker morale, (Niedhammer et al., 2009; Woodrow & Guest, 2014) pointing to its unconstructive role for employees and organisations. Job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours are two possible, detrimental outcomes of workplace bullying that have received little attention within the Pakistani higher education sector. Albeit, a good number of studies have indicated existence of job insecurity within the Pakistani work context (Aslam, Javad, Nokandeh, Sharifi, Jalalian, & Lodhi, 2012; Baraldi, Kalyal, Bernston, Naswall & Sverke, 2010; Halai, 2013; Khalid, Irshad, & Mahmood, 2012). Besides job insecurity, it is likely that pressurized workers within Pakistani academia resort to revengeful, malevolent, counterproductive acts to hurt the organisation or their co-workers, where they face bullying.

Research must, therefore, suggest methods to minimize work bullying effects from the work environment. Given unwanted effects of job insecurity (Debus, Probst, Konig, Kleinmann, 2012; Sverke, Hellgren & Naswall, 2002), it is crucial to strategically manoeuvre so as to reduce this threat for employees. Likewise, counterproductive work behaviour must also be minimised to inhibit employee and organisational loss, as documented unwanted effects of counterproductive work behaviour include work stress, revengeful acts at work, workplace conflicts, inefficient work pace (Bolton, Becker, & Barber, 2010; Fida, Paciello, Barbaranelli, Tramontano, & Fontaine, 2014).

Having explained effects of workplace bullying practices and having provided evidence for existence of high job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviour within the Pakistani academia, it is imperative to devise strategies to curtail damaging workplace bullying outcomes, specifically job insecurity, and counterproductive work behaviour for sustained organisational competitiveness (Pandey & De, 2013). The few studies related to counterproductive work behaviours conducted in Pakistan (Fatima, Iqbal, & Imran, 2013; Khan, Qurutulain, & Crawshaw, 2013) fall short of examining a possible relationship between workplace bullying and counterproductive work behaviours, which calls for investigating this relationship in the Pakistani context. Without such constructive steps and interventions, job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours within bullying-prone work environments are liable to continue, resulting in pessimistic work environments and derailed work output.

While Naseer, Raja, Syed, & Bouckenoghe (2018) examined perceived organisation support, a contextual variable, we examine work engagement, an individual level positive employee strength to minimise bullying effects on job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviour. Additionally, Nel (2019) showed that bullied employees who are high on emotional intelligence, a concept close to positive psychology, experience higher well-being than bullied employees with lower emotional intelligence. This calls for further investigation of positive individual-level variables for minimizing bullying effects. Secondly, while workplace bullying and its unwanted outcomes have evolved within the workplace, the literature positive organisational behaviour has grown alongside. Despite good evidence that work engagement is likely to prompt sought-after employee behaviours (Park & Ono, 2016; *Salminen, Makikangas, & Feldt, 2014*), scant studies have examined its utility within workplace bullying and employee outcomes relationships. This study aims to bridge this shortage in literature by empirically testing if workplace bullying prompts job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours in bullied employees, and if work engagement moderates these relationships.

## Operational Definitions

**Workplace bullying.** Workplace bullying is defined as “..... harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone’s work tasks. In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity, interaction or process, it has to occur constantly and repeatedly (e.g. weekly) and over a period of time (e.g. about six months).” (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011, p. 15).

**Job insecurity.** Sverke, Hellgren, and Naswall’s (2002) defined job insecurity as “(*job insecurity*).....reflects the subjectively experienced anticipation of a fundamental and involuntary event” (p. 243).

**Counterproductive work behavior.** Robinson and Bennett (1995) defined counterproductive work behaviours as “...voluntary behaviour that violates significant organisational norms and in so doing, threatens the well-being of the organisation or its members, or both” (p.556).

**Work engagement.** Bakker, Schaufeli, Demerouti, and Euwema (2007) defined work engagement as “...a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind in its own right that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption” (p. 229).

## Theory and Hypotheses

### Workplace Bullying and Job Insecurity Relationship

Subordinates may be bullied through voiced insults, defamation, unwarranted disapproval, undue reprimand, undermining work tasks, ostracising employees, tossing things or yelling, and deliberately or un-deliberately overlooking consequences of such

acts on the subordinate's work (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2013). Such infuriating acts are likely to harm the bullied worker's mental, emotional, and psychological well-being as an unjust employment relationship triggers hostility and adversely affects individual (Geurts, Schaufeli, & Rutte, 1999; Baillien & De Witte, 2009). Shin and Hur (2019) concluded that job insecurity offsets emotional exhaustion, and this relationship is strongest when co-worker incivility is high. Based on these findings, we argue that a bullied employee will perceive unfairness in the superior-subordinate relationship, and experience job-related ambiguity. The following hypothesis is thus suggested:

H1: Supervisor perpetrated bullying (at work) will positively affect job insecurity in employees.

### **Workplace Bullying and Counterproductive Work Behaviour Relationship**

A two-dimensional taxonomy of counterproductive work behaviour comprising of interpersonal deviance and organisational deviance (Bennett & Robinson, 2000) is well-known. Interpersonal deviance includes detrimental acts aimed at co-workers and peers and includes making offensive remarks and jokes, physical harm, and deliberate humiliation. Organisational deviance is directed at the organisation and includes deliberate tardiness, taking extra time out from work, ignoring inaccuracy and work-related problems, organisational thefts, unnecessary absenteeism, and harming physical surroundings (Bolton, Becker, & Barber, 2010).

Counterproductive work behaviours are unconstructive psychological and behavioural responses triggered in response to factors surrounding work situations that hamper a worker's goals (Ghazo, Suifan, & Alnuaimi, 2019). Ill-treated employees experience melancholy, overtiredness, powerlessness, irritation, reduced self-belief and motivation, and alcohol-related problems (Keashly & Neuman, 2005; Richman, Flaherty, & Christensen, 1992). Earlier studies have also concluded negative correlations between workplace bullying and stress-related, unconstructive variables including workplace hostility, low self-esteem, and negative affectivity (Aquino & Bradfield, 2000; Le Blanc & Kelloway, 2002). Given the stress-triggering, adverse nature of workplace bullying, a vengeful response in a bullied individual is likely to get triggered, as literature on workplace bullying is a damaging work stressor and offsets stress in bullied workers, which in turn triggers counterproductive work behaviours in bullied employees. The following hypothesis thus proposed:

H2: Supervisor perpetrated bullying (at work) will positively affect counterproductive work behaviours in employees.

## **Work Engagement as Moderator of Relationships of Workplace Bullying with Job Insecurity and Counterproductive Work Behaviour in Light of the Social Determination Theory (SDT)**

We draw upon the SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000) to explain how intrinsic motivation, through psychological needs of autonomy, competence, growth, and well-being shape human interactions. We reason that the positive psychological state of work engagement acts as an intrinsic, motivational influence during demoralising bullying experiences as it offers an inner energizing and inspirational mechanism that refutes negative effects of destructive bullying acts. When faced with bullying acts, the bullied employee, through work engagement develops the appropriate beliefs, perspectives, motives and behaviours that work to minimise, even invalidate detrimental bullying outcomes as it acts as a defensive mechanism to protect against triggering of job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours. Work engagement assists the bullied employee in self-determination by regulating planned work goals and appraisal of external (bullying) events, thus enabling the bullied employee to adhere to earlier set work goals. In this way, a bullied employee who perseveres engagement in work, will experience lesser insecurity about their job and will indulge in lesser revengeful, counterproductive work behaviours. The stronger the bullied employee's work engagement, the superior the adherence to goal setting and steadfastness during adverse experiences of workplace bullying.

### **Work Engagement as Moderator**

Organisations require responsible, lively, engaged workers (Alcaro & Edwards, 2010; Halbesleben, 2010) as such employees can create their own resources to boost their work-related capacity. A positive role of work engagement for work-related aspects has been established earlier (Bakker & Albrecht, 2019; Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). We argue that work engagement is a possible moderator of the workplace bullying and job insecurity relationship, based on the following argument. Bosman, Rothmann, and Buitendach (2006) reported that high job insecurity predicted low levels of work engagement. Likewise, there is additional evidence that an inverse relationship exists between work engagement and job insecurity (De Spiegelaere, Gyes, Witte, Niesem, & Hootegem's, 2014). On the other hand, high work engagement is related with low job insecurity (Lu, Wang, Ly, Du, & Bakker, 2014) and that workplace bullying and work engagement are negatively related (Glaso, Bele, Nielsen, & Einarsen, 2011). Taking these findings together, it may be argued that if employees are highly engaged in work, they will not appraise their job as being insecure even when faced with workplace bullying while employees with low work engagement will appraise job insecurity in a bullying context. Hence, we argue that work engagement will weaken

the workplace bullying and job insecurity so that the relationship will be weaker when employee work engagement is high and stronger when employee work engagement is low. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Work engagement will moderate the positive workplace bullying – job insecurity relationship such that the relationship will be strong when employee work engagement is low and weak when employee work engagement is high.

Ansari, Maleki, and Mazraeh (2013) found that work engagement had direct, negative effects on drug abuse, theft, and sabotage – components of counterproductive work behaviour. Another study by Clerkcq, Bouckennooghe, Raja, and Matsyborska (2014) showed that work engagement was negatively related with counterproductive work behaviour, implying that highly engaged employees were less inclined towards counterproductive work behaviour, while lowly engaged employee were likely to exhibit counterproductive work behaviour. Moreover, organisational citizenship behaviour, a concept centrally opposed to counterproductive work behaviour (Klotz & Bolino, 2013) is strongly, positively related with work engagement (Matta, Scott, Koopman, & Conlon, 2014) suggesting that work engagement is likely to relate negatively with counterproductive work behaviours.

We argue that, under bullying conditions, employees who develop vitality, cognitive connection, and absorption during work will not develop a resentful mind-set towards work, thus they will not perform harmful acts at work. Therefore, we suggest that work engagement will buffer the relationship between workplace bullying and counterproductive work behaviour such that this positive relationship will be weaker for highly engaged bullied employees and stronger for lowly engaged bullied employees. The following hypothesis is thus suggested:

H4: Work engagement will moderate the positive workplace bullying – counterproductive work behaviour relationship in such a way that the relationship will be stronger when employee work engagement is low and weaker when employee work engagement is high.

## **Methodology**

### **Data Collection Procedures and Study Sample**

Employing convenience sampling method, specialised data collectors were hired and personal acquaintances were used to approach nine public and private sector higher education universities located in the Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, and Peshawar. A cover letter clarified the study purpose, ensured anonymity and confidentiality for unbiased data and sought voluntary participation in the academic survey. The self-report research instrument and the cover letter was disseminated to teaching and research faculty designated as lecturer and assistant professor and



excluded higher ranks as perceptions of supervisor bullying were meant to be captured. Four hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed to 180 public sector and 270 private sector faculty and staff, while 142 and 195 complete and usable replies were received respectively, a total of 337. The response rate was 78.89% and 72.23% respectively for public and private sector higher education universities and degree awarding institutions. The study sample comprised of 52% lecturers, 33% assistant professors, and 15% non-teaching staff. Respondents were mostly men (74%) belonging to the 30-40 years ( $SD=\pm 3.4$ ) age bracket. The average organisational tenure was 4.76 years ( $SD=\pm 4.10$ ) and 63% respondents had an MS or equivalent degree, while 37% had a PhD degree.

### Research Instruments

**Workplace bullying.** We used Einarsen, Hoel, and Notelaers' (2009) 22-item Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ) that comprises of three dimensions of work-related, person-related, and physical intimidation forms of bullying. The NAQ assesses the victims' perceptions of supervisor bullying behaviour perpetrated over previous six months using a 5-point frequency scale ranging from 'never' (1) to 'daily' (5). Sample items include: 'someone withholds information which affects your performance', 'being ordered to do work below your level of competence'. Internal consistency for the NAQ was acceptable ( $\alpha=.88$ ; Nunnally, 1978). A second-order confirmatory factor analysis was performed to confirm whether workplace bullying dimensions of work-related bullying, person-related bullying, and physical intimidation bullying would significantly load on workplace bullying, the higher-order factor. The resultant single-factor model loaded significantly on the latent factor ( $p<0.01$ ) and showed sufficient model fit ( $\chi^2=93.67$ ,  $df=45$ ;  $RMSEA=.06$ ,  $CFI=.91$ ,  $GFI=.96$ ) with factor loadings above 0.5 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Andersen, 2010).

**Work Engagement.** Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, and Bakker's (2002) 17-item Work Engagement Instrument comprising of three dimensions of vigour, dedication, and absorption on a 6-point Likert type scale ranging from 'never' (0) to 'almost every day' (6) was used. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was  $\alpha=.85$ .

**Job insecurity.** The 17-item Job Insecurity Scale (JIS) by Ashford, Lee and Bobko's (1989) instrument that measures perceived job loss threat and powerlessness along a 5-point Likert type importance scale ranging from 'very unimportant' (1) to 'very important' (5) was used. Sample items of the JIS are: (*I feel insecure in relation to*) 'my geographical location', 'my potential to get ahead in the organization'. A first-order confirmatory factor analysis to test whether the factor structure would hold for our study sample revealed a single-factor model with good fit ( $\chi^2=96.77$ ,  $df=60$ ;

RMSEA=.05, CFI=.94, GFI=.91) and significant factor loadings above 0.5 ( $p < .05$ ). Internal consistency for the JIS scale was acceptable ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

**Counterproductive Work Behaviour.** Bennett and Robinson (2000) original 19-item Workplace Deviance Measure that assesses interpersonal deviance and organisational deviance along a 7-point Likert type agreement scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (7). The scale demonstrated adequate internal consistency ( $\alpha = .87$ ).

**Control Variables.** We used age, organisational tenure, organisation type (private/public) as control variables. We coded gender as ‘0’ for male and ‘1’ for female, ‘1’ for age 35 years or younger and ‘2’ for 35 years or older, and ‘3’ for public and ‘4’ for private organisation type.

## Results

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for study variables. Workplace bullying correlated positively with both job insecurity ( $\gamma = -.40, p < .05$ ) and with counterproductive work behaviour ( $\gamma = .20, p < .05$ ). Workplace bullying had negative correlations with work engagement ( $\gamma = -.21, p < .01$ ) and forgiveness ( $\gamma = -.23, p < .01$ ). Job insecurity had weak, negative correlations with work engagement ( $\gamma = -.21, p < .05$ ) and with forgiveness ( $\gamma = -.13, p < .05$ ), while job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviour correlated positively with each other ( $\gamma = .22, p < .05$ ). Counterproductive work behaviour had negative correlations with work engagement ( $\gamma = -.14, p < .05$ ) and with forgiveness ( $\gamma = -.18, p < .05$ ), while work engagement and forgiveness correlated positively with each other ( $\gamma = .31, p < .05$ ). All correlations were in line with expectations, showing initial support for study hypotheses.

**Table 1** Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations among Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	1.10	.30	-						
2. Age (years)	34	3.4	-.8**	-					
3. Organization type (public/private)	1.2	.242	-.10*	.27**	-				
4. Workplace bullying	2.83	.47	-.11	-.07	-.17*	(.88)			
5. Work engagement	4.42	.71	-.02	-.05	-.04	-.21*	(.85)		
6. Job insecurity	4.43	.61	-.05	.04	.12**	.40**	-	(.85)	
7. Counterproductive work behaviour	4.26	.57	-.06	.04	.18**	.20**	-.21**	.22**	(.87)

Note:  $N = 337$ ; Cronbach’s alpha for each scale are shown in parenthesis.

\* $p < .01$ , \*\* $p < .05$ .

## Workplace bullying, job insecurity, and counterproductive work behaviours

Hypotheses 1 and 2 had premised that supervisor-perpetrated bullying would positively impact job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours in bullied employees. To test both main effects separately, first, gender, age, organizational type as control variables were entered in step 1, followed by workplace bullying as predictor in step 2. Results of tests for hypotheses 1 and 2 are presented in Table 2. As may be seen, workplace bullying had a significant, positive relationship with job insecurity ( $\beta=.43, p<.05$ ) and with counterproductive work behaviour ( $\beta=.54, p<.05$ ), offering full support for hypothesis 1 and 2.

**Table 2** Hierarchical Regression Analysis to test Direct Effects of Workplace Bullying on Job Insecurity and Counterproductive Work Behaviours and test Work Engagement and Forgiveness as Moderators

Predictor	Job insecurity				Counterproductive work behaviour			
	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$F$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$F$
Step 1: Control variables								
Gender								
Age	-.03				-.12*			
Organisation type (public/private)	-.04	.01		33.43	-.03	.04*		16.21
	-.02				-.14*			
Step 2: Main effects								
Workplace bullying	.43**	.33*		52.67	.54**	.45		78.91
Work engagement	-.21**				-.05**			
Step 3: Interaction effects								
Workplace bullying* work engagement	-.28*	.36*	.03**	48.2	.48**	.03*	12.4*	117.2

\* $p < .000$ , \*\* $p < .001$ , \*\*\* $p < .005$ .

Note:  $N=337$ .

### Work engagement as moderator

Work engagement was tested as moderator of relationships of workplace bullying with job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours using three causal paths (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). In step 3 of the hierarchical regression, we entered a standardized interaction term of workplace bullying and the hypothesized moderator (Frazier, Tix, & Baron, 2004). We plotted regressions of the criterion on predictor at various values of the moderator to examine if simple slopes for different

values of the moderator were different from each other and to clarify the direction of the moderation effect (Dawson, 2014).

H3 and H4 had predicted that work engagement would moderate relationships of workplace bullying with job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours. Table 2 shows that the product term of workplace bullying and work engagement was significant for job insecurity ( $\beta=-.28, p<.01$ ) and for counterproductive work behaviours ( $\beta=-.19, p<.005$ ). Next, simple slope analysis was performed to test the direction of moderation of work engagement on relationships of workplace bullying with job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours (Figures 1, 2 respectively). It may be seen that work engagement moderated the workplace bullying – job insecurity relationship in such a way that the relationship was more strongly positive for those bullied employees who had higher work engagement levels, and less strongly positive for bullied employees with low work engagement levels. Likewise, work engagement moderated the workplace bullying – counterproductive work behaviour relationship such that the relationship was more strongly positive for bullied employees with higher work engagement levels, versus those with low work engagement levels, in which case it was less strongly positive. These results offered full support for H3 and H4.

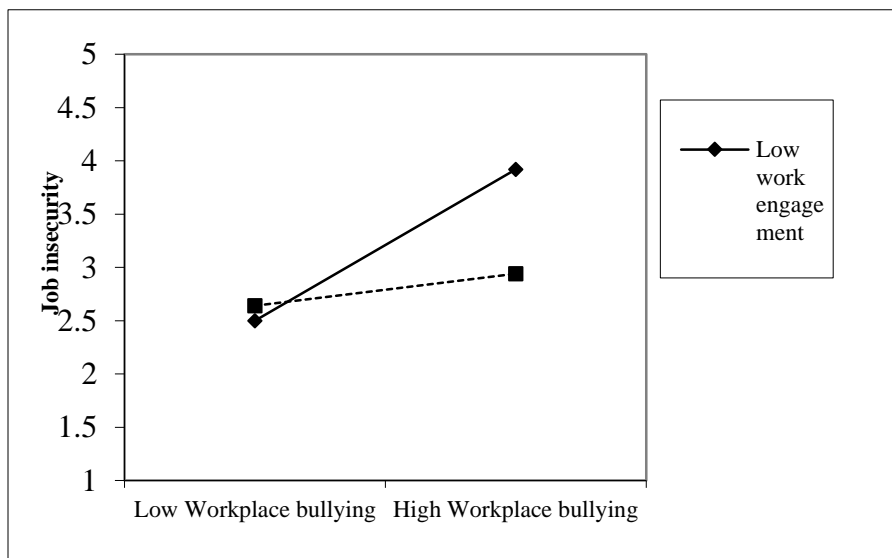


Figure 1: Work engagement as moderator of workplace bullying – job insecurity relationship

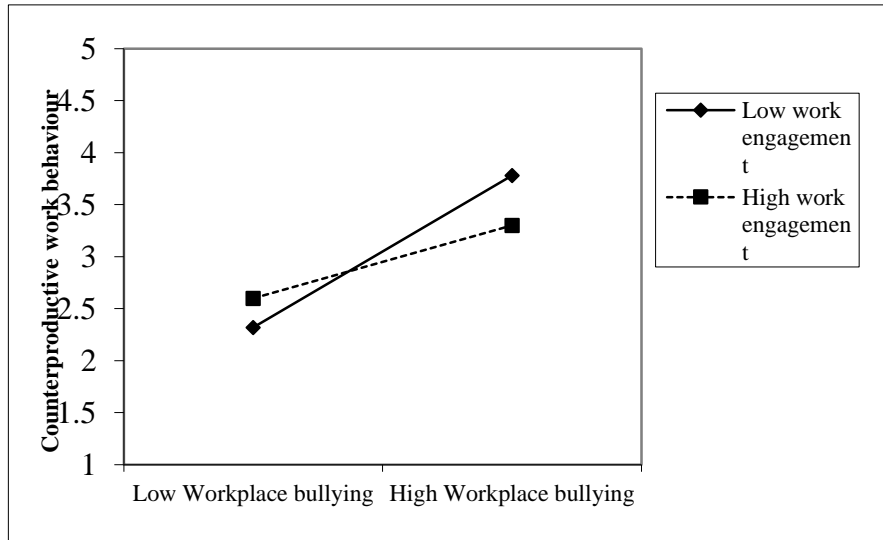


Figure 2: Work engagement as moderator of workplace bullying – counterproductive work behaviours relationship

## Discussion

The present study set out to answer two important questions in contemporary literature pertinent to workplace bullying – whether workplace bullying offsets job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours, and whether work engagement moderates these effects. Four hypotheses were tested by obtaining data from 337 faculty from working in nine higher education universities in six cities of Pakistan. Hierarchical regression procedures revealed that the two hypotheses predicting direct effects of workplace bullying on job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviour were confirmed, implying that workplace bullying offsets job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours in bullied faculty. Full support was also found for the two hypotheses that had premised a moderating effect of work engagement on relationships of workplace bullying with job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours suggesting that bullied faculty who are highly engaged at work experience lesser job insecurity than bullied employees with low work engagement levels. Overall, these results point to triggering of job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours in bullied higher education faculty and signify work engagement as a moderator of relationships of workplace bullying with job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours.

## Theoretical Implications

Our finding that workplace bullying prompts job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours in bullied higher education faculty corroborates with earlier bullying-

related research. Earlier bullying-related research has consistently demonstrated negative consequences of bullying on occupational outcomes including commitment, satisfaction, quitting intentions, retention, burnout, well-being, and mental health across various contexts including manufacturing, service, health, and public sector (Fontes, Alarcao, Sanatana, Pelloso, & Carvalho, 2019; Bosman & Notelaers, 2012; Laschinger, Wong, & Grau, 2012; Lever, Dyball, Greenberg, & Stevelink, 2019; Samsudin, Isahak, & Ramsal, 2018; Sheehan, McCabe, & Thomas, 2018) across the Western work environment. While bullying-related research has majorly been conducted in Western work environments and established damaging bullying effects, findings of our study conclude a similar, destructive effect of bullying on job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours within the Pakistani higher education faculty.

An important contribution of our study relates to moderating effects of work engagement on relationships of workplace bullying with job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours – a unique contribution in that it merges bullying-related research with research pertinent to positive psychology. We build on recent suggestions (Brandt, Bernstein, Reines, & Baillien, 2018; Nel, 2019) for employing coping mechanisms and personal resources as moderators of workplace bullying and outcomes relationships by investigating how work engagement curtails negative effects in bullied employees. Our study also responds to Bakker and Albrecht's (2018) advice for investigating work engagement as an intervention for employee well-being. The moderation effect of work engagement on relationships of workplace bullying with job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours implies that highly engaged, bullied employees experience lesser job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours amid pressurizing, demanding, bullying-prone work contexts, as opposed to those employees with low levels of work engagement, who experience higher job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours. Thus, work engagement curtails triggering of bullying effects in a bullying-prone work environment and offers a buffering, protective mechanism in a bullying-prone work context.

### **Managerial Implications**

Based on our findings, notable practical managerial implications are suggested, particularly for the Asian academia. Managers concerned with job design and work flow should construct work design and flow mechanisms that prevent supervisor bullying in the first place. For example, data or information necessary for effective task execution should be made freely accessible to the job incumbent to prevent the supervisor from keeping necessary data or information control. Grievance procedures should be designed to allow bullying reports to be handled objectively and effectively. For selection and job assignment, likely work engagement levels of prospective employees

should be assessed and matched with job contexts. Human resource managers should offer awareness programs, practical exercises and trainings on work engagement to curtail negative bullying effects in bullied employees. Imparting awareness and experiential exercises on work engagement would teach employees to maintain high levels of energy, enthusiasm, and concentration on work tasks and restrain triggering of job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviours in bullying-prone work environments. Additionally, building engagement in tasks is also likely to enhance task performance, subsequently lessening the likelihood of being bullied.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

Our study measured all constructs using well-validated instruments with established psychometric properties, which is a notable strength. We also confirmed factor structures of all measures, pointing to constructs' discriminant validity that adds to confidence in our study's findings. Moreover, we framed the research problem in a context where the problem clearly existed, i.e. the Pakistani higher education context. Hence, we believe that our findings can be endorsed with confidence in those settings. At the same time, important limitations of our study should be recognized. We used convenience sampling method, which is believed to limit generalisation of a study's findings across diverse contexts and populations. Employment of self-reports is also a possible limitation of our study, as it threatens social desirability bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). As our study aimed to measure bullying perceptions, we believe that those are best felt and reported by the employee, owing to differing sensitivities of bystanders, particularly in the collectivist culture of Pakistan where bystanders may possibly give biased replies for gaining social appeal. In addition, our study employed a cross-section study design while a longitudinal study design is generally considered to best determine causality. However, Wunch, Russo, and Mouchart (2010) challenge this 'traditional' view by arguing that causality may be assessed in a correlational study design if variables are time ordered. In our study, respondents were required to recall bullying acts experienced over the past six months, making our data retrospective that allows for reasonable causal inference.

### **Future Research Directions**

We recommend that the study be replicated across dissimilar environments for generalisation and a broader understanding of relationships between workplace bullying and its outcomes of job insecurity and counterproductive work behaviour under diverse contexts. We also recommend examining moderating effects of other individual positive strengths, such as confidence, resilience, forgiveness, courage, and gratitude (Algoe & Haidt, 2008; Bandura, 1997; Frederickson, 2004; Sekerka & Bagozzi, 2007; Shea & Howell, 2000) on relationships between workplace bullying and employee

outcomes. Future research may also employ longitudinal study design to ascertain causality relationships with confidence.

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## Envious Behavior among University Students: Role of Personality Traits and Self-Compassion

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### Abstract

*Being envious of others is one trait that can affect better social relations and affect an individual capacity to muddle through life stresses with a positive approach. The current research investigated the predictive effects of independent variables (IV), e.g., personality traits and self-compassion, on the dependent variable (DV) envious behavior among university students of Pakistan. Students from different Government and Private Universities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi were taken. Two hundred students were included (Male= 100, Female= 100) between the age range of 16-40. Three scales employed on 200 students were Big five inventory (BFI) (John & Srivastava, 1999), Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) (Neff, 2003), and The Dispositional Envious behavior Scale (Smith et al., 1999) in the present study to assess personality traits, self-compassion, and envious behavior among university students of Pakistan. Results of the present study revealed that extroversion, agreeableness is positively related to envious behavior. The result showed that conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness negatively correlated with envious behavior. The self-judgment, common humanity, self-kindness, mindfulness isolation, and over-identification positively related to envious behavior. Gender differences in the table highlighted that females are higher on neuroticism and self-kindness than male students. Male are higher on openness and envious behavior as compared to female students. Regression table showed that extraversion ( $\beta = .29, p < .01$ ) positively predicted envious behavior. Openness negatively ( $\beta = -.27, p < .01$ ) predicted and explained 8.9 % variance in envious behavior. Regression analysis showed that self-judgment ( $\beta = .18, p < .01$ ), and over-identification ( $\beta = 6.54, p < .001$ ) positively predicted envious behavior. Mindfulness ( $\beta = -.16, p = .01$ ) negatively predicted envious behavior, and the value of  $R^2$  explained 30 % variance in envious behavior. The results of the study are discussed with cultural reference.*

**Keywords:** Personality traits, Big-five, isolation, humanity, self-judgment, self-kindness, mindfulness, envious behavior

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## Introduction

An individual is expected to deal with diverse life stressors in an effective manner. Feeling of disarray, sympathy, and jealousy appear to subsequently leave adolescents with sentiments of segregation and envious behavior in social relationships. Personality traits play a significant role in the overall adjustment of an individual, developing healthy social relations, and also enhances personal wellbeing. Family environment and peer interaction also affect the level of self-compassion and envious behavior. Self-compassion is an obvious trait that enables any individual to move forward and prosper in his/her life. A grandiose sense of self-compassion leads to envious behavior towards one-self and others that affects social relationships.

Big Five Personality Factor Model- NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992) suggests that personality is subdivided into five dimensions, with each dimension laying between the two boundaries of different estimation. Neuroticism contrasts components of passionate solidness with those of negative emotionality. Extraversion proposes a vigorous way to deal with the world rather than a disconnected approach. Openness examines a person's openness to experiences and individuals in this estimation are more inventive and prepared to express and understand their emotions (Hergenhahn & Olson, 1999). Cattell (1973) brought up the theoretical concept that traits cannot be measured just by verbal report and behavior in the research domain.

Self-compassion includes agony feelings combined with a profound yearning to reduce that misery (Mwanje, 2018; Goetz, Keltner, & Simon-Thomas, 2010). Self-compassion is just empathy coordinated with internal feelings that a person holds within, an objective feeling of consideration and concern when confronted with the experience of anguish (Neff, 2003). At the point when confronted with troubles in life, a few individuals get knocked off with disappointments, misery, and nervousness while responding maladaptive to offensive circumstances, for example, ruminating about the circumstance, reprimanding for their shortcomings, and catastrophizing, which just prompts worsening of their pain (Leary, Tate, Adams, Allen, & Hancock, 2007). Self-compassion is a model of self-perspectives that has been determined by Neff (2003). Self-compassion is accepted to assume to hold a strong function that helps in dealing with life's dilemma. Recently, western researches' have started considering the relation of self-compassion with different constructs. Self-compassion serves as an imperative commitment to passionate prosperity and life happiness (Bluth & Neff, 2018). Self-compassion develops a positive frame of mind with enjoyment and positive thinking that prompts general better alteration, prosperity, and thriving (Reizer, 2019).

Envious behavior is based on negative emotion in which the individual develops the feeling of worthlessness in comparison to the individual with a superior personality

(Crusius & Lange, 2017; DeWall et al., 2014). These emotions also include failure in social evaluation, social comparison; individuals high on envious behavior may feel deprived of all life luxuries and feel jealous of others in fame and position (Jones & Paulhus, 2017; Smith & Kim, 2007). Shalev and Morwitz (2012) envious behavior is the emotional and behavioral strategy of a person that focuses on getting things that person wants to diminish jealous emotions. Envious behavior comprises feelings of begrudging, an excruciating feeling that frequently originates from needing something that someone else has (Hill, DelPriore, & Vaughan, 2011). Envious behavior is negative behavior that is not attractive; one that isn't charming for the desirous individual (Jones & Paulhus, 2017; Tai, Narayanan, & McAllister, 2012; van de Ven, 2009).

Different researches have been conducted on personality traits, self-compassion, and envious behavior, and other distinct variables. Fabioa and Saklofske (2021) revealed that trait emotional intelligence (EI) brings about variance in personality traits, compassion, and self-compassion. EI also mediates in the relationship between personality traits, compassion, and self-compassion. Samuel (2011) concluded that emotional intelligence mediated the relationship of neuroticism and extraversion with mental prosperity yet not between openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness and mental prosperity. Self-compassion plays a crucial role in developing better well-being (Lopez, Sanderman, Ranchor, & Schroevers, 2018) and promoting pro-social behaviors in social gatherings (Marshall, Ciarrochi, Parker, & Sahdra, 2019). A longitudinal study (Eldor, 2018) carried out on self-compassion among employees that received more self-compassion (e.g., love, kindness, care, tenderness) from their manager, those employees displayed a higher level of service-oriented performance and more sympathetic attitude towards their customers, supporting the idea that high level of self-compassion improves overall organization productivity (Yang, Guo, Kou, & Liu, 2019).

Another study by (Amirazodi & Amirazodi, 2011) concluded that extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness were notable positive predictors of self-esteem, and neuroticism was a notable negative predictor of self-esteem. Neff et al. (2005) inspected the connection between self-compassion and academic achievement among undergrads. Self-compassion was connected with dominance, which includes the delight of learning for one's purpose and adversely connected with execution objectives, including protecting or improving one's feeling of self-esteem through scholarly achievements. Self-compassionate undergrads displayed more versatile methods for adapting to disappointment. A research study by (Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick, 2007) revealed that self-compassion had a significant positive relationship with conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extroversion has a negative relationship with neuroticism. Another study found that unwillingness to take

responsibility, lack of self-confidence, interpersonal problem solving had a negative relation with extraversion, openness to experiences (Sarıcaoğlu & Arslan, 2013) agreeableness, self-compassion, and responsibility (Bacanl, İlhan, & Arslan, 2009; Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008). Constructive problem solving had a positive relation with extraversion, openness to experiences, self-compassion, responsibility, and agreeableness (Arslan, 2016).

Gottheim (2009) showed a positive relationship between aggression and self-esteem and self-compassion had a weak link with aggression. Moreover a more elevated level of self-compassion anticipated a lower level of aggressive behavior (Runyan et al., 2019). Smith and Kim (2007) have connected envious behavior to counterproductive work practices that incorporate undermine the adversary's work, manipulating a contender, and annoying or shunning the opponent. Regarding the envious behavior, counterproductive work practices can be an endeavor to kill or decrease the anguish of evaluation. Cohen-Charash(2009) stated that episodic envious behavior is not the same as shamefulness, adoration, and rivalry. The envious behavior is firmly associated with negative passionate responses (nervousness, discouragement, negative state of mind, threatening vibe) and behavioral responses (e.g., hurting the other, making a negative work environment). Inferiority is the major reason behind envy pain, which can increase depression, along with indirect aggression (Zitek & Jordan, 2016). The malicious envy can lead to machiavellian tactics such as planned deception (Leckelt, Kufner, Nestler, & Back, 2015), damage individual morale (Khan, Quratulain, & Bell, 2014), disparaging rumors (Lange et al., 2016), and lastly impulsivity (Shoham, Gavish, & Segev, 2015).

Personality traits have been emerged to be a predictor of numerous variables including schooling, earning, career promotion, employment factors, and academic achievements (Hakimi, Hejazi, & Lavasani, 2011; Kai-Wen, 2011; Lee & Ohtake, 2012). Mehboob (2014) highlighted that rumination had a positive association with anxiety. Though self-compassion had no association with anxiety. Further, it was discovered both rumination and self-compassion, independently were not strongly linked with each other. Besides, detailed examination demonstrated that ladies living in asylums on account of abusive behavior at home ruminated more when contrasted with the individuals living there in light of different reasons. Ahmed and Bhutto (2016) showed non-significant attachment styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) with self-compassion. The predictive effect showed that permissive parenting styles significantly affected self-compassion and isolation. Research conducted by Ali and Ijaz (2014) demonstrated a positive relationship between self-viability, personality traits, and occupation execution of police officers. Khan, Quratulain, and Bell (2014)

found a negative relation between envious behavior and counterproductive work behavior. Prior research showed that neuroticism was associated with negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, and envious behavior (Bazelli, Hindle, & Stroulia, 2013). Researchers have identified that envy is characteristic of the dark triad of personality, which have both constructive and destructive functions depending on the functional value of envy. Malicious envy is linked with psychopathic behaviors and antisocial behavior in the workplace (Lange, Paulhus, & Crusius, 2018).

### **Rationale of the Study**

The previous Western and indigenous literature review has shown that there are scarce researches which have been carried out on study variables among university students. As personality traits have been studied but with other variables such as mental prosperity of young people Samuel (2011), learning styles of mathematics, architecture, and fine arts students (Zonash & Naqvi, 2011), ego resiliency among amputated soldiers (Zeb, Naqvi, & Zonash, 2013), self-esteem (Amirazodi & Amirazodi, 2011). Similarly, self-compassion has been studied in western culture with different variables such as self-compassion, self-esteem, scholastic accomplishment (Neff et al., 2005), narcissism, and aggression (Gottheim, 2009). Lastly, western and indigenous researches have shown that envious behavior has been studied with the variables like envious behavior and counterproductive work practices (Khan et al., 2014) and personality variables (Bazelli et al., 2013). But none of the research has explored the regression effect of personality traits and self-compassion on envious behavior among university students. For that the study aimed at exploring the relationship between personality traits, self-compassion, and envious behavior. Further, the study also aimed at exploring the effect of social characteristics e.g., age, education, family structure, and birth order that have on psychological study variables that are under exploration in the current study.

### **Significance**

The present study will help the psychologist, educational specialist, teachers, and student counseling department to highlight the issues that students experience in light of study variables. The present study will help to fill up the gap between indigenous works of literature for the present study variables. The research can be used by educational psychologists, vocational psychologists, and counsellors to establish intervention plans for the betterment of students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

To explore the predictive effects of personality traits and self-compassion on envious behavior among university students.

## Procedure of the Study

**Research Design.** Quantitative cross-sectional research method protocols were followed during the study procedure. The study sample was collected from different universities located in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan. After, receiving the ethical and procedural permission from the concerned university official. Students were approached individually during their university timings. They were informed concerning the idea of the research being done and about their assent and participation, which was a critical factor in the current study. A demographic sheet along with three questionnaires was given to them. They were asked to fill the questionnaires fairly and were guaranteed that the gathered data will be kept for research purposes. The members were required to peruse and respond to everything by rating how much they feel the statement mirrors their present perspective of themselves, as there was no correct and right response for particular statements. Participation was voluntary, the information gathered was dealt with under states of secrecy and obscurity and it was elucidated that the results would just be used for research study purposes. They were acknowledged for their time, trustworthiness, and ability to help with this study.

**Population.** Sample of the study consisted of 200 university students comprising males ( $n=100$ ) and females ( $n=100$ ) selected from different universities, i.e., International Islamic University, Islamabad ( $n=120$ , 60%), Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad ( $n=80$ , 40%). The sample was selected through a convenient sampling technique. The ages of these students ranged from 16 to 40 years. Their minimum educational level was from Graduation to Ph.D. Further, they belonged to various disciplines of studies.

**Research Instruments.** The study comprised of three instruments. The first scale, The Big Five Inventory (BFI) originally by (John & Srivastava, 1999). The scale is a self-report measure that intends to assess the Big Five dimensions. The BFI consists of 44 items that are subdivided into five trait dimensions of personality - agreeableness (9 items), openness to experience (9 items), extraversion (8 items), neuroticism (8 items), and conscientiousness (9 items). The scale is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree'). Besides, a high score on any personality traits reflects the high level of existence of that trait.

Self-Compassion among students was measured with the Self Compassion Scale by (Neff, 2003) and it consists of 12 items. Responses are measured by using a five-point Likert scale (*almost never=1 to almost always=5*). The alpha reliability of SCS.SR was 0.86. The subscales of the scale are as follows: Self-Judgment (11, 12), Self-kindness (2, 6) Mindfulness (3, 7), Common Humanity (5, 10), Over-identified (1, 9), and Isolation (4, 8).

The Dispositional Envious Behavior Scale was developed by (Smith et al., 1999). It consists of 8 items that are scored on a 5-point Likert scale ( $1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree$ ). It is used to measure different tendencies of individuals towards envious behavior. A high score on the scale reflects the higher level of envious behavior among the students. The alpha ranged from ( $\alpha = .83$  to  $.86$ ).

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

For the present study, the result was carried out using SPSS-21 on the total population of 200 university students. For the current research, the correlation between the study variables was determined using Pearson correlation (See Table 1 and Table 2). The gender differences (See Table 3) and family structure differences (See Table 4) were determined using the Independent sample T-Test (See Table 3). To determine the predictive effect of personality traits and self-compassion on envious behavior the multiple and linear regression was computed (See Table 5-7).

**Objective:** To determine the relationship between personality traits and envious behavior among university students.

**Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):** Personality traits, e.g., extroversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness negatively correlated with envious behavior, whereas neuroticism positively correlated with envious behavior.

**Table 1** Correlation between Personality Traits (Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness) and Envious behavior (N=200)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Extroversion	1	.46**	.29**	.33**	.59**	.14*
2 Agreeableness		1	.34**	.36**	.39**	.09
3 Conscientiousness			1	.42**	.34**	-.08
4 Neuroticism				1	.38**	-.02
5 Openness					1	-.09
6 Envious behavior						1
<i>a</i>	.31	.53	.16	.27	.37	.75
Number of items	9	9	9	8	10	8

Note. 1=Extroversion, 2=Agreeableness, 3=Conscientiousness, 4=Neuroticism, 5=Openness, 6=Envious behavior,  $\alpha$  = Chronbach's alpha

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$

The table shows a correlation matrix between personality traits and envious behavior among university students. Extroversion is positively related to envious behavior. The table shows that conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness negatively correlated with envious behavior. The table showed that a significant correlation exists between the study variables and their subscales.

**Objective:** To determine the relationship between self-compassion and envious behavior.

**Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):** Self-compassion negatively correlated with envious behavior among university students.

**Table 2** *Correlation between Self Compassion (Self-Kindness, Self-Judgment, Common Humanity, Isolation, Mindfulness, and Over Identification) and Envious behavior (N=200)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self-kindness	1	.29**	.26**	.24**	.32**	.41**	.15**
Self-judgment		1	.16**	.23**	.10	.29**	.31**
Common humanity			1	.20**	.27**	.20**	.08**
Isolation				1	.51**	.47**	.26**
Mindfulness					1	.16**	.01**
Over identification						1	.50**
Envious behavior							1
<i>a</i>	.15	.24	.48	.21	.35	.49	.75
Number of items	2	2	2	2	2	2	8

*Note.* 1=Self-kindness, 2=Self-judgment, 3=Common humanity, 4=Isolation, 5=Mindfulness, 6= Over identification, 7= Envious behavior,  $\alpha$  = Chronbach's alpha

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$

The table shows a significant relationship exists between the study variables and their subscales. Self-judgment, self-kindness, common humanity, mindfulness, over-identification, and isolation have a significant positive relation with envious behavior among university students.

**Objective:** To determine gender wise differences on sub-dimensions of personality traits, self-compassion, and envious behavior.

**Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>)<sub>1</sub>:** Male students would be higher on extraversion and openness, whereas female students would be higher on neuroticism.

**Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>)<sub>2</sub>:** Female students would score higher on self-compassion dimensions as compared to male students.

**Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>)<sub>3</sub>:** Male students would score higher on envious behavior than female students.

**Table 3** Mean, Standard Deviation, *t* value of gender on Personality Traits, Self-Compassion and Envious behavior (N=200)

Variables	Male (n = 100)		Female (n = 100)		<i>t</i>	95% CI		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Extroversion	27.03	4.26	27.63	4.17	-1.00	-1.77	.57	.14
Agreeableness	29.68	3.85	29.25	4.36	.73	-.719	1.57	.11
Conscientiousness	29.52	3.24	29.99	4.76	-.81	-1.60	.68	.11
Neuroticism	24.93	4.08	26.52	4.51	-2.61**	-2.79	-.38	.36
Openness	43.15	5.95	35.18	5.17	-1.30	-2.58	.52	1.42
Self-kindness	5.79	1.81	6.26	1.62	-1.93*	-.94	.00	.27
Self-judgment	6.17	2.08	5.67	1.69	1.85	-0.30	1.03	.26
Common humanity	6.55	1.76	6.02	2.05	1.95*	.00	1.06	.27
Isolation	6.57	1.89	6.77	1.80	-.76	-.71	.31	.10
Mindfulness	6.79	1.55	6.69	1.91	.40	-.38	.58	.05
Over identification	5.42	1.92	5.33	1.90	.33	-.44	.62	.04
Envious behavior	20.21	5.48	18.25	4.92	2.66**	.50	3.41	.37

Note. CI= Confidence Interval, LL = Lower Limit, UP= Upper Limit.

Gender differences in the table highlighted that females are higher on neuroticism as compared to male students. Male are higher on openness in comparison to female students. Female students scored more on self-kindness in comparison to male students. Male students are higher on common humanity and envious behavior as compared to female students.

**Objective:** To determine family structure differences in personality traits, self-compassion, and envious behavior.

**Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):** Students from the joint family structure would be higher on extraversion and openness, agreeableness, whereas female students would be higher on neuroticism and conscientiousness.



**Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>)<sub>1</sub>:** Students from the nuclear family structure would score higher on envious behavior as compared to students from joint family structure.

**Table 4** Mean, Standard Deviation, *t* value of family structure on Personality Traits, Self-Compassion and Envious Behavior (N=200)

Variables	Joint (n = 107)		Nuclear (n =91)		<i>t</i>	95% CI		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Extroversion	28.01	4.02	26.4	4.34	2.58**	.34	2.69	.36
Agreeableness	29.68	4.00	29.1	4.22	.82	-.67	1.63	.11
Conscientiousness	30.14	4.12	29.2	4.02	1.49	-.30	1.99	.20
Neuroticism	26.48	3.76	24.8	4.88	2.66**	.42	2.85	.37
Openness	34.89	4.36	34.3	6.77	.71	-1.00	2.14	.10
Self-kindness	6.17	1.72	5.88	1.74	1.25	-.17	.79	.16
Self-judgment	5.99	1.84	5.80	1.97	.69	-.34	.72	.09
Common humanity	6.26	1.79	6.32	2.10	-.26	-.61	.47	.03
Isolation	6.51	1.80	6.87	1.89	-1.38	-.88	.15	.19
Mindfulness	6.70	1.78	6.78	1.69	-.31	-.56	.41	.04
Over identification	5.30	1.78	5.48	2.06	-.64	-.71	.36	.09
Envious behavior	19.22	5.41	19.2	5.07	-.08	-1.54	1.41	.01

Note. CI= Confidence Interval, LL = Lower Limit, UP= Upper Limit.

Family structure differences were highlighted in Table 4. The mean differences showed that students from the joint family were higher on extroversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. There was no meaningful difference in self-compassion and envious behavior among students of both family structures.

**Objective:** To determine the predictive effect of personality traits on envious behavior among university students.

**Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):** Extroversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness will negatively predict envious behavior, whereas neuroticism will positively predict envious behavior.

**Table 5** *Multiple Regression Analysis to Test Effects of Personality Traits on Envious behavior (N = 200)*

Variables	Envious behavior	
	<i>B</i>	Model 1 95 % <i>CI</i>
Constant	18.55	[11.79, 25.32]
Extraversion	-.36**	[.14 , .59]
Agreeableness	-.14	[-.06 , .34]
Conscientiousness	-.14	[-.34 , .05]
Neuroticism	.01	[-.21 , .17]
Openness to experience	-.25**	[-.42 , -.08]
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.089	
<i>F</i>	3.80	

As shown in table 5 extroversion, agreeableness positively predicted envious behavior among students. Regression table showed that extraversion ( $\beta = -.29, p < .01$ ), negatively predicted envious behavior. Openness negatively predicted ( $\beta = -.27, p < .01$ ) envious behavior. The value of  $R^2$  showed that extraversion and openness (independent variables) explained a total of 8.9 % variance in envious behavior (dependent variable).

**Objective:** To determine the predictive effect of self-compassion on envious behavior among university students.

**Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):** Self-compassion negatively predicted envious behavior among university students.

**Table 6** *Multiple Regression Analysis to Test Effects of self-compassion on Envious behavior (N = 200)*

Variables	Envious behavior	
	<i>B</i>	Model 1 95 % <i>CI</i>
Constant	12.50	[8.74, 16.25]
Self-kindness	-.21	[-.63 , .21]
Self-judgment	.52**	[.16 , .88]
Common humanity	.08	[-.28 , .44]
Isolation	.03	[-.35 , .42]
Mindfulness	-.43**	[-.78 , -.09]
Over identification	.54**	[.92 , 1.71]
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.350	
<i>F</i>	14.12	

As shown in table 6 over-identification, self-judgment, isolation, and common humanity, positively predicted envious behavior among students. The subscales of mindfulness, self-kindness negatively predicted envious behavior among university students. Regression analysis showed that self-judgment ( $\beta = .18, p < .01$ ), and over-identification ( $\beta = 6.54, p < .001$ ) positively predicted envious behavior. The regression table showed that mindfulness ( $\beta = -.16, p = .01$ ) negatively predicted envious behavior among university students. The value of  $R^2$  showed that self-judgment, over-identification, and mindfulness explained a 30.0 % variance in envious behavior.

**Objective:** To determine the effect of personality traits on self-compassion among university students.

**Table 7** Multiple Regression Analysis to Test Effects of Personality Traits on Self-Compassion ( $N = 200$ )

Self-Kindness		
Variables	<i>B</i>	Model 1 95 % <i>CI</i>
Constant	3.62	[1.38, 5.86]
Conscientiousness	.34**	[.01, .15]
$R^2$	0.068	
<i>F</i>	2.84	
Common Humanity		
Variables	<i>B</i>	Model 1 95 % <i>CI</i>
Constant	6.337	[-2.05, 2.73]
Conscientiousness	.15***	[.07, .22]
$R^2$	0.143	
<i>F</i>	6.47	
Isolation		
Variables	<i>B</i>	Model 1 95 % <i>CI</i>
Constant	5.34	[2.96, 7.73]
Neuroticism	.11**	[.04, .18]
$R^2$	0.074	
<i>F</i>		
Mindfulness		
Variables	<i>B</i>	Model 1 95 % <i>CI</i>
Constant	4.34	[2.11, 6.58]
Agreeableness	-.17*	[-.14, .42]
Conscientiousness	.38**	[.02, .15]
$R^2$	0.081	
<i>F</i>	3.41	

Regression effect was tested to explore the predictive effect of personality traits on self-compassion. The multiple regression analysis revealed that conscientiousness positively predicted self-kindness ( $\beta = .20, p < .01, 6.8\%$  variance), common humanity ( $\beta = .31, p < .001, 14.3\%$  variance). Neuroticism positively predicted isolation ( $\beta = .27, p < .01, 7.4\%$  variance). Agreeableness negatively ( $\beta = -.17, p < .05$ ) whereas, conscientiousness positively predicted mindfulness ( $\beta = .20, p < .01, \text{total of } 8.1\%$  variance).

## Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relation and predictive effect of personality traits and self-compassion on envious behavior among students of different universities. According to the theoretical perspective, different personality traits and self-compassion components tend to increase or decrease the level of envious behavior. The present research results supported the idea that there is a significant association between the research variables of personality traits, self-compassion, and envious behavior.

The first hypothesis “extroversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness negatively predicted envious behavior” of the study was supported by the results of the study. Extroversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, were negative predictors of envious behavior. Results in the regression table identified that extraversion positively predicted envious behavior whereas openness negatively predicted envious behavior (See Table 5). The second hypothesis of the study "neuroticism positively predicted envious behavior" was also supported by study results. The result of the study showed that neuroticism negatively predicted envious behavior (See Table 5). There are inadequate numbers of studies that have explored the predictive impact of personality trait dimensions on envious behavior in indigenous culture. The result of the study has been supported by previous western researches that have indicated that negative emotions like envious behavior are significant elements that are linked to specific personality dimensions (Lange et al., 2018; Jones & Paulhus, 2017) but in literature review envious behavior is variables that are linked with other socio-cultural factors (Cabreres, 2010; Hill & Buss, 2006; Takahashi, Kato, Matsuura, Mobbs, Suhara, & Okubo, 2009) then specific personality dimensions. Strong envious behavior leads to more negative emotions with the person that is being envied (Kim, O'Neill & Cho, 2010). Numbers of researches have shown that neuroticism is linked with a dark personality triad, negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, and envious behavior (Leckelt et al., 2015; Bazelli, Hindle, & Stroulia, 2013).

The third hypothesis of the study ‘self-compassion negatively predicted envious behavior’ was also supported in the present study (See Table 6). Common humanity,

self-kindness, self-judgment, over-identification, isolation, mindfulness have a significant positive correlation with envious behavior. Self-judgment and over-identification positively predicted envious behavior and mindfulness negatively predicted envious behavior. Current results are consistent with previous study findings that self-compassion is strongly linked with envious behavior ( Bhagat, Haque, Simbak, & Jaalam, 2016; Fitzsimons, 2013; Neff et al., 2007; Shu & Lazatkhan, 2017; Thurackal, Corveleyn, & Dezutter, 2016). Personality effects on self-compassion showed interesting findings that conscientiousness positively predicted self-kindness, common humanity Neuroticism positively predicted isolation (Reizer, 2019). Agreeableness negatively whereas, conscientiousness positively predicted mindfulness, research by (Neff et al., 2007) showed similar results that self-compassion had a significant association with extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness self-compassion has a negative association with neuroticism (Runyan et al., 2019). Another study by (Yang et al., 2019) found a negative link between family conflicts, negative coping strategies, low self-esteem, and poor problem-solving strategy with self-compassion, and extraversion (Sarıcaoğlu & Arslan, 2013) agreeableness, openness to experiences, and responsibility (Bacan, İlhan, & Arslan, 2009; Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008). Constructive problem solving had a positive relation with extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experiences, responsibility, and self-compassion (Peiro, Bayonab, Caballer, & Di Fabio, 2020; Vesely-Maillefer & Saklofske, 2018; Arslan, 2016). The non-significant results of the study can be attributed to differences in the diversity of personality dimensions. As each individual has different personality characteristics, the differences in personality in a different environment can show diversity in its expression. Non-significant results can be attributed to the non-serious response of the respondents on the personality scales as the reliability of the personality scale is also comparatively low.

Regarding other objectives, the current research also attempted to explore the mean effect of gender and family structure on personality traits, self-compassion, and envious behavior. The present study showed that females are higher on neuroticism as compared to male students. These findings replicate previous findings that females have more anxious personality features, have more concerns, feel stressed easily, and have apprehensive feelings that lead to more inclination to develop neuroticism (Costa, Terracciano, & McCrae, 2001; Weisberg, DeYoung, & Hirsh, 2011). Male scored more on openness in comparison to female students. Female student's scores are higher on self-kindness as concerning male students. Male students are higher on envious behavior and common humanity as in contrast to female students (See Table 3). A systematic review of multiple types of research have shown that the gender differences

are related to negative emotions (e.g., neuroticism, nervousness, gloominess, cogitation) (Bleidorn et al., 2015) this idea is supported by multiple meta-analyses (Johnson & Whisman, 2013), and cross-cultural studies surveys (De Bolle et al., 2015; Hopcroft & McLaughlin, 2012). Another study (Hyde, 2014) identified gender differences in personality across multiple variables like friendliness, seeking sensation, level of aggression, social isolation v/s social gathering, and sexual behaviors (Conroy-Beam, Buss, Pham, & Shackelford, 2015). Some researchers identified that gender differences across gender are also visible across negative affectivity, meticulousness, sociability, reward compassion, and self-confidence (Bhagat et al., 2016; Zell, Krizan, & Teeter, 2015). Current outcomes are consistent with previous study findings. Family structure differences on a t-test revealed that the mean differences showed that joint family structure students were higher on extroversion and neuroticism. There were no mean differences in self-compassion and envious behavior among students of both joint and nuclear family structures (See Table 4). The student of joint family structure tends to exhibit more envious behavior. However, the findings have shown interesting findings, student of both family structure have self-compassion as well as envious behavior as multiple types of research have shown that high level of self-compassion tends to lead to envious behavior (Johnson & Whisman, 2013) due to self-consumption. Indicating that despite family structure differences other variables are at play when the individual has a high level of self-compassion, similarly, individual personality and attachment styles determine the level of envious behavior in individuals in comparison to family structure. As individual personal preferences, nature plays a significant role in determining the level of compassion and jealousy.

### **Limitations and recommendations**

The effort was made to make the research flawless as possible but under different circumstances, there is dependably opportunity to get better. Thus following limitations have been recommended by the researcher. Monetary and time assets kept the utilization of a large sample. The present study sample was small and therefore generalizations of the outcomes should be deliberately addressed. The study sample was gathered only from the two cities Rawalpindi and Islamabad that limited the research zone. Hence future examinations might have profited from the investigation of a more extensive scope of the young populace from various districts of Pakistan. The current study offers fascinating outcomes that widen our comprehension and expand information regarding the study variables. For that, longitudinal study and follow-up study can be conducted. A longitudinal study can give solid evidence of the relationship directions that develop between dimensions of personality trait, self-compassion, and envious behavior among students.

## Conclusion

The current examination was intended to explore the effect of personality traits and self-compassion on envious behavior among university students. The desired sample of a total of 200 university students was recruited from the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Three standardized questionnaires comprising of Big Five Inventory (John, O & Srivastava, S., 1999), Self-Compassion Scale -Short Form (Neff, 2003), and Dispositional Envious behavior Scale by (Smith et al., 1999) were availed for measuring research variables. The study findings have reasoned that a significant correlation exists between the study variables and their subscales. Extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness have a significant positive correlation with each other. Extroversion and agreeableness have a positive correlation with self-compassion but a negative correlation with envious behavior. The current study has identified that different personality features of personality can increase the envious and negative behavior of the students in students. The high feeling of compassion can minimize the risk of developing psychopathic tendencies among the students and also enhances the individual performance of the students depending on their motivational level. The study has highlighted the significance of study variables in Pakistani population, as the western students tend to share different environmental conditions as well as values and norms. In comparison the religious beliefs, family environment, and interpersonal/intrapersonal influences tends to shape individual perception regarding feeling of ecstasy and jealousy. Similarly the understanding of students regarding their personality is quite different from international students, as the major emphasis of the western culture is concept of (being), however collectivist cultures can shape individual perception their personality (as combination of individuals beings).

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## Changing Character of Political Islam in Pakistan

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### Abstract

*Pakistan's confessional parties are re-inventing themselves. The Parties that are carrying a legacy from the time before partition are struggling to keep themselves relevant in mainstream political discourse. Pakistan's political landscape is changing because of the rise of Tehreek-i-Insaf, a progressive center-right political party that has altered the electioneering environment in Pakistan. Two main confessional parties Jamaat Islami (JI) and Jamiat Ulma e Islam Fazal Ur Rehman (JUI-F) are trying to develop an inclusive and pluralist political agenda. JI is a hierarchical Islamic party whereas JUI-F is a network Islamic party. Political Islam is in the process of shrinking in Pakistan because of the rise of political alternatives and outdatedness of the political and electoral discourse of confessional parties. Political Islam in Pakistan is changing by improving its ideological, political, and organizational structure in relation to its contemporary rivals. Changes in political Islam are not because of intellectual diversity and growth within confessional parties but to manage and compete for the rise of competing domestic political perspectives. Transnational connections with like-minded Islamist groups have scaled-down as the like-minded religio-ideological partners are termed as extremists and terrorists.*

**Keywords:** Political Islam, confessional parties, Islamist perspective, identity, social contract

### Introduction

The second half of the twentieth century has been important because activist groups across the Muslim world came up with competing Islamist perspectives that directly collided with existing political narratives erected and sustained by colonial powers. Islamist perspective challenged the status quo and touched the hearts of the Muslims who were in search of an Islamist identity (Shadi, 2014, p.174). Muslims were facing serious crisis of recognition where their socio-cultural and religious ideas were being ignored marginalizing the entire section of the population. Islamists were divided into

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three different geographic and cultural tendencies. The first one was Sunni Arab Middle East, the Second was the Sunni Indian sub-continent, and the last one Iran–Arab Shiism (Roy, 1994, p. 2). In the Sunni Arab Middle East, the largest organization which shaped regional and international view of the Arabs is Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt based religio-political party. It was organized on a national basis in many countries but primarily Egyptian leadership of Sayid Qutb influenced in shaping its ideas. In the Indian subcontinent, Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) set up its organizational apparatus in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. Abul Ala Maududi was the architect of JI and his ideas were appreciated across the Muslim world. Political parties like Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) also had a political base that got separated from Jamiat ulema-i- Hind (JUH) because JUH was close to the Indian National Congress and did not support the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. As far as the Shia movement was concerned, it took power by the revolution in Iran and the Iranians emerged as the vanguard of this movement. They enhanced their regional power and influence which put their regional rivals on alert as the sectarian competition started which is still going on in the Arab world (Rieck, 2015, p.307).

This paper discusses that how the confessional parties in the Sunni Indian Sub-Continent created and changed the political discourse and how these Islamic political parties are changing their narrative to create relevance to the contemporary political dynamics. Pakistan's confessional parties are re-inventing themselves to keep themselves relevant in changing political landscape. Parties that are carrying legacy from the pre-partition time are thinking seriously that how to bring reforms as their vote bank is traditional but youth inclusion in their movement and political struggle is need of the hour. Whereas youth get attracted to a more modern, democratic, ethno-nationalistic and progressive ideology, Islamic parties are working to grab the support and votes of 60% of the population that comprises youth. Since Pakistan's Political landscape is changing where two main religious political parties JI and JUI-F are trying to make themselves more attractive to new voters without losing traditional and religious vote bank. JUI turned JUIF when Maulana Fazal Ur Rehman took control of the party after his father's death. Both confessional parties have brought changes in their political, organizational and socio-religious discourses because they were being criticized for being conservative and not open to moderate voices (Jamal, 2014, p18). Both Islamist parties have always desired to enforce religious laws and practices but could not materialize because of lack of electoral support. There is huge ideological diversity between them but both have tried to have a political alliance which normally did not work as their interests diverge frequently.

New developments in Pakistan's politics in general and in KPK particularly have forced ultra-right wing conservative parties to revive Muttahida Majlis-i- Amal ( MMA) to keep right-wing conservative vote bank united. MMA was formed in 2002 when General Pervaiz Musharraf was ruling the country (Rieck, 2015, p.359). MMA is an alliance of religious parties which was formed because of anti-US sentiments in the Muslim world. The reason for those sentiments was the American attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq. Meanwhile, MMA emerged as an opposition party after the 2002 elections and later on dismantled because of political differences. MMA revived itself in 2018, the election year, where JUI F and JI were the main forces in this alliance whereas other parties were Tehreek-i-Islami Pakistan (TIP), Jamiat Ulema-i-Pakistan (JUP), and Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadith (MJAHA). The real challenge for MMA was to deal with the rise of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) of Prime Minister Imran Khan in religiously conservative province of KPK. PTI is still a popular party among youth and won the 2018 national elections with a narrow majority.

The public narrative of MMA is that the U.S. has undermined Palestine's cause (Gordon, 2019, P 56). Kashmir is still an unfinished issue of British Partition and international community has not fulfilled its promises related to its resolution. East Jerusalem has been recognized as the capital of Israel, Rohingya Muslims are facing genocide, and the Muslims are being killed in the Middle East, are the serious concerns for which the Muslim world needs to stand (International Crises Group, 2011). On the domestic front, MMA believes that enforcement of Islamic Khalifat is possible if all Islamic parties are together. They believe marginalized sections of society need to be mainstreamed and minorities must be protected although the status of minorities is compromised in the constitution and they have done nothing extraordinary for the protection of minorities but they keep this as part of their electoral campaign and political rhetoric. MMA believes that there is a need of an ideal state like the state of Madina, Nizam-e-Mustafa and the concept of Ummah needs to be made clear to masses for having support. MMA also believes that Pakistan needs to get rid of sectarianism and all this struggle should be through democratic means and political struggle by means of democratic institutions. MMA could not get the desired outcome and the idea of the Islamic parties was defeated in the 2018 elections (Shah and Sareen, 2018). It only secured 2.54 million votes in 2018 elections across the country and the moderate political force PTI managed to form government first time in the Federal Capital and KPK province where it has been ruling since 2013.

How the two confessional parties will now find new avenues to keep themselves relevant in political discourse and among their voters after defeat in the 2018 elections, is a challenge for them. Since they could not get the desired results in the election. By

implication, their unity and united political discourse will potentially change. MMA may not form an alliance as it did in the past to counter PTI and keep right-wing voters intact. Political Islam is shrinking in Pakistan as confessional parties are losing international support from like-minded political quarters and Islamic parties are careful in developing their transnational ideological linkages because Islamists are unpopular and lack inclusiveness (Noor, 2019). Therefore, political Islam as a phenomenon is shrinking from transnational to national level while, at the domestic level, its erstwhile political and ideological space is being reduced because of the new progressive nationalist actors. So how both parties will keep their identities and how they will keep propagating about political Islam when their political discourse faces challenges and space is shirking for their political survival, is the focus of this paper.

### **Political Islam: Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of Political Islam will make readers understand this research. Two major questions have been raised in this research which the conceptual framework will answer. The first question is that the transnational character of political Islam is changing after 9/11 where Islamist's role got compromised and choices got contracted. The second question which will be answered in this research is about changing nature of confessional parties in Pakistan because of evolving nature of domestic politics in Pakistan. Both of these questions have not been answered Political Islam and Islamism have the same meaning and have been used interchangeably by scholars for making them understand Islamists politics. Theorists and historians have competing and cutting-edge perspectives on Political Islam to inquire whether it's modern phenomena or old Islamic religious commitment. Islamists in Pakistan and the rest of the world keep changing their perspectives looking at changing global environment and adjusting them in domestic apparatus (Dabashi, 2017, p. 105). In the west Islamists are looked from the lens of ultra-right-wing or right-wing but Islamists lean to different political ideologies for their political adjustments with other political actors and this makes them liberal conservatives. But they did not transform those looking changing global and domestic orders which made them irrelevant at domestic and international levels.

Jan Michiel Otto, Sayyed Vali Raza Nasr, and Peter Mandaville present a conceptual framework that Political Islam should not be seen from the lens of social movements only (Otto, 2011, p. 45). Islamists work on domestic legislation for making their inroads in state apparatus. These scholars conclude that Islamists should not also be seen as revolutionizing the state and its system. Political Islam cannot be understood if it is only looked through the lens of social movement or lens of militant Islam. Islamists in Pakistan have philanthropist and socio-cultural agenda for welfare and



moral policing of society (Mandaville, 2007, p. 75). Although JI and JUIF have Al Khidmat Foundation and Al- Khair Trust which they use to translate their social work for their political gains. Islamists are not categorized as institutional Islamists and Militants Islamists and for this, they are normally termed as revolutionary. The above schools have categorized that all Islamists do not want revolutionary governments like in Iran and Afghanistan. Similarly, institutional Islamists in Pakistan did not support revolutionaries but it took them a long time to disassociate themselves from militant Islamists. Institutional Islamists stopped the ideological supply line but the damage had been done which made JI and JUIF weak domestically and compromised their transnational connections with other Islamists and Islamic states.

Otto, Nasr, and Mandaville made their case that the priority of Islamists has been to lead domestic legislation through the 'Top Down' approach as they could Islamize the entire population rather than using the 'Bottom Up' approach. Countries like Nigeria, Egypt, Morocco, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan had such governments and political parties for Islamizing domestic legislation (Vali Raza Nasr, 2001, p. 25). JI and JUIF both supported elected and unelected governments for Islamizing domestic legislation for being mainstream Islamists. They did not just rely on to be a change agent by supporting the social movement and rejected militants as well for bringing change by force.

Scholars like Stefano Allievi, Nielsen Jorgen Faisal Devji, Peter Mandaville, and Seyyed Vali Raza Nasr make their case that Islamist differ on the idea of a nation-state. Islamists societies did not understand the idea of a nation-state system for long and for this Muslim societies remained politically weak and confused (Allievi & Nielsen, 2003, p. 61). JI and JUIF are part of this as they created an environment where Muslims kept considering the international system and nation-state system as Western-dominated conspiratorial formwork against Islamist states. JI and JUIF being part of the state understood the sovereign rights of states but when the issue of disputed territories like Kashmir and Palestine arouse their followers joined Jihad even bypassing Pakistan's constitution. This created division among Islamic societies as Islamists came under their propaganda when it became clear that any armed struggle without the approval of the state is illegal and pressure of the international community increased after 9/11. Transnational connections of JI and JUIF with their like-minded Islamists groups like the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and other Islamists got scaled-down or disconnected when Jihadi organizations and their like-minded ideological partners were termed as extremists and terrorists.

Islamist's view of liberating Muslim lands was flawed. Intellectually, ideologically and through the lens of international law they could not justify their struggle utilizing

force and this decreased their transnational connections. The idea of Islamic Ummah (Community of Believers) and its activism because Muslims used this for transnational and cosmopolitanism but it did not survive because of vested interests of Islamists powers and irrelevance of institutional and militant Islamists in Islamic states (Devji, 2005, p. 34).

## **Political Islam in Pakistan's Context: Pakistan's Islamic Confessional Parties**

Islam has been central to the political system and national identity for Pakistan's entire history. For about a decade after independence initial leadership of Pakistan be it religious elite, secularists and bourgeoisie were unable to draft a constitution because of having differences that what kind of role Islam will have in constitution (Rais, 2017, p.8). After a public campaign and compromises shown by all stakeholders, it was decided that Pakistan will be the Islamic Republic with the head of state to be Muslim. The first constitution of Pakistan mandated that Quran should be taught in schools but the constitution did not impose Shariah and deliberately remained vague on matters of public policy (Ullah, 2014, p.22). Minorities were given minimal protection to which many criticized as a deliberate move by the state and because of pressure from right-wing religious parties.

Islamic parties especially JI and JUI which were at the center of politics at that time were instrumental in declaring minority sect Ahmadiyya as non-muslim in 1974 and surprisingly progressive Pakistan People's Party ( PPP) controlled parliament passed this law. 1973 constitution also ensured that Ahmadis cannot hold posts of President or Prime Minister (Hassan, 2006, pp. 263–84). It was in 1970,s when the Islamization of public life started. Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) which was an opposition coalition of mainly Islamic parties including JI and JUI used Islam for contesting elections in 1977. When PNA could not win against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of PPP, it brought religious issues into a national political debate. Since PNA lacked any concrete agenda but its slogan was to bring Nizam I Mustafa (System of Prophet PBUH). Bhutto made a significant shift and changed party literature by removing the word socialism and incorporating Islamic egalitarianism and banned alcohol and made Friday weekly holiday (Ullah, 2014, p.22). JI and JUI had strong street power within PNA which forced powerful leader like Bhutto to change his domestic narrative despite that he already had popular support and won the national election.

Former military Dictator Zia Ul Huq overthrew Bhutto,s democratic government in 1977. He was a religious person and used to distribute religious literature in army officer's corps. Looking at ethnic divisions in country, he realized that the only factor that can give him legitimacy internally is religion and thus he instrumentalized religion.

Once he said One God, One Prophet, One Country, One System, and No dissention (Ahmed, 1996, p.384). Zia wanted a true Islamic society and for that, he focused on areas like judicial reform, implementation of Islamic penal code, economic activities, and new educational policy (Talbot, 2012, p.272).

For implementing his agenda he needed the support of right-wing elements who were natural partners of Zia in this struggle and they were already demanding these reforms in national legal, social and political discourse. JI and JUI helped Zia in implementing his agenda and they could never get this opportunity before and after Zia. That was a favorable time for both confessional parties that it had a long-lasting impact on society in every sphere. JI and JUI which influenced the political and democratic system and had political roots and power of mobilization transformed national discourse. Both are confessional parties that have leveraged aspects of religious ideology and culture to activate, recruit and campaign in electoral competition (Ullah, 2014, p.7). Both parties mainstreamed Islamism in Pakistan. They are considered mainstream Islamists because of their electoral performance in elections as compared to other Islamic parties. Their other credentials like religious education mostly in madrassas, mosques, dawah activism, providing private school education, and social welfare increased their space in society. For analyzing how both parties have made an impact one has to see the ideological, organizational, and political strategies of both parties (Ullah, 2014, p.9).

### **Changing Character of JUI-F**

Since the party was established and till times of Mufti Mehmood JUI remained nomenclature of the party. The Party's name changed to JUIF after the death of Mufti Mehmood when Maulana Fazal Ur Reham became chief of the party through a difficult transition. Party is known as a network Islamist party because it has a structure of loosely affiliated workers and leaders and over all structure of the party is broad-based (Ullah, 2014, p.48). Party draws its support from Sunni Deobund Muslims. The Religious Elite of the party is less educated and they get their education from the Madrasah system. A huge number of Madrasah network which is across the country and propagates Deobund religious sect also supports recruitment for a party. (Pirzada, 2000). Party is known as pragmatic as its leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman not just believes in ideological commitment but understands power centric notion of politics. He stays close to the powerful political elite be it left-wing politicians or right-wing (Arqam, 2017). Party has a religious ideological commitment and believes in having Shariah in the country but wants to have Sharia through parliament and democratic process. So JUI F did not start any agitation against a state which is unconstitutional and above law for the implementation of Shariah.

The roots of the party could be traced to British Colonial India. Before partition in colonial India Deobund ulema organized under a political platform known as Jamiat Ulma e Hind (JUH). JUH at the time of partition supported the All India National Congress and was not in favor of a separate state for Muslims in the shape of Pakistan. JUH was of the view that provincial autonomy should be given to federating units but there must be a united India. (Amin, 2016, p.66). Ulema,s in Pakistan influence social and political domains so they were included in the party so that people to know this party belongs to clerics and religious elite will be future political leadership in the country (Amin, 2016, p.66).

Pro partition group of clerics who formed Jamiat e Ulema e Islam (JUI) were DeoBund clerics under Shabir Ahmed Usmani. Usmani along with members of JUI worked with the Muslim League for the establishment of Pakistan. The JUI was led by madrassah-educated clerics who came from a rural background and had ethnic and religious ties with the rural electorate (Ullah, 2014, p.90). JUI had to face legitimate questions from the rank and file of clerics because of its association with Muslim League. JUI was concerned about working with irreligious workers and members of the Muslim League.

Whereas JUI F has always kept themselves open to all political forces and for practical matters they keep themselves open to engaging with all. For such political accommodative behavior, concerns have always been raised at the worker's level because they are given a narrow perspective of the party's political ideology. Whereas top-level leadership looks at situation strategically as their canvas is large and they make decisions for bigger incentives.

JUI F tried to bring change through institutions and influenced institutions and became part of those. Starting from constituent assembly where Shabbir Ahmed Usmani was a member along with Muslim League and constituent assembly passed an objective resolution on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1949. Although JUI failed to make inroads in electoral politics in 1946 elections when the party put up candidates in former Northern Western Frontier Province ( NWFP) which is now KPK under new legislation by the provincial and federal legislature.

JUI chose Mufi Mahmood as Amir (President) of a party in 1962 and the general elections of the 1970 party were successful enough to win few seats to make itself relevant in national and provincial politics. JUI got seven seats in the National assembly and provincial assemblies of NWFP and in Baluchistan party got nine seats. JUI was successful enough to form a coalition government with the Left-wing progressive National Awami Party (NAP). JUI made a political alliance in 1970 not just with ANP but with another left-wing progressive party (PPP). Party has been criticized by this

approach of losing ideological commitment to the pursuit of power. Meanwhile, JUI has also been encouraged for this pragmatism among political quarters although they have to face criticism on their opportunism and extraordinary ideological flexibility.

JUI F got branched off from JUI and two factions came into being. One was Jamiat Ulama e Islam Samiul Haq ( JUI S) and the other became JUI F. Sami Ul Haq is known as the father of Taliban because of his madrassah Darul Uloom Haqqania which is known as the University of Jihad in West. The majority of Taliban studied in this university and learned their Islamic teachings from here. JUI S supported Zia and its Islamization whereas JUI F opposed much of Zia,s Islamization and policies of his regime but favored many of Zia,s Islamization moves.

The major reason for the split between both factions was a difference in Afghanistan as both supported the Taliban but had different perspectives on Jihad and armed struggle (Akbari, 2019). Maulana Sami Ul Haq wanted to take credit for developments in Afghanistan. Fazal ur Rehman knew Sami Ul Haq could use influence in Afghanistan for achieving its political purposes in Pakistan. During the lifetime of Mufti Mehmood when Maulana Fazal ur Rehman was a student in Darul Uloom Haqqania his father asked Fazal not to be a student of Sami ul Haq. Sami was jealous of Fazal ur Rehman,s political outreach as he was not having influence in KPK and among Deobunds (Akbari, 2019). Because of major ideological and political differences, both did not want to go together and separated their ways.

JUI F which is known as a pragmatic as well as opportunistic party is facing difficulty in shaping its political narrative because of stagnation in the ideological program. For almost two decades with changing regional and global strategic matrix, religious political parties like JUI F are going through a transformation. (Safi, 2017). Such parties had transnational political and ideological commitments and because of patronage-based global order, such commitments are shrinking. Old loyalties and ideological bondages are being revisited by nation-states and political groups. Concepts like sovereignty and national identity have reduced space for transnational ideological commitments by political groups which reduces the role of political Islam in Pakistan as well.

JUI F celebrated hundred years of JUH in 2017 where delegations from thirty states came to celebrate a historic day of the party. JUI F had guests from across the world for three days. Delegates from across the world participated which means the transnational value and identity of the party is intact but influencing their religious political ideas transnationally has become challenging task. Top religious figures like Imam e Kaaba and the Saudi religious affairs minister came to Nowshera a city in KPK. (Dawn, 2019). These religious figures have a direct link with Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab who was

the founder of Wahabism. Religious leaders from the Deoband school of thought also came and participated in celebrations. Religious leaders from India, Bangladesh, Iran, and many other Islamic countries came to participate in a hundred-year celebration of the party. Despite ideological and political differences party was able to invite delegates from Saudi Arabia and Iran (Dawn, 2019).

JUIF has a close connection with Saudi Arabia. Party believes that the Islamic Military Alliance which is led by Saudi Arabia is a positive move that will give Pakistan a role in Muslim World. Former Pakistan's army chief is head of Islamic Military Alliance. Although JUIF is a religious political party on the left of the military in Pakistan but because of Saudi Arabia partly supports this military alliance. JUIF says the impression that this alliance is against Iran must be dispelled and Pakistan must engage Iran on this issue. Party believes the state must make policy on this issue as political parties just have a role to assist the state. This shows that JUIF does not believe in transnational link with other states and political forces which excludes the role of state (Safi, 2017).

JUIF gave an unprecedented space to minorities, even local Christians were given a stage to speak and share views at three days international gathering in Nowshera. A Christian lady from Baluchistan Asiya Nasir is a senator of JUIF. How independent is she in making her political and social choices that is something else and debatable. But compulsion of the system has changed the ideas and structure of JUIF (A. Nasir, personal communication, December 3, 2019). That is how this research says that Political Islam is changing in Pakistan. Maulana Fazal Ur Rehman openly states that anyone can be a member of JUIF including Shia, Sunni, and non-Muslims. This is changing the character of JUIF which is embracing all others to make them a member of the party. In the past, JUIF was considered a party that has given rise to extremist elements like banned organizations like Sipah-e-Sahaba, Lashkar-e-Jhagvi and Harkat-ul-Ansar and non-Muslims could not be part of party but now party is changing itself. (Safi, 2017).

Whereas in the last few years especially after 9/11 politics of JUIF is more like a liberal-conservative party. Although Party overrated its significances in Pakistan to get engaged with national security institutions for political relevance. But militants rejected the politics and loyalty of JUIF with them and JUIF had to face terrorism of the Pakistani Taliban. The policies of JUIF have been progressive when issues of sovereignty and implementation of sharia were raised by non-state actors. JUIF stood with the state and parliament and even mainstreamed other religious forces under the banner of MMA. The way liberal parties like ANP, PPP, and MQM were targeted by the Taliban after 9/11, the leadership and workers of JUIF were also targeted. Maulana

Fazal Ur Rehman was targeted three times by suicide bombers. Former Deputy Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Abdul Ghafoor Haidri and Former Chief Minister KPK Akram Durrani were targeted in suicide attacks in Baluchistan and KPK. Party leadership in Sindh has also been targeted and killed. JUIF has made it clear that party leaders and workers are being attacked for supporting Pakistan, democracy, and for the welfare of the people. (The Express Tribune, 2018). JUIF created a narrative that was contrary to religious extremism and terrorism. Party trained and equipped thousands of its workers, members, and supports on ideological lines. Its supports and voters have been told to follow guidelines of the state and its principles which portrays political Islam is changing in Pakistan. The traditional view of confessional parties is of hardliners and extremists which changed when party supported state apparatus against extremist elements.

JUIF has categorically stated that it does not have any political bonding with JUH now despite having the same history and ideological understanding. Both parties believe that working in the contemporary state framework is a need of the hour and any transnational link will not be according to rules of contemporary statecraft.

Meanwhile, the organizational structure of JUIF is changing and now the number of members in the Central Executive Committee (Markazi Shoura) is increasing from 45 to 70 (Akbari, 2019). Since the party believes it needs wider public opinion and participation from all quarters and areas is needed for broader decision making. This happened because the party lost an election in 2018 and they want mobilization and re-indoctrination of party ideas in members. Although the party says they have a membership of over three million people which is a sizeable number (Akbari, 2019). While organizational restructuring is going after the 2018 elections and the party is gathering the support of workers, members, students of madrassahs, and voters and creating awareness about the 2018 elections are fake. JUIF knows that its electoral base was KPK and PTI has made inroads there and made provincial government twice. So JUIF is using religious cards where issues of the finality of Prophethood and conspiratorial theories are being used to discredit and destabilize PTI in KPK and at the national level calling them a Western agents. Using religious cards against other progressive political forces is normally done by religious parties to gather support from their workers. But the rise of a third political force in the shape of PTI in KPK and at the national level shows religious forces have failed to make their case and win voters and supporters.

### **Changing character of JI**

JI is an organic creation but it is believed the party has changed its ideological stance on having shariah in the country. It speaks more of sharia in media and for news content

whereas in its manifesto there is less discussion on that (Amin, 2016, p.80). Meanwhile, electoral setbacks and new political entities like PTI in its traditional voter base diminished its political utility. Party believes it lost momentum after 9/11 because new political forces are emerging and unelected forces are influencing the political process (Rehman, 2019). The religious right-wing has been tested and it could not convince its right-wing voter base for gaining electoral support after 2007. Party believes keeping supporters and voters engaged and charged on sharia is necessary and they keep doing this and their support base is large. JI did not support the armed struggle of Sufi Muhammad in Swat as that was a critical time for party supporters and loyalists. Party stood with the state and its institutions for making the state supreme entity.

One important factor which has brought ideological changes in JI is the de-intellectualization of the party. There has been no one after Maulana Maududi who came up with intellectual thoughts like him. There are scholars in the party but they could not intellectually replace Maududi. Meanwhile, all those who were members of the party remained stagnant in terms of ideological development. Party could not enhance its ideological base and could not maintain political relevance in emerging political discourse. It took them much time to understand changing national and international environment to adjust their party perspective. This has decreased their political relevance in mainstream politics and in parliamentary political activities.

One such example of de intellectualization and changing character of JI is of Former Amir Munawar Hassan. He became controversial when he declared death of Amir of globally designated terrorist organization ,Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as a martyr and called that be it American or Pakistani soldier who fought with TTP is not a martyr.(Jamal, 2014). Party called such views as personal and not of a party which shows ideological differences among rank and file of the party (M. Aslam, personal communication, January 23, 2020). Party had to change its stance and Munawar Hassan could not be the next Amir which is unprecedented as he was the only Amir who remained in this position for one tenure. So with changing political situation in the country, JI changed its ideological base because of pressure from state institutions and society.

Over the period, political ideas of the party are losing mainstream attention of the society. Party is talking less about Islamic sharia for the state and trying to engage the masses on socio-economic issues. Party speaks of Islamic morality and the Islamic banking system but since it can only bring changes with an electoral majority in parliament so it has limitations. Although the party supports parliamentary legislation and stands against military intervention in politics when JI was part of MMA it supported Gen (R), Pervaiz Musharraf, in many ways including giving him an extension



for wearing uniform through parliament (Dawn, 2004). JI is under leadership of Siraj Ul Haq is becoming anti status quo party and challenging role of unelected institutions in politics.

JI is considered a grass-root political party having religious and conservative support. Support of the party for Indian-occupied Kashmir and Palestine has never been questionable. JI emerged single religious voice which spoke against India's unconditional act on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019 of revoking article 370 and 35 A in Occupied Kashmir and held countrywide protests. Amir of JI was included in Prime Minister's special committee to look into the situation after India unilaterally changed Occupied Kashmir's status. Party turned out to be the only religious political party from opposition to be made part of this because of its commitment to Kashmir cause and street power. This is an unprecedented move and also a recognition of the JI position on Kashmir (The News, 2019). Meanwhile, JUI F leader Maulana Fazal ur Rehman who remained head of parliamentary Kashmir committee for ten years could not develop his credentials on the Kashmir cause. This is because of the fundamental approach to Kashmir issues of both parties. JI has its support for Kashmir because it considers its unfinished agenda of British partition and Muslim lands which have been under the control of non-Muslims must get freedom including Palestine. Whereas JUIF has taken political advantage of the Kashmir issue for engaging conservative voter base which thinks the Kashmir issue is a dispute between Hindus and Muslims.

Party has an anti-imperialism agenda as part of manifesto as well as expression through media. It is a rare religious party in Pakistan which supports Hamas and speaks for Palestine and takes a very hard line on Israel. This makes JI a natural partner with Iran and takes the party away from the Arab States whose position has been compromised on the Palestine issue. Although the party has street power but when Israel changed its capital from Tal Aviv to Jerusalem, right-wing Islamic parties including JI took some time to mobilize people. Although Americans and Israelis were expecting an abrupt reaction. But conservative voter base in Pakistan is not that much active because religious parties are facing domestic challenges of political relevance in electoral and mainstream politics.

Despite the fact, a party is losing its political value and electoral support although it became part of a larger political force like MMA in the 2018 elections. JI does not believe in violent revolution or any kind of totalitarian change in society. Party believes that for the broader stability of society a strong socio-economic order is needed. For this moral economy is needed which is a model of development based on the capitalist economy but having Islamic reference (Amin, 2014, p.83). JI is interested in a weaker form of sharia where women and minorities are incorporated in the national apparatus.

Jl and JUI F are working together and keeping political Conesus other than MMA as well. Political platforms like Milli Yekjehti Council (MYC) brought religious harmony and became a source of dialogue for religious parties. It was established in 1995 to be instrumental in reducing sectarian tensions among religious groups. (Amin, 2014, p.84). Jl is also a member of this political conglomeration and party along with JUIF tried to shift the Islamic ideology of religious parties from hardcore religious sharia model to issues that are linked to identity, economy, and society (Amin, 2014, p.83). Jl emerged as a progressive force although its political and electoral space kept shirking which is changing the character of political Islam in Pakistan.

While Jl is changing its ideological base in Pakistan so its transnational partners have changed their ideological commitment. Jl had the same ideological commitment before the partition of India and Pakistan but after the partition, it changed its ideology keeping in view the state's social contract. Jl in India seeks secularism and kept making appeals to the government for secularism to protect the rights of the Muslims (Iqtedar, 2011, p.55). Whereas in Pakistan Islamists opposed secularism. This shows how Islamists shift their political ideology knowing ground realities and adjust their ideological and political objectives. One can analyze confessional parties are not hardcore Islamists who believe in enforcing sharia but they want to give reference to their political activities. Misconception about confessional parties like Jl has been they want to grab power to bring the hard face of Islam through parliamentary politics. In such times when political institutions are attracting youth and the literacy rate is comparatively increasing. Confessional parties are changing their ideological and political stance in Pakistan keeping in mind ground realities and overall global political realities.

There has been an impact of leftist groups, youth, social media, and mainstream electronic media on Islamists (Iqtedar, 2011, p.56). Which has changed the conservative stance of Islamists and societal pressure in urban centers and mainstream media and social media reach in rural areas have changed Islamists methodology of work. Islamists were not ready to face such technological challenges. Forces of globalization which normally have been criticized by Islamists calling them western imperialist inventions and also interventions in Islamic societies changed the mindset of society. Since Islamists are vying for power with other political forces they are adopting new means of communication to keep themselves relevant. That is why Jl has a huge social media infrastructure at the party level and all members of a party using social media to make their reach to the masses. Political Islam is changing and Islamists like Jl are changing their political strategies to make their voices heard.

## Conclusion

This research has examined that how confessional parties in Pakistan have developed democratic and institutional credentials. They believe changes in national apparatus can only be included through democratic means. Despite the demand for a sharia-based political structure, both JI and JUI-F avoid bringing sharia through unconstitutional means. Their electoral base has reduced because of the de-intellectualization of political thought in view of the contemporary tendencies in societies. Political Islam is changing and shrinking in Pakistan because of the lack of the religious-political diversity and lack of participation of the youth in mainstream politics. Political Islam is changing because the society is not conducive to orthodox Islam whereas confessional parties have long tried to bring conservative Islam through political means in policymaking. While society in Pakistan is traditional and culturally ultra-conservative in general but not in a religious sense with some possible exceptions. So at times western researchers and thinkers mix religious conservatism with social conservative ideas. Pakistan is moving forward and Islamists have to incorporate modern tools of globalization and communication for making their local, regional and global outreach. The use of communication tools and technology in terms of social media and mainstream media has also exposed Islamists both positively and negatively to society making their case more challenging in the context of the emerging youth population in Pakistan.

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## **Economic Integration in South Asia: Opportunities and Challenges**

Tanweer Shahid<sup>1</sup> and Azhar Ahmad<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

*Regional economic integration stimulates cooperation to uplift socio-economic quality of a region. Although economic integration may, sometimes, result in lesser independence of states, the benefits often outweigh the limitations. Despite encouraging growth in South Asia (pre-Covid-19 period), its contribution in global GDP remains minimal. Trust deficit, reluctance of states, political and security issues, lack of sustaining infrastructure, are some factors affecting gainful integration. Regional economic integration, nevertheless, offers exciting prospects to synergise mutual comparative advantages, trade and commercial gains, investment opportunities in other states. This paper analysis various initiatives within the South Asian region and their impact on regional integration. The pandemic of Covid-19 has worsened socio-economic predicament and trade transactions in the region. Given the socio-economic and poverty issues, SAARC integration can aid in political stability, socio-economic development thus ensuring overall growth of the region and individual countries.*

**Keywords:** Regional integration, Socio-economic prospects, Covid-19, Free Trade Agreements, SAARC.

### **Introduction**

Regional economic integration is predominantly economic in its character, encompassing trade and investment between states in a particular geographic region. Such integration remains a distinguishable attribute of international trade relations. A step towards wider regional integration has prospects for larger benefits for consumers and socio-economic dividends for the countries involved, and for world at large (Sultana & Asrat, 2014).

A greater trend of integration has been seen entailing trade in the region and various cooperative agreements. Both, the economic and political factors, have served to bring the countries together but pre-dominantly it is the economic factor that influences the integration process. Manifestation of this fact is the EU and ASEAN amongst many fora, where the economic interests have improved relations and brought the conflicting states together. Ongoing global economic situation displaying retarded growth,

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prevalent recession and, at times, the protectionist mindset of some of the nations, call for unanimous joining of trade and fiscal goals, both at regional and global levels, to ameliorate cooperation (Sultana & Asrat, 2014). Significantly, and unexpectedly, the Corona Virus 2019, with its genesis in city of Wuhan (China), has engulfed the globe including South Asia. Already poor and struggling economies of the countries of the South Asian region and overall crawling regional trade and economic activities are estimated to suffer the worst. Thus, it makes good reason for the countries of the region to engage themselves in the regional initiatives for better cooperation and improved trade.

### **Economic Integration in South Asia**

South Asian region encompasses eight countries of varying economies, differing cultures, ethnicities and political approaches. This region includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is the platform established by the countries to promote common good. In January of 2004, these SAARC countries embarked on a much sought after collaborative trade journey and commissioned South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA). It symbolized the objectives to accomplish more and wider integration, in terms of economy, trade and investment, amongst these South Asian countries. This key aim of the SAFTA was to be accomplished by diminishing interstate barriers to economic cooperation and trade. The SAFTA aimed to facilitate cross-border shipment of goods, to promote fair trade approaches and to implement mechanisms for just and equal benefits, and steering correct measures for enforcement of the SAFTA objectives (Kabir, 2007).

### **Significance of Integration in Conflict-Ridden South Asia**

Necessity of economic integration in the region of South Asia, marred with conflicts and mistrust or political blocking, has been increasingly acknowledged by the politicians, statesmen, industrialists and businessmen. Initially, towards this aim, the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) was implemented in year 1995 by the SAARC to promote trade and economic cooperation and cohesion. The scope and reach of economic integration in South Asia is too low despite their geographic proximity and socio-economic conditions (Rosal, 2009).

South Asian economies, continue to struggle under an environment of military conflicts and colossal blend of interstate differences as well as domestic divergences. India has shown some promise in pre-Covid era, whereas smaller countries have not been able to do that well. Pakistan is also trying to cope with unending security and socio-economic issues. Sri Lanka has recently come out of a civil war with Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) in its own territory and still in the recovery phase.

Although a platform in the form of SAARC exists, the level and speed of integration in South Asia is definitely unsatisfactory. Political, military, social and ethno-religious problems are characteristic of the region. The South Asian unit of the World Bank has indicated four pre-conditions that integrate a region, particularly to become a Free Trade Area (FTA). Firstly, the pre-FTA tariffs must be high; secondly, the FTA members must be significant partners prior making an arrangement. Thirdly, there demands should be complementing each other. Lastly, their economic structural differences should be based on 'true' competitiveness. Except for the first condition, South Asian region barely satisfies the criteria. The trade amongst the states of South Asia has been, in contrast, more competing and to a lesser degree complementary to each other. Such circumstances indicate lesser likelihood to maximize dividends from South Asian PTAs (Bhatta, 2004).

### **Preconditions for Enhanced Trade Probability**

Barring the downturn caused by Covid-19, India economically has been in lead within SAARC countries with a stable economic growth rate of 6-7% at average. With per capita income of US\$ 3653/-, Maldives stands at top in the region. In terms of global Gross Domestic Product, India has been maintaining 4.7% growth but its production shortfall is also around 5.7%. If we talk of Bangladesh, it is owing to two factors that the country has maintained 1.9% of the account balance: firstly, due to higher inbound remittance from its diaspora; and secondly, due to its rising and expanding exports (Bhatta, 2004).

### **Intra-Regional Trade within SAARC**

Intra-regional trade amongst SAARC states continues to be on its ebb. Interestingly, during initial period of their becoming independent countries, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were having relatively higher trade figures amongst them. As a proportion of their collective trade, the trade figures were in two digits. Today, it has reached too low a figure, compared to trade between ASEAN countries that is at 30% and EU, which reached 65%. Another worth noting point is that in South Asian region, a great proportion of trade that happens in the region falls under category of 'Informal Trade' (Ewing-Chow & Islam, 2007). Such a significant volume of informal trade rejects the proposition that South Asian countries cannot engage in systematic, formal and wholesome agreements of trade and investments, through SAFTA.

Today, in contemporary international trends, trade in services continues to be more important and is on rise than the trade of goods. It is yet another startling fact that SAFTA has utterly failed to bring about any trade in services and there is zero trade in services amongst the South Asian region. As the technology continues to evolve and grow it facilitates trans-frontier exchange of services. In addition, as stated, the removal

of statutory hurdles may incentivize the regional trade market to address regional demand. The prospects for this natural trade seems good (Ewing-Chow & Islam, 2007).

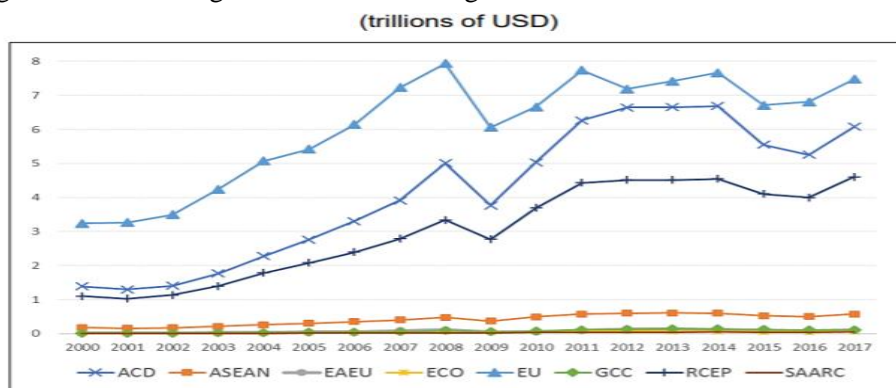
Amongst all the regional blocks including Gulf Cooperation Council, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership established in November 2020, SAARC stands at the bottom. Even it failed to reach its predicted trade volume of 67 billion \$ and is hovering around 32 billion \$.

### Lack of Formal Trade in South Asia

Another worth mentioning point is that in South Asian region, a great proportion of trade that happens in the region falls under category of ‘Informal Trade’ (Ewing-Chow & Islam, 2007). Dearth of ‘Formal Trade’ entails unrecorded trade while not using capital, unskilled and skilled labour in production of traded good as an investment and a consumption good. Such a significant volume of informal trade, focused on consumption good and unrecorded trade only, rejects the proposition that South Asian countries cannot engage in systematic, formal and wholesome agreements of trade and investments, through SAFTA.

Today, in contemporary international trends, trade in services continues to be more important and is on rise than the trade of goods. It is yet another startling fact that SAFTA has utterly failed to bring about any trade in services and there is zero trade in services amongst the South Asian region. As the technology continues to evolve and grow it facilitates trans-frontier exchange of services. In addition, as stated, the removal of statutory hurdles may incentivize the regional trade market to address regional demand. The prospects for this natural trade seems good (Ewing-Chow & Islam, 2007).

Figure-1: Trade Integration Volume in Regional Forums



Note: ACD = Asia Cooperation Dialogue; ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations; EAEU = Eurasian Economic Union; ECO = Economic Cooperation Organization; EU = European Union; GCC = Gulf Cooperation Council; RCEP = Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership; SAARC = South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.  
 Source: Author's calculation and compilation based on International Monetary Fund, Direction of Trade Statistics.

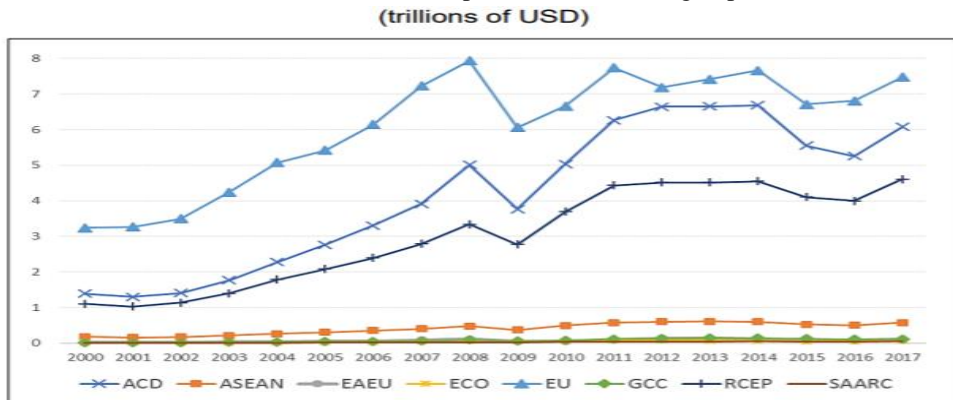
Source: Asian Development Bank Working Paper, 2020.



Even the intra-trade amongst the SAARC regional countries is the lowest in comparison to member countries of other regional integrational forums, as reflected below:

**Figure-2: Total Intraregional Trade Share (%)**

**Source:** Asian Development Bank Working Paper, 2020.



Note: ACD = Asia Cooperation Dialogue; ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations; EAEU = Eurasian Economic Union; ECO = Economic Cooperation Organization; EU = European Union; GCC = Gulf Cooperation Council; RCEP = Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership; SAARC = South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.  
 Source: Author's calculation and compilation based on International Monetary Fund, Direction of Trade Statistics.

## Unilateral Trade liberalization in South Asia

Trade liberalization is the most significant policy reform in the South Asian region. Economic effects of this liberalised policy indicate that imports in the region, significantly in states of Bangladesh and Nepal, is falling due to transaction in the local currency. The most increase in the imports demand has been witnessed by Bangladesh. India follows Bangladesh in the imports demand figures. Talking about the rise of total domestic demand, Pakistan stands second after Bangladesh. Indian statistics show that it has seen the maximum increase in nominal return to capital. The second highest figure in rise in nominal return is that of Bangladesh. It is worth noting that the GDP price deflator has shown upward trends in all the regional states. It is its highest figure of increase as shown by Bangladesh, then India followed by Nepal. The reason is that though tariff reduction caused reduction in the costs of investment goods, but it has been marginalised due to “rise in the primary costs, wages, return to capital and return to land”. Also, actual exchange rate has dipped in the countries of the region whereas Bangladesh suffered maximum depreciation. What are the results? The resultant outcome is very competitive exports if seen in the global perspective. The greatest positive impact on GDP, along with that on increased employment rates, has been seen in Bangladesh whereas Sri Lanka remains the least beneficiary of the effect of GDP.

Similarly, there are number of production effects; such as due to tariff liberalization, Bangladesh has undergone more pronounced effects on its outputs. Again, it is Sri Lanka seeing the least production effect. The result has been that the average output rates in the domain of agriculture have increased in these countries (Seth, 2020). Again, Bangladesh has seen the most significant effect. Likewise, the cost of manufactured goods, at average, is also low in Pakistan, Nepal as well as in Bangladesh. On the other hand, the industrial goods have seen rise of cost in both India and Sri Lanka. Talking of services sector, it is Pakistan only where cost of services has dipped whereas whole SAARC region has witnessed increase of cost in services (Seth, 2020).

### **Trade Linkages - Maritime and Land Routes**

**Maritime routes.** Oceans carry around 90% of world trade. Thus, seaports and sea routes become vital for inter-regional and intra-regional trade. So is the case for South Asia. Generally, seaports can be classified into 3 categories: trans-shipment hubs, regional-hub ports, and thirdly the regional ones. Bigger shipping liners normally ply on or in vicinity of the principal sea routes and use the trans-shipment hubs, the first category of seaports. In South Asian region, Colombo port of Sri Lanka is the only trans-shipment hub. Colombo is also the most developed one. Nevertheless, its standing amongst the container ports has been witnessing decline, as it has to face competition with Chinese ports. Indian Nhava Sheva port, which is the largest one in India, comes under category of the regional hub port. Regional seaports administer feeder services from the major trans-shipment hubs. In South Asia, the Regional seaports are Indian ports of Calcutta, and Haldia, and Bangladesh's Chittagong. At regional hub ports, there are number of discouraging facts that cause disruption of trade flow. These include excessive turn-around time, delayed shipments, crowding, unfixed weekly schedule and adjournments. If a trader opts for an air route, it would add 40% to the cost of a traded item. Thus, it is a negative outcome of limited trade infrastructure in the region (Wilson, 2007).

**Effects of security regimes.** Other than ports and associated infrastructure, regulatory framework and its compliance is also an aspect worth attention. "International Maritime Organization (IMO)" enacted the "International Ship and Port Security Code (ISPS)". A large number of states – around 102 – have ratified the Code and have implemented it. The regional airports and maritime ports appear less competitive than the ports of East Asia. The port efficiency is highly associated with shipping costs. Tariffs of port entry make part of shipping costs and are thus higher in South Asia. Since the current level of port efficiency is very low in South Asia, the region could not expect significant benefits now. However, with improved port regulations and performances, it can cause lower transaction costs and facilitate trade.

Newer frameworks for regional cooperation as well as improved regional security mechanism remains vital for enhanced cooperation and trade.

**Land routes & land-based trade.** Lack of trans-frontier transit stations and road networks within South Asian region are prominent hurdles in growth of regional integration. For instance, Afghanistan lacks road infrastructure and goods transshipment facilities. For shipment between India and Bangladesh, there is an established inland waterway. Talking about India and Pakistan, normally a third party route is used other than Wagah border. The shipping cost remains on rise because of lack of regional transport linkages. This issue is much relevant in states without a seaport, like Afghanistan, Bhutan, & Nepal. Furthermore, industry strikes are also a major reason for trade transit as well as bottlenecks along land connections. Thus, time and price of shipment remain major factors of consideration with the entrepreneurs for trade shipments.

**Implications of lack of connectivity.** Largely, Inland road network forms principal routes for goods transportation in South Asia. In regional context, negligible maintenance, old bridges, network growth system and limited capacity exist. Resultantly, it causes increase in the cost of movement, maintenance of vehicles, licensing restrictions and cost of goods. Thus, limitations are imposed on cargo carrying vehicles and the weight of goods too. Accordingly, the shipment efficiency is marginalised and done at higher costs. Again, the traders determine the shipping means considering only two factors i.e. time and cost. Such limitations in road connectivity in the region puts tremendous hurdles in enhancing regional and supra-regional trade and commerce prospects (Wilson, 2007).

## **Non-Cooperation and its Implications**

**Political crises.** Unfortunately, in South Asian region, after-effects of political dynamics with respect to intra-state remains too discouraging. These effects show that undesirable external interference in domestic affairs may cause non-cohesive prepositions not only for a country but also for the region itself. A struggling state can be more diluted because of a surge in its domestic issues. As example, unwanted meddling of United Nations in the crisis of Nepal (in Nepalese perspective), resulted in increased differences amongst the government, the political parties and the populace during the 1996-2006 armed conflict between Maoist insurgents and Nepalese law enforcement agencies (Human Rights Watch, 2020) . Earlier, where state actors have been the significant characters in regional i.e. trans-frontier and domestic politics, the ongoing leanings indicate that there are many non-state actors such as politico-religious factions and terrorist organisations, that influence the political dynamics of a state (Khan, shaheen, Yusuf, and Tanveer, 2007). Generally, the expanse of intermittent

incidents of violence or law & order in the South Asian region pose serious questions about the effectiveness of a country in alleviating the problems. Number of actors in a state choose to follow their respective agenda, unconcerned of the probable rise of conflict and the dividends of the cooperative engagement (Khan et al, 2007).

**Security conditions and conflicts in the region.** South Asian region is besieged with manifold regional, interstate as well as domestic clashes either based on territorial reasons or factors entailing faith, ethnicity, or parochial outlook. Historically, such issues cumulatively form a barrier in growing any worthwhile integration in SAARC. Such issues have resulted in negatively affecting the objective of economic development in the SAARC states. For instance, although a cordial relationship exists between India and Nepal, they still have mutual disputes. The “1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship” mandated the parties i.e. both Nepal and India, to collaborate while developing effective strategies to combat security threats in case of foreign aggression (Nayak, 2010). Such provisions cause concern in Nepal, as these may cause restrictions on autonomy of Nepal and enhanced probability that India might intrude into Nepalese independent identity. Nepal thus employed its geographical leverage with China as a strategic measure to avoid complete strangulation by India. Following 1962 Sino-Indian war, Nepal authorised China for constructing the Lhasa-Kathmandu connection. India viewed, however, this decision of Nepal as Nepalese inclination towards China as well as interference of China in the internal affairs of South Asia. India sees it as a grave threat to its security interests (Tandan, 2020).

**India and Other States of SAARC.** India versus other SAARC states is a regional concern vis-à-vis dynamics of Indian foreign politics. Sri Lanka has no major dispute with any of the South Asian states. With India, key dispute of Sri Lanka has been the denial of citizenship to Tamils and Indian suspicious involvement in Sri Lanka’s fight against LTTE and recent lease of Hambantota port to China (Herskovitz, Marlow, and Bloomberg, 2019). India and Bangladesh also have conflicts such as Chittagong Hill tracts marred with illegal migration, waters dispute as well as delimitation issues of boundaries between the two states (Ahmad, 2020). Division of Bengal on pre-partition is also a bitter issue (Kher, 2012). India and Pakistan share strained relations. Their relationship is marked with insecurities. There have been number of failed initiatives to ease the tense relations and number of unresolved bilateral conflicts, the core issue being the Kashmir dispute. Being the major countries of South Asia, their bilateral conflicts, especially insensitivity of India (Ganguly, 2020) evidently affect not only their mutual trade benefits, but negatively impact the regional integration and overall growth of the region. Recent China-India face-off in disputed Laddakh region of Sino-

Aksai chin has reignited the Sino-Indian dispute, further strained the relations between the two major powers, and heated the region (Goldman, 2020).

**Social Uprisings & Unrest in the Region.** In South Asia, almost all the countries are combatting serious security challenges; be it civil violence, insurgency, separatist movements, extremism or ethno-religious conflicts. The largest country of the region, India is struggling with such issues in Kashmir, Punjab, eastern states of Mizoram, Assam as well as Nagaland (Pritam, 2020). Recent Indian Citizenship Enactment and annexation of Indian-Occupied Kashmir have further raised security issues for India (TRT World News, 2020). Viewing Indian politics, federalism, its secular proclamation vis-à-vis Hindutva doctrine being followed, religious extremism being displayed even in ongoing Corona pandemic crises, by present regime of Mr Narinder Modi, is likely to cause more serious challenges for the State. Talking of Pakistan, it is struggling with economic crises, federal-provincial rifts and extremism despite earlier military operations, governance incompetence and international geo-political issues. Afghanistan is on the crossroads of instability, prolonged military action, political divides, and ethnic conflicts, dominance of international forces, terrorism and socio-economic downfall. The smaller states such as Nepal and Sri Lanka are also facing domestic conflicts and failures in their economic and monetary systems. While such conflicts pose a challenge to integration, we believe that growing economic cooperation can help all the states mutually not only to address their domestic issues but also help in toning down their inter-state political conflicts.

**Economic instability.** South Asian states economic policy hinged upon the aim of self-sufficiency through import substitution (Kher, 2012). In the opinion of the smaller states, increased trade would mean that larger states such as India might dominate the economic interests of smaller states and result in over-dependence of these states on India. However, the other perspective, which remained subdued, was that it was indeed an opportunity leading to bigger markets in countries like India as well as Pakistan (Kumar & Sharma, 2015). Relatively more compact states, in economic terms, such as Nepal or Bangladesh preferred that extra-regional suppliers provide them goods, even at higher prices showing significant reservations to welcome any investment by India or Pakistan. Notwithstanding that, the latent hydropower capacity of Nepal is around 70,000 MWs, the regional countries have not benefitted from this latent energy despite continuing rise in Indian energy demands. It is only 1% of this capacity that has been utilized by these countries (Kumar & Sharma, 2015). Another example is of Sri Lanka which imports bulk of railway coaches from Romania whereas regional products of the same quality are also available at the costs that are lesser than that in Romania. Likewise, in the fields of shipbuilding and cement industry, trade with both Pakistan

and India can result in more dividends for Sri Lanka rather than the latter engaging with South Korea (Kumar & Sharma, 2015). Sadly, both India and Pakistan, have repeatedly ignored the well-being of their masses by not engaging with each other purposefully. The credit of even the existing limited level of trade, formal or informal, goes primarily to the industrialists and entrepreneurs on both sides rather than the states (Kumar & Sharma, 2015).

### **Effects of Indo-Pak Conflict on Economic Integration**

In geopolitical terms, the South Asian region is undoubtedly a very hot neighbourhood of ideological, political, people-to-people, military and geopolitical animosity between the two nuclear rivals. In addition to the interests of the global powers; the ethno-religious, sectarian and parochial actors are major contributors to the intra-regional relations in this part of the world. Such highly volatile trends in Pak-India relations and historic divide between Hindus and Muslims are main features of their bilateral relations. Parochialism and ongoing religious extremism sour the declared secular stance of India towards Pakistan. Pak-India divide reflects several dimensions including territorial issues and demarcation of boundaries – both land and maritime. Other issues of rivalry include water distribution, illegal immigration, military stand-offs and suspicions of hegemonic designs of a larger nation over other states of the region. Be it the core issue of Kashmir, delimitation issues in Sir Creek, construction of Baglihar Dam, highest military stand-offs at Siachen Glacier, or the issue of Wullar Barrage - all make probable flashpoints of conflict (Jabeen, Mussarat, and Goraya, 2007).

One major barrier in regional integration is a range of politico-military conflicts among the countries of the region. Mutual fears, animosity and bitterness mark the inter-state political relations. Tense relations prevail between nuclear states of India and Pakistan on Kashmir and terrorism. These countries spend huge exchequer on procurement of arms and military hardware. Extraneous military budgets directly shrink the amount to be spared on socio-economic sectors. Emerging nature of threats such as cyber warfare and cybercrimes have also caused suspicions between the regional countries (Kumar & Sharma, 2015). The new forms of warfare, such as the 4th and 5th generations of warfare, non-state actors including armed networks or combatants etc. have caused rise in tensions between India and Pakistan. This, cumulatively, casted too negative ripples on their full-fledge economic integration (Hussain et al, 2019).

### **Cooperation and Integration in South Asia**

Bilateral and regional trade agreements are fast-growing trend in global market. It manifests in all major geographical bounds of the contemporary world including greater Asia. Regional cooperation and integration provides prospects for expanding trade and

economic avenues. Nevertheless, market-oriented cooperation characterised in the region is too low compared to other parts of the world. It is an agreed fact that South Asia offers great prospects of an integrated trade avenues, production, and investment opportunities.

### **Initiatives at SAARC level**

As discussed earlier, SAARC launched the initiatives for stimulating regional integration. Such initiatives include The SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) and SAFTA, as well as “the SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS)” (Kumar & Sharma, 2015).

Although the trade between the SAFTA members has risen, it is too slow to feel satisfied about it. The policymakers and businesspersons of the region are growing interest in SAFTA and its prospective dividends. Sceptics have been suspicious of the potential of the economic cooperation between the regional countries. However, South Asia’s current commercial and fiscal vitality along with its outward-looking policies have caused some interest in South Asian economic integration. The regional integration in economic terms will result in South Asian principal goals of poverty alleviation and socio-economic development (Moinuddin, 2013). South Asian economies are obliged to conceptualize such integration to be an evolving phenomenon. SAARC displays a clear aim to steer towards growing economic community in the region. Recent economic growth trends in South Asia offer both opportunities and challenges to be surpassed for more comprehensive and overarching integration in harmony with the global economy.

### **Replicating global regional integration models**

EU and ASEAN are largely better manifestations of regional cooperation. They set aside their political differences and made efforts for regional integration. Increased integration offered direct and indirect ways of communication and progress. In initial years of formation of ASEAN, almost all states of the region were combatting some form of insurgency and ethnic conflicts with their nearly turbulent and unstable mutual ties (Kher, 2012). Nevertheless, their concerns for stagnant growth in the region, socio-economic standards and their perceptions and concerns on rising dominance of China unified them to solve their disputes through dialogue. South Asia needs to replicate ASEAN and EU by ignoring differences.

### **Corona Pandemic and its Economic Fallout**

The Corona pandemic has casted everlasting effects on every aspect of human activity; and it would have, for sure, strong and severe implications for the world and the South Asian region. Apart from human sufferings due Novel Corona Virus resulting in Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19), a new world order is being swiftly written while

towing behind new social, political and economic norms. On February 15, 2021, as per COVID-19 Situation Report, the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 worldwide has reached 108,579,352 whereas 2,396,408 human beings have lost their lives due this fatal pandemic. For the South Asian region, 12,567,129 people are suffering from the pandemic whereas around 184,393 South Asians have died due COVID-19. India is the worst hit in the region with 10,916,589 cases and 155,732 deaths as of February 15, 2021 (WHO, 2021).

### **Implications of COVID-19 on the Region**

Corona virus, despite invention of vaccines by some countries, continues to pose serious threat to the world. As per a report titled “South Asia: the road ahead in 2021” (Atlantic Council, 2021), “the shadow of 2020 is likely to loom large over the coming year for South Asia, which faces unprecedented economic challenges...” Last year, in another report, “South Asia in the Corona Crisis”, published by “German Institute for International and Security Affairs” in April 2020, there would be too severe and drastic ramifications on the regional economies and would cause rise in the inequality and poverty (Wagner & Scholz, 2020).

As per the report, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have updated their growth predictions for South Asian states with ebbing and negative trends. It goes to state that pandemic and resultant economic crises can drastically affect the agricultural sector that is the principal earning sector in South Asian countries. Due lockdowns, the sudden closing down of major factories and industries, like textiles which have strong economic influence in Bangladesh, or the tourism in countries such as Sri Lanka and the Maldives, are likely to rely on further debt and may push recession (Wagner & Scholz, 2020). The World Bank forecasts year 2021-22 to be perplexing period for the region in terms of economy and trade (World Bank, 2021). The “South Asia Economic Focus”, in its report issued on April 12, 2020 expected an economic nosedive in the region, due low trade and economy (SAEF: “The Cursed Blessing of Public Banks”, 2020). It proved correct. Covid-19 would further result in almost failing trade, as well as much of the pressure on financial institutions and banking fields. It also forecasted South Asian growth dip between 1.8 and 2.8% in last year (2020); whereas prior COVID-19, the forecasted regional growth, in October 2019, was around 6.3%. Result is the worst regional statistics in last four decades (SAEF, 2020). The World Bank sees South Asian economic outlook gloomy and glim in coming couple of years and estimates that socio-economic levels would further plunge close to poverty lines (World Bank, 2021).

As the current pandemic situation goes on, and lockdowns may be easing out due to economic and livelihood concerns, stress would be again on national economies



having health care and socio-economic implications. The report cautions the worst consequences for South Asian countries and the region with further falling growth rates in 2020. India, the largest economy of South Asia, is already witnessing downfall in its growth that was under 5% by December 2019 (SAEF, 2020). Along with India, Pakistan is in severe economic predicament. The country was already struggling with governance, socio-economic distress, and monetary policymaking; and now, this COVID-19 has added to the woes of the region. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka feel deeply stressed due to the pandemic (SAEF, 2020). For the fact that economic conditions of each South Asian state differ, each state may, follow a customized roadmap to combat the Covid-19 and its economic battle. In nutshell, individual and regional economic growth is severely bruised and it requires substantive efforts to face the crisis. The answer lies in collaborative and cooperative approach, a compulsion under Covid-19.

Given all above factors and the prevalent Covid-19 effects, the economic outlook of the South Asian region is gloomy and grim. In addition, as per the forecasts by the World Bank, the regional economies are likely to continue with their downfall trend in general, and due Covid-19 fallout. The table below (World Bank, December 2020) reflect the GDP forecast of the economies of regional countries. The result would be thrusting a large number of regional masses to poverty line or below.

Figure 3: Real GDP Growth 2019 & Beyond

		Real GDP forecasts (percent)				Revisions to forecasts from October 2019 (percentage point)	
		2019	2020(e)	2021(f)	2022(f)	2020(f)	2021(f)
<b>South Asia</b>		4.1	-7.7	4.5	4.6	-14.0	-2.2
Afghanistan	December to December	3.9	-5.5	2.5	3.3	-8.5	-1.0
Maldives	January to December	5.9	-19.5	9.5	12.5	-25.0	3.9
Sri Lanka	January to December	2.3	-6.7	3.3	2.0	-10.0	-0.4
<b>Fiscal year basis</b>		<b>18/19</b>	<b>19/20(e)</b>	<b>20/21(f)</b>	<b>21/22(f)</b>	<b>19/20(f)</b>	<b>20/21(f)</b>
Bangladesh	July to June	8.1	2.0	1.6	3.4	-5.2	-5.7
Bhutan	July to June	3.8	1.5	1.8	2.0	-5.9	-4.1
Nepal	mid-July to mid-July	7.0	0.2	0.6	2.5	-6.2	-5.9
Pakistan	July to June	1.9	-1.5	0.5	2.0	-3.9	-2.5
		<b>19/20</b>	<b>20/21(e)</b>	<b>21/22(f)</b>	<b>22/23(f)</b>	<b>20/21(f)</b>	<b>21/22(f)</b>
India	April to March	4.2	-9.6	5.4	5.2	-16.5	-1.8

**Note:** (e)=estimate, (f)=forecast. For India, FY2020/21(e) runs from April 2020 through March 2021. June 2020 forecasts are from World Bank (2020a) and October 2019 forecasts are from World Bank South Asia Economic Focus Fall 2019. Pakistan is reported at factor cost. **Source:** World Bank

**Source:** World Bank data (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/sar/overview>)

## **Opportunities for Synergizing Regional Integration**

There exists an array of opportunities for South Asian states to pursue economic integration. Accordingly, the dividends of such regional integration would vary as determined by the phase of development and political stability of each state and growing mutual trust.

### **Cross-border Investment**

Enhanced economic cooperation amongst SAARC states will aid in number of domains like customs regimes, tariffs, taxation, market opportunities as well as framework of legal systems. Such arrangements are bound to result in increased facilitation and thus increased profitability. It shall broaden other trade opportunities due to the region's geographical location - at the crossroads of Asia and connecting the world's energy hub in Middle East, Western and Central Asian region to some of the largest consumers of energy (SAARC Report, 2020). It is evident given socio-economic stagnancy of South Asia that its resource requirements to develop infrastructure in the region is colossal (Kabir, 2007). Indian assessment for its resource needs in future of around \$500 billion is very significant. The larger markets can be the dividend of regional trade framework and make the private sector more attractive in establishing the physical infrastructure in the region. Because of policy of self-sufficiency, the regional countries remain reluctant in trade complementarities (Kabir, 2007). In the regional perspective, say, Bangladesh has jute industry so the country may benefit from its production, whereas Indian region of the West Bengal having its production infrastructure should focus on fabric processing.

In the region, economic aspects are growingly determining the political linkages amongst states; other than being in constant state of turmoil in recent past due economic struggles, terrorism and security.

Pakistan has been on the path of consolidating its relations with the Gulf countries, capitalizing on its relations with China and growing relations with Central Asia. Alternatively, the fact that increased bilateral linkages between India and China, strengthening nexus between Iran and India make good ground that increased cooperation with India is in the interest of Pakistan and India both and for the region. To promote foreign direct investment, it is important to not only have an integrating approach above political and military differences but also to create a safe and secure environment internally for economic and trade dividends (Kher, 2012).

### **Trade and Economic Cooperation**

Trade in past twenty years in South Asian region continues to be extraordinarily low in comparison to other regions. During this period, the exports in ASEAN have grown ten times whereas in South Asia, it remained hovering around \$100 billion. If

the regional countries increase their trading capacity even half of the ASEAN's average trade, the regional trade figure can hike by another \$2.6 billion (Wilson, 2007). It makes around 60% of total trade being done in the region. Similarly, if the South Asian region in conjunction with the supra-regional world increase their trade halfway to that of ASEAN's average trade figures, dividends to the region are assessed to be of \$36 billion (Wilson, 2007). The growth of regional trade can be promoted if the regime, trade, customs, tariff barriers and infrastructural limitations such as ports and routes of trade are addressed positively in a cooperative framework.

## **Conclusion**

South Asia is amongst the dynamic regions of the world in terms of its resources, human capital, growth potential, trends of urbanization, and evolving industrialization. Increasing population is a boon and a bane simultaneously. This has caused an increase in the demand for resources while posing serious implications on socio-economic prosperity that encompasses food, water, agriculture, industrial products and energy security. Integrated regional economic planning and management of trade, like ASEAN, NAFTA and EU etc. offer great prospects of overall regional economic improvement, and potential for socio-economic development while mitigating political differences. Ongoing volatile security and political situation in the region makes it imperative to strengthen regional integrated coordination mechanisms to optimize synergies and mitigate trade-offs. Number of impediments retard regional growth. South Asia has its characteristic poverty, socio-economic concerns, limited technological base, absence of robust and established infrastructure, inter-state linkages, political distrust and disharmony, illiteracy, unemployment, population, military hazards affecting overall growth. Above all, the unparalleled COVID-19 catastrophe has resulted as a reality, and it would continue to challenge, the already weak economy of South Asia. The pandemic has pushed down the regional growth to about 2.8%. If the regional states aspire to improve upon their individual growth rates, particularly post-Corona timeframe, they would have to engage with others. This undoubtedly, would alleviate poverty as well as result in enhanced quality of living of the habitants of the region.

An integrative approach in South Asia; is bound to result in huge opportunities and bring socio-economic prosperity in the region which offers prospects of collective growth and uplift for the region and for individual states. Integration is not a zero-sum but a wholesome game, with win-win and shared dividends.

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