

## Linking Exploitive Leadership to Negligence Behavior: An Empirical Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

*Exploitative leadership hinders the employees' creativity and causes them to exhibit negligence behavior. However, this negative side of leadership is still under explored in the context of employee negligence behavior in higher education institutes, especially in underdeveloped backgrounds. Following COR theory, this study aimed to investigate Exploitative leadership and employee Negligence behavior through the mediating relationship of Job frustration in AJK higher education institutions. The data was collected on convenience sampling of 255 faculty members of AJK universities, and the results suggest a positive relationship between exploitative leadership and employee negligence. The finding about job frustration also uncovers the black box of the mediating impact of it between exploitative leadership and employee negligence. Both hypotheses are accepted at  $0.00 p < 0.5$ .*

**Keywords:** *Exploitative leadership, Negligence behavior, Job frustration*

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## INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a great role nurturing socio economic development of country and universities are regarded as place for intellectual development, personal growth and innovation. Education industry demands high performance and efficiency. However, such efficiency extremely relies on organizational environment and ethical leadership style. Leadership has a vital role in shaping employees' attitudes and behavior. Despite having grate importance of ethical leadership styles, in recent the growing number of research on leadership is more inclined to investigate its negative side (Schmid, et al., 2018). Among the different negative styles of behavior, the exploitative leadership is quite distinctive. This style is reflected in five distinct behaviors: self-serving actions, applying undue pressure on employees, limiting their autonomy, taking credit for their work, and manipulating them for personal advantage (Schmid et al, 2019). Exploiting leadership pursues personal benefits by influencing employees and employs different strategies to attain such benefits. These problems usually come from poor or exploitative leadership, which creates a stressful and unhealthy work environment. As a result, employees may feel overworked, frustrated, or emotionally drained, which affects both their professional performance and personal well-being (Lin, 2023).

According to COR theory exploitative leadership builds negative states in the organization. Such leadership creates a toxic work environment that erodes trust, undermines morale, and fosters negligent behavior. Exploitive leadership drains the employees' psychological resources that leads to emotional strains like anger, execution, and frustration which results as negative employee behaviors e.g., deviance, disengagement, Job frustration and reduced performance. This type of leadership often has great negative impact on employee mental health, causes psychological distress (Akram et al, 2024) adds depression (Akhtar et al, 2022) and results emotional execution (Elsaied, 2022) which leads to negligence behavior. The employees start feeling threat of losing their psychological resources and get into negative emotional states like job frustration. However, most of the time the power distant culture may limit the employees from openly expressing their negative behavior and lead them to react exploitation in passive way (Joshi et al, 2025). Similarly, the literature attributes the hierarchical power structures, and favoritism in administrative practices for weaken the education

sector in South Asia region especially in Pakistan (Soomro et al., 2020). Therefore, these problems highlight the need to study how leadership styles impact staff in higher education. This study further is an attempt to heed the call to study of Asim et al. (2024) to investigate the various mechanisms related to Exploitive Leadership and employee negligence behavior. This study aims to investigate Exploitive Leadership and employee negligence behavior through the mediating effect of Job frustration as there is still lack of literature on underlying mechanism (Kong et al., 2025).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Exploitative Leadership and Negligence Behavior**

Negligence behavior refers to decline in employee focus and efforts toward work responsibilities. This appears when employee feels dissatisfaction though in an unethical environment. Whereas negligence behavior is other reactions of employee disaffection is a passive reaction of employee that can slightly harm the organization over time by delaying projects, gossip and crushed creativity etc. (Vigoda, 2000). This behavior appears when employees feel mistreated, ignored or facing politics (Aliza et al., 2022). According to COR theory, the victims go to silence and become passive due to power distance from their leaders. As result they move their disappointments toward their work. The employees avoid confronting exploitative leadership directly due their revenge behavior and less tolerance for opposition (Wang et al., 2024) which can affect further on the loss of psychological resources.

H1. Exploitative Leadership has positive impact on employees' negligence behavior.

### **Mediating Role of Job Frustration**

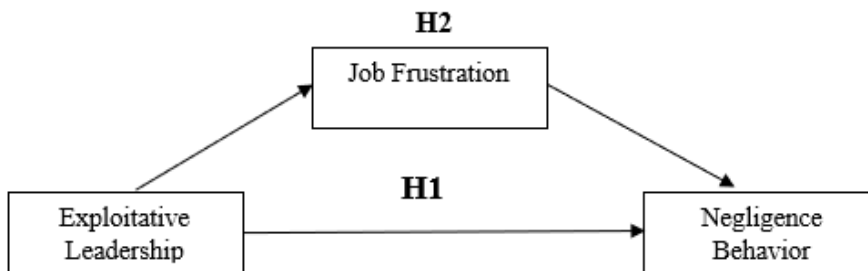
Job Frustration is negative outcome of exploitative work environment (Lyu et., al. 2023). This attitude appears due to constant failure of achieving one's tasks. To understand its mediating role between exploitative leadership and negligence behavior. Employees get frustrated when they encounter obstacles and challenges in their working environment through exploitive leadership. This frustration led them to negative emotions that results as negligence behavior (Ntsiful et al., 2018). As previously discussed, regular exploitation over time causes negative stimulus which lessens the key psychological resources of employees like self-esteem, social support and create frustration. The employees feel their negative relationship with leadership are more likely inclined toward negative emotions (Liven – Ofer et al., 2019) as job frustration.

Likewise, as per COR theory of Hobfall (1989), job frustration diminishes the employee motivation to work and turns it negligent behavior such as carelessness, reduced work quality, or withdrawal from professional responsibilities (Fatima & Majeed, 2023;22).

H2: Job frustration mediates between Exploitive Leadership and employee negligence behavior.

### Perceived Model

**Figure 1.** Perceived Model



## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design, Sampling & Data Procedures

The population of study was the faculty of higher educational institutes of Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK). Convenience sampling technique is used to collect the primary data. The data was adopted on a questionnaire on 1-5 likert scale. The total number of 300 questionnaires were distributed 255 questionnaires were received It are of 85% response.

The data was processed through SPSS and Preacher and Hayes process macro model 4 was used to analyze the data. The cronbach alpha of variables showed the reliable consistency and found above 0.7. We used 15 items measure of Schmid et al., (2019) for exploitive leadership, 8-item measure of Leak & Saunders (1992) for negligence behavior, five item measure Peters, O'Connor, and Rudolf (1980).

**Table 4.1:** Reliability Results

S.No	Variables	Chronbatch Alpha	No Items
1.	Exploitative Leadership	0.77	15
2.	Negligence Behavior	0.71	08
3.	Job Frustration	0.74	05

The normality of data was analyzed through descriptive analysis. Table 4.2 presents normality through mean, standard deviation, skewness and Kurtosis. The mean and standard deviation values of all variables are in acceptable range, whereas Skewness falls between -1 to +1 and Kurtosis is between -0.5 to +0.5 that shows normal distribution of data.

**Table 4.2:** Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Std.Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
EL	2.25	0.89	0.71	0.52
NB	2.13	0.79	0.63	0.56
J F	2.18	0.79	0.76	0.14

Further correlation is applied to check the association of variables with each other. The values of person correlation for all the variables are found the standard range of 0.5 that tends to be a strong relationship as there is positive association between negligence behaviors exploiting leadership based on ( $r=0.88$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) that if there is more exploiting leadership there will be more negligence behavior of employees

**Table 4.3:** Correlation Analysis

	EL	NB	JF
EL	1		
NB	0.88	1	
J F	0.89	0.86	1

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### Hypothesis Testing

The results direct effect in table 4.3 of hypothesis testing of H1: Exploitative Leadership has positive impact on employees' negligence behavior

are found accepted as ( $R^2=0.79$ ),  $Beta = 0.90$ . Both values are more than 0, hence it can be said that model fit for regression. Further the F test ( $F=1002.6$ ) and T test (31.6) support the acceptance of hypothesis which means that exploitative leadership impact on employee negligence behavior.

**Table 4.3** Direct Effect

Hypothesis	IV	DV	R2	F test	T. test	Beta	Sig	
H1	EL	NB	0.79	1002.6	31.6	0.90	0.00	Accepted

The effect of mediation is verified through Preacher and Hays method model4 to calculate total direct and indirect effects of perceived model with direct impact of exploitative leadership on negligence behavior and mediating impact of Job frustration between them.

**Table 4.4** Mediating Effect

Confidence interval of total, direct and indirect effects of exploitative leadership on negligence behavior					
	Effect	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
The Total effect of IV on DV	0.78	0.02	31.6	0.74	0.83
The Direct Effect of IV on DV	0.52	0.04	10.6	0.43	0.62
	Effect	Boot SE		LLCI	ULCI
The Direct effect of IV on DV	0.26	0.06		0.14	0.39

Based on analysis each hypothesis is tested independently by using SPSS software. Hypothesis1 of direct effect was analyzed through linear regression and was found acceptable while second hypothesis was analyzed through Preacher and Hays bootstrapping method and was found also acceptable.

**Table 4.5** Summary of Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Status
<b>H1.</b> Exploitative Leadership has positive impact on employees' negligence behavior	Accepted
<b>H2:</b> Job frustration mediates between Exploitive Leadership and employee negligence behavior	Accepted

## DISCUSSION

According to (Wang et al.,2023) the mistreatment through exploitative leadership is likely to derive employees to lack of moral responsibility through negligent behavior. In the context of COR theory, exploitative leadership diminishes the employees' psychological resources as they feel their supervisor is less aligned with organizational policies. When feeling of unfairness prolongs, the employees feel unfair which creates a threat to their trust and emotional wellbeing. This perceived resource loss—such as respect, support, and fairness—can lead employees to mentally withdraw from their roles. To avoid further emotional harm or conserve their remaining resources, employees may reduce their effort, become disengaged, or display careless behavior as a form of self-protection (Hobfoll, 2018; Fatima & Majeed, 2023). Building organizational support systems, fair treatment, and ethical leadership practices can help lessen these negative impacts and restore employees' psychological resources.

## MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The finding of study has several gridlines for the practical application for the management. The results suggest adopting the ethical and supportive leadership style rather exploitative. It suggests the higher management to improve the monitoring and evaluation system for the m\management as they \are the face of department and usually do not let the higher authorities know the involvement of their subordinates. Having transparent regular feedback from employees for their higher authorities encourages psychological environment. The promising open and communication, positive institutional environment can further improve the relationship of faculty and staff to remove the likelihood of negligence work.

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