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Abstract

According to the literature on perceived overqualification (POQ), previous researchers overlooked its predictors, mediating mechanism, and particularly the direct impact of POQ on proactive behavior. Integrating person-environment fit theory, this research aims to examine the POQ's predictor (boredom proneness and perceived organizational politics) mediating mechanism and its effect on proactive behavior. Using a cross-sectional research design 189 responses were collected from diverse non-manufacturing sectors and evaluated utilizing partial least square structural equation modeling. The results depict that perceived organizational politics and boredom proneness significantly predict POQ. Similarly, our findings indicate that the direct association of POQ with proactive behavior was negative. Further, POQ mediates the relationship between predictors and outcomes. Theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and forthcoming recommendations of our research are discussed.

Keywords: boredom proneness, perceived organizational politics, perceived overqualification, proactive behavior

1. Introduction

The unemployment, economic slump, and increase in the educational level of workers may contribute to the belief of employees that they have more knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) than they need for their jobs (Erdogan, Bauer, Peiró, & Truxillo, 2011; Li, Liao, & Han, 2022). For this reason, the perception of overqualification (POQ) is common. This POQ forces them to settle for a job that does not match with their qualifications (Katz & Krueger, 2019; Liu, Luksyte, Zhou, Shi, & Wang, 2015; Simon, Bauer, Erdogan, & Shepherd, 2019). POQ is expected to increase in the upcoming years (Erdogan, Tomás, Valls, & Gracia, 2018) and is going to be a common problem for workers in developed as well as developing economies (Lee, Erdogan, Tian, Willis, & Cao, 2021).

After probing past studies, we realize that there is a significant disparity between POQ and employee performance in the literature. One such performance variable is proactive behavior which denotes-“future-focused actions that are self-initiatively taken by employees to modify and improve the workplace environment” (Wu, Parker, Wu, & Lee, 2018). A large area of studies has proven that POQ has adverse effects such as turnover (Simon et al., 2019), career stress (Maynard, Brondolo, Connelly, & Sauer, 2015), and counterproductive behaviors (Khan, Ali, Saeed, Vega-Muñoz, & Contreras-Barraza, 2022; Liu et al., 2015). However, similar agreement regarding the relationship between POQ and proactive behavior is still insufficient (Peng, Yu, Peng, Zhang, & Xue, 2023). Therefore, the question of whether individuals who perceive themselves as overqualified demonstrate proactive behavior remains open for investigation. In line with the negative view, we posit that an individual's POQ will reduce proactive behavior. The literature suggests that when overqualified individuals are unable to utilize their knowledge they can inclined towards a negative track (Dar & Rahman, 2020) that is they can reduce the advantageous behavior (e.g. proactive behavior). For example, researchers recognized that overqualified individuals are not willing to engage in helping and knowledge-sharing behavior (Erdogan, Karaeminogullari, Bauer, & Ellis, 2020; Li et al., 2022). Thus, one of our objectives is to examine the influence of POQ on proactive behavior based on the person environment (P-E) fit perspective.

To date, researchers of overqualification have used POQ as antecedents of some outcomes (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). However, a recent critical review of POQ by Erdogan and Bauer (2021) revealed that studies on antecedents of POQ are very rare. A sound understanding of the antecedents of POQ is required to tackle its negative consequences (Arvan, Pindék, Andel, & Spector, 2019). Only a handful of studies have so far emphasized the antecedents including job characteristics, demographic influences, team cohesiveness, and leader-member exchange (Alfes, Shantz, & van Baalen, 2016; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021).

Erdogan and Bauer (2021) recommend that studies linking personality traits and POQ are very limited. Although, scholars found that personality traits such as narcissism enhance POQ (Maynard et al., 2015). While validation about other personality traits such as boredom proneness trait facilitates POQ is lacking. According to Farmer and Sundberg (1986), boredom proneness is “a tendency to experience tedium and lack of personal involvement and enthusiasm, to have a general or frequent lack of sufficient interest in one's life and surrounding and future” (p. 210). In the same way, the evidence regarding whether organizational factors such as perceived organizational politics is missing. POP is a belief of workers that the organizational environment is unjust and unfair (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). Therefore, our second contribution is to fill the gap regarding the predictors of POQ by focusing on organizational factors and personality traits. Based on the (P-E) fit approach, we proposed that the boredom proneness trait and POP are a predictor of POQ.

Given that, POQ is predicted to be caused by boredom proneness on one side and POP on the other side, it influences proactive behavior. We treat POQ as a pathway connecting boredom proneness and POP to proactive behavior. POQ is a situation where individuals notice that they have excess qualifications like knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that are not utilized or required at the job (Erdogan et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2015). Until now, researchers found that POQ impacts proactive behavior but evidence of whether this relationship is positive or negative is still inconclusive (Maden-Eyiusta, 2023). Researchers suggest incorporating a mediating process to understand whether POQ is positive or negative (Lee et al., 2021).

To address this issue, we aim to test the mediation mechanism of POQ and look at its antecedents and link with proactive behavior. So, our third contribution is to examine the hypothesis that the impact of boredom proneness and POP on proactive behavior will be mediated by POQ. Furthermore, theoretical evidence of the mediation process of POQ is important to extend the

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prior research regarding POQ. The multi-faceted (P-E) fit theory serves as a groundwork for our research. According to theory, (P-E) misfit perception occurs when there is a disparity between individual needs and job characteristics or when a person's abilities are incongruent with the requirements of a job (Edwards, Caplan, & Harrison, 1998). Further, this theory suggests that the experience of a misfit has an impact on individual perception which in turn predicts behavioral outcomes (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). We suggest that boredom proneness and POP is a particular type of misfit that leads towards POQ. This POQ as a misfit perception negatively impacts proactive behavior.

2. Theoretical background and hypothesis development

2.1. Person-environment fit theory

(P-E) fit theory states that subjective fit(misfit) depends on the level of congruency between the individual (abilities, needs, values) and the environment (demands, supplies, values) at work (Edwards et al., 1998). One of the facets of (P-E) fit theory is the person-job (P-J) fit(misfit), which is narrowed down into two types of fit (misfit): demands-abilities fit (D-A) misfit and needs-supplies fit (N-S) misfit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). The misfit research suggests that when individuals' KSAs are incongruent with the demand of a job (D-A) misfit is generated. Whereas, when there is a disbalance between individual needs and job supplies need-supply (N-S) misfits arise(Cable & DeRue, 2002; Edwards et al., 1998). Further, this theory suggests that misfit between personnel and the working environment has an adverse impact on performance (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Boredom proneness is a person-job D-A and POP is a person-job N-S misfit our study posits that both types of misfit lead toward POQ. Additionally, we proposed that misfit perception i.e. POQ can be raised from both types of misfit negatively impact proactive behavior.

2.2. Effect of POQ on Proactive Behavior

In light of the uncertainty of the contemporary work environment, the proactive behavior of employees is becoming attractive to both enterprises and researchers (Carusone, 2018). Organizations value proactive behavior because it gives positive outcomes to both organizations and employees, such as high performance at work (Parker & Liao, 2016) and career success (Yang & Chau, 2016). Proactive behavior is defined as "future-focused actions that are self-initiatively taken by employees to modify and improve the workplace environment" (Wu et al., 2018). Previous studies suggest that perceived organizational support, job autonomy, learning goal orientation (Shin & Kim, 2015), self-efficacy, and, work engagement (Lisbona, Palaci, Salanova, & Frese, 2018) act as predictors of proactive behavior.

A large number of studies examined that POQ results in negative behaviors, for example, counterproductive work behavior (Liu et al., 2015), and withdrawal behaviors (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013). (P-E) fit approach states that when an individual and an organization do not share the same objective and values individual-organization misfit will develop (Kim, Park, Sohn, & Lim, 2021; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). This perception of misfit is directly believed to negatively impact job performance (Edwards, 1996b). Using person-environment fit theory this research posits that POQ as a perception of misfit will be negatively related to proactive behavior.

Research elucidating proactive behavior outlined that individuals' qualifications, competencies, and, skills are vital for proactive behavior (Peng et al., 2023). Comparably, POQ individuals perform more quickly and easily and have a greater chance of engaging in proactive behavior because of potential competencies (Liu & Wang, 2012). Unfortunately, the point is that overqualified individuals believe their knowledge and abilities (Hu et al., 2015; Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2016) are underutilized because of their organization. This effect the reciprocity between individuals and organizations and cause feelings of unfairness and stress (Harari, Manapragada, & Viswesvaran, 2017; Liu & Wang, 2012; Luksyte, Spitzmueller, & Maynard, 2011).

They notice a misfit between what they expect from a job and what their organization provides (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). All of this adds fuel to their anger and makes them believe that they are not valued by the organization (Peng et al., 2023). In short, we predict that utilization of knowledge and skills is essential for proactive behavior. Conversely, overqualified employees face the problem of underutilization of their competencies which urges them to deal with their organization by decreasing the behavior that is beneficial to an organization.

Further, Sesen and Ertan (2023) prove that POQ has a negative link with extra-role behavior e.g. knowledge sharing. Thus, based on person-environment fit theory we suggest that an overqualified person's underutilization of qualification is a misfit that impacts proactive behavior. Therefore, based on empirical and theoretical arguments this research hypothesized that:

H1. Perceived overqualification will be negatively related to proactive behavior.

2.3. Effect of boredom proneness on POQ

According to the P-E fit theory, demand-abilities fit occurs when the demands of a job are compatible with the individual abilities (Cable & DeRue, 2002). This research based on P-E fit theory proposed that boredom proneness is the predictor of POQ is a misfit that arises from the disparity between the job demand and individual abilities. Boredom is conceptualized as a "negative experience commonly arising in situations deemed deficient in meaning, interest, and challenge" (Struk, Carriere, Cheyne, & Danckert, 2017, p. 1). While, "boredom proneness" alludes to the general tendency of a person to perceive boredom when they are uninterested or unable to pay attention or to identify meaning in their task (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986; Westgate & Wilson, 2018). Boredom proneness leads to various adverse outcomes such as poor decision-making (Yakobi & Danckert, 2021), difficulty in emotional regulation, decrease in wellbeing and increase in anxiety and depression (Isacescu & Danckert, 2018; Mercer-Lynn, Flora, Fahlman, & Eastwood, 2013; Raffaelli, Mills, & Christoff, 2018; Struk et al., 2017). Literature related to overqualification suggests that research investigating personality traits with POQ is very limited (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Kaymakçı, Görener, & Toker, 2022). An individual's boredom arises when the individual's current job tasks are incongruent with the individual's desired goals (Van Tilburg & Igou, 2012; Van Tilburg, Igou, & Sedikides, 2013) or competencies.

Research identifies that individuals feel bored when required goals are not aligned with the current goals (Critcher & Gilovich, 2010) or KSAs of individuals (Kristof, 1996). This led overqualified individuals to think that their current job is not according to

the demanded job (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Khan et al., 2022). The view that POQ stems from a mismatch between an individual's KSAs and present job requirements is supported by substantial research (Arvan et al., 2019; Capsada-Munsech, 2019; Wiedner, 2024). We suggest that this situation reflects demands-abilities misfit perception. Based on P-E fit theory we proposed that boredom proneness represents P-J demand-abilities misfit that leads toward POQ. So, POQ is a misfit that arises from the disparity between the job demand and individual abilities.

Watt and Hargis (2010) research provides also empirical evidence that boredom proneness has a significant relationship with subjective underemployment (a form of perceived overqualification). Thus, based on theory, arguments, and evidence this research accordingly anticipated that:

H2: Boredom proneness will be positively related to perceived overqualification.

2.4. Effect of POP on POQ

P-E fit theory states that the mismatch between individual needs and job supplies leads to misfit perception (Edwards, 1991a; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). This research based on P-E fit theory proposed that POP represents P-J need-supplies misfit that cause POQ perception which is P-J misfit perception. POP is described as an "individual's perceptions of others' political activities (not one's own), such as favoritism, suppression of competing entities, and the manipulation of organizational policies" (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991, p. 203).

Scholars found a large number of negative outcomes of POP such as absenteeism (Gilmore, Ferris, Dulebohn, & Harrell-Cook, 1996), deviant behavior at work (Wiltshire, Bourdage, & Lee, 2014), and work stress (Jam, Donia, Raja, & Ling, 2017). POP involves behavior that is against the ethics of an organization and is intended to promote self-interest (Liu & Wang, 2012). For example, a supervisor evaluates the performance of employees according to their criteria e.g. giving greater and lower ratings or "favoritism rather than merit determines who gets ahead around here." Probably, this drives individuals' feelings of overqualification.

The source of POQ lies in the workplace environment renowned for the prevalence of internal conspiring. Research revealed that due to POP employees think that their efforts have no value, as everyone is manipulative and flatters others to get an advantage for themselves (De Clercq, Shu, & Gu, 2023). Moreover, in such an environment, coalitions are formed among strong members of organizations to climb the ladder of success. This reduces the confidence of individuals in their abilities as in such an environment members of coalitions get benefits in terms of both job and career growth (Rosen, Ferris, Brown, Chen, & Yan, 2014).

Since, the political environment might promote and even validate the usage of unjust and unethical practices (Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 2013; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991) e.g. favoritism regarding assigning jobs. This consequently increases uncertainty regarding an individual's value in the organization (Chang, Rosen, & Levy, 2009). It also, affects the individual's need for the utilization of skills and abilities (Ferris, Adams, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, & Ammeter, 2002). Researchers found that the underutilization of skills increases the likelihood of experience of POQ (Erdogan et al., 2011). Researchers also assume that when politics in organizations exist, underutilization of individuals' KSAs can also be high (Liu & Wang, 2012). Thus, based on P-E fit and discussion this research proposed that:

H3: Perceived organizational politics will be positively related to perceived overqualification.

2.5. Meditating mechanism of POQ between predictors and proactive behavior

Finally, our research anticipated that the negative effect of boredom proneness and POP on proactive behavior is mediated by POQ. This proposition is aligned with the previous POQ research and (P-E) fit theory (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Luksyte et al., 2011). Studies have found that the employees' outcomes are potentially impacted by objective misfits through POQ. This is due to objective demand-abilities incongruency leads to underutilization and misfit perception which causes job dissatisfaction (Arvan et al., 2019). According to (P-E) fit theory, the mismatch between the individual and the organization generates a misfit perception this misfit perception directly affects employees' performance (Edwards, 1996b; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Boredom proneness and POP are proposed to have a weaker effect on proactive behavior as they are the distal predictors of proactive behavior. They need to be filtered through workers' perceptions and thus may highlight the role of boredom proneness and organizational politics that workers notice and perceive as misfits with their expectations and qualifications and affect their behavior. Since boredom proneness and POP caused the perception of a misfit, the theory of P-E fit entails that their effect on proactive behavior should be mediated by POQ (Luksyte et al., 2011).

To the best of this study's understanding, no study explicitly examined POQ as a mediating mechanism between predictors (boredom proneness and POP) and proactive behavior. On the other hand, the relationship of POQ with proactive behavior is not clear. While, a meta-analysis of POQ shows that POQ has negative outcomes such as counterproductive work behavior, voluntary turnover, and poorer well-being (Harari et al., 2017). Building on the aforementioned reasoning that boredom proneness and POP positively related to POQ, we posited that boredom proneness and POP with POQ may show less proactive behavior. Based on this, we hypothesized that:

H4: POQ mediates the relationship between boredom proneness and proactive behavior.

H5: POQ mediates the relationship between perceived organizational politics and proactive behavior.

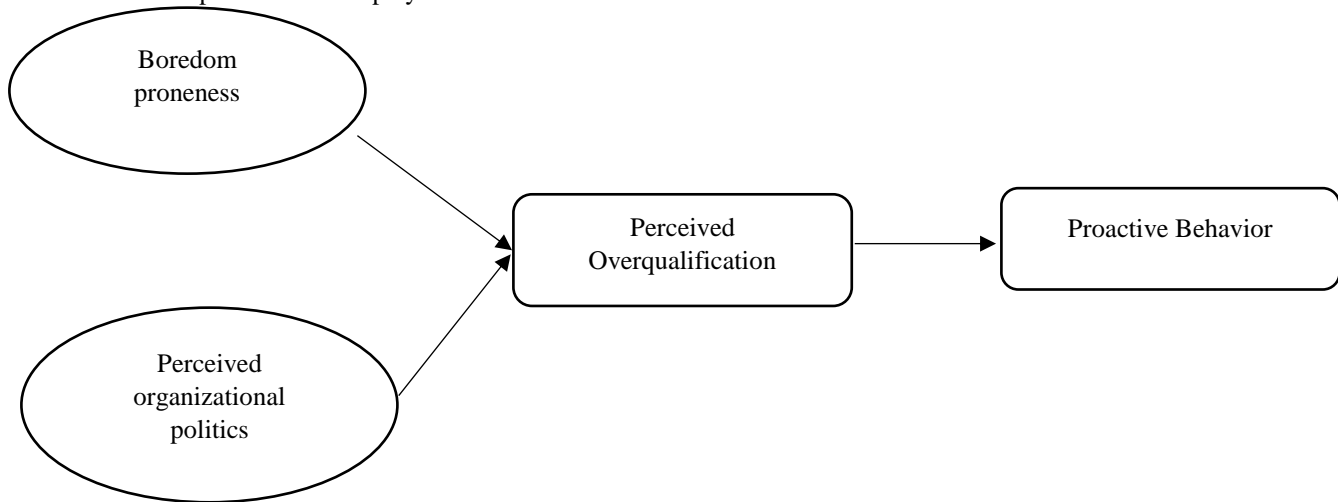
3. Methodology

3.1. Sampling and data collection procedure

Surveys were conducted in Pakistan. We collect data from diverse non-manufacturing organizations such as tourism, telecommunication, and banking. In this research convenient sampling which is the type of non-probability sampling technique was used. Therefore, we chose 218 (full-time personnel) randomly participants from these organizations with the help of the human resource department (HR). It has been proven that in Pakistan approximately 31 to 37 percent of workers are either underemployed or overqualified (Farooq, 2017). The stagnant labor market setup fails to align job avenues with the credentials of

workers. (Sial, Sarwar, & Saeed, 2019). In conclusion, POQ has emerged as a significant area of interest within the context of Pakistan's labor market. Therefore, Pakistan serves as a suitable context for conducting this research.

We used a self-reported questionnaire and cross-sectional research design. The department of HR assisted in notifying them that the purpose of the study was to investigate the POQ and that their responses would held confidential. In this study, the English language was used for the survey. Respondents were informed to voluntarily complete the survey without getting any compensation. Participants were requested to respond to predictors, POQ, and proactive behavior. A demographic portion including gender, age, qualification, and work experience was added at the start of the questionnaire. We distributed 223 questionnaires to respondents in above mentioned organizations in Pakistan. A total of 205 questionnaires were returned out of which 18 responses were incomplete. Thus, 187 responses were evaluated with an 83.85% response rate. The demographic features of the respondents are displayed in Table 1.



3.2. Instrumentation

We adopted well-established measures of prior research to measure all the variables in the framework. Five-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5) was used to record responses from participants.

Boredom proneness

Boredom proneness was measured by adopting the Struk et al. (2017) scale. This measure contains 8 items. The scale sample is “I often find myself at “loose ends,” not knowing what to do.”

Perceived organizational politics

Perceived Organization politics was assessed by adopting the 12-item Kacmar and Ferris (1991) scale. The original scale of Kacmar and Ferris contains 40 items. This research followed the research of Kacmar and Carlson (1997), which utilized only 12 items. Prior studies also reported the validity of this scale (e.g. 0.74 Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1994). “One group always gets their way in this organization” is the sample of this scale.

Table 1: Demographic information of respondents

Gender	Male 75 (40%)	Females 112 (60%)		
Organization type	Tourism 68 (36%)	Telecommunication, 47 (25%)	Banking 72 (39%)	
Education	Graduated 92 (49%)	Master/Mphil 66 (35%)	Above Master/Mphil 29 (16%)	
Age	18–25 years 27 (14%)	26–35 years 45 (24%)	36–45 years 64 (34%)	Above 45 years 51 (28%)
Experience	01–05 years 33 (18%)	06–10 years 54 (29%)	11–15 years 69 (37%)	Above 15 years 31 (16%)

Observation(s): n=187

Source(s): SPSS output

Perceived overqualification

POQ was measured by using Maynard, Joseph, and Maynard (2006) the 9-item scale. Various overqualification studies have commonly used this scale (e.g. Liu et al., 2015; Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2016). The sample statement of this measure is “My job requires less education than I have”.

Proactive behavior

The Frese, Fay, Hilburger, Leng, and Tag (1997) 7-item scale was used to measure proactive behavior. The sample item of this scale is “I actively attack problems”.

3.3. Common Method Bias (CMB)

We follow the suggestion of Kock (2015) regarding full collinearity to report the CMB issue as data for independent and dependent constructs are collected in one time frame. Therefore, we perform various statistical tests to evaluate the responses for CMB.

First, Harman’s Single-factor statistical test was performed to detect CMB. Analysis reveals that a single factor captured 29.831% of the variation, below the 50% criteria. Second, according to Kock (2015) appropriate multicollinearity (variance inflation factor) and suitable discriminant validity (review table 3 of HTMT) for logically testifying CMB.

4. Analysis strategy

Advanced studies employed different kinds of software to interpret data results (Matthews, Hair, & Matthews, 2018). SEM is well recognized for extending, testing, or advancing theory and for examining prediction-oriented frameworks (J. F. Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2021). Two diverse statistical techniques are used to calculate SEM i.e. variance-based (PLS-SEM) and covariance-based (CB-SEM). In the present research, partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) is used for data analysis.

The following are the reasons for employing PLS-SEM. First, the framework is relatively new. Second, when the purpose of research is to assume the relationships. Third, as compared to CB-SEM which involves the removal of various items, decreasing the research framework’s effectiveness, Goodness of Fit (GoF) is not required by PLS-SEM. Lastly, in contrast to CB-SEM, PLS-SEM does not confront “factor indeterminacy”. Therefore, because of above mentioned reasons this research hypothesis is tested by using Smart PLS 4.

The PLS-SEM for analysis of findings comprises of dual-phase process i.e. measurement model (outer model evaluation) and structural model (inner model evaluation) (J. Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014; Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). According to J. F. Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2011), these models can be used to test hypothesized relationships between latent variables and the instrument’s validity and reliability. Further, in this study bootstrapping (5000 resampling) approach is employed for evaluating path coefficients and the importance of outer-loading (J. F. Hair et al., 2021).

4.1. Measurement model

The measurement model is the first stage and it involves the evaluation of the outer model. In this model, we analyze the link between the latent variable and its corresponding indicators (J. F. Hair et al., 2021). This research executes techniques of the PLS algorithm, and path weighting technique for standardizing the outcomes and testing the fitness of the outer model. For the evaluation of the outer model, this research determines the variables’ discriminant validity, reliability of measures, and convergent validity. Therefore following Roldán and Sánchez-Franco (2012) direction, this research carried out confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), average variance extracted (AVE), Cronbach’s alpha, and composite reliability.

The reliability of individual items is ensured by factor loading. The required criteria for the reliability of each item is ≥ 0.70 but it appears valid if more than 0.50 (J. Hair et al., 2014). In this study, the individual item’s factor loading is more than 0.5 therefore it fulfills the accepted level as shown in Figure 2 and Table 2. Whereas, to calculate convergent validity AVE was used and the acceptable criteria of 0.50 was achieved (J. F. Hair et al., 2021). Further, composite reliability was used to assess the scale’s internal consistency percentage, and the CR threshold is 0.7 which was met in our research.

Further, we use discriminant validity to investigate the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) to confirm the outer model robustness (J. F. Hair et al., 2021). For greater distinction of constructs the recommended value for HTMT is less than 0.85 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Given below table 3 demonstrates that HTMT ratios are less than the threshold value i.e. 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2009; Kline, 2023), indicating that discriminant validity exists. Collectively, the findings of convergent, CFA, and HTMT, all indicate that discriminant validity is established in the measurement model.

Table 2: Constructs factor loading

Constructs	Items	Factor loading	AVE	CR
Boredom proneness	BP1	0.729	0.583	0.908
	BP2	0.84		
	BP3	0.791		
	BP4	0.691		
	BP5	0.755		
	BP6	0.779		
	BP7	0.723		

Perceived organizational politics	BP8	0.792		
	POP1	0.722	0.542	0.904
	POP2	0.715		
	POP3	0.778		
	POP4	0.774		
	POP5	0.731		
	POP6	0.793		
	POP7	0.786		
	POP10	0.646		
	POP11	0.667		
Perceived overqualification	POQ1	0.818	0.603	0.921
	POQ2	0.794		
	POQ3	0.769		
	POQ4	0.809		
	POQ5	0.742		
	POQ6	0.802		
	POQ7	0.774		
	POQ8	0.768		
	POQ9	0.71		
Proactive behavior	PB1	0.822	0.69	0.926
	PB2	0.84		
	PB3	0.852		
	PB4	0.805		
	PB5	0.796		
	PB6	0.861		
	PB7	0.834		

Note(s): CR > 0.70; AVE >0.50; Loadings >0.5

Source(s): PLS-SEM output of measurement model

Table 3: Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix

Constructs	BP	PB	POP	POQ
BP	0.764			
PB	-0.457	0.83		
POP	0.456	-0.483	0.736	
POQ	0.503	-0.697	0.572	0.777

Note(s): HTMT <0.85

Source(s): PLS-SEM output of measurement model

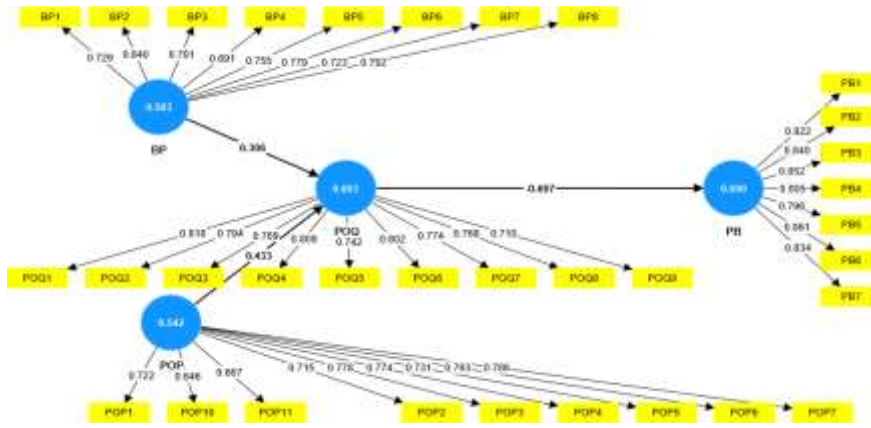


Fig 1: Measurement Model

4.2. Structural model

After satisfying the guidelines regarding the outer model, by running Bootstrapping and Algorithm of SMART PLS 4 this research evaluates the structural model and anticipated hypothesis. To evaluate the significance of the structural model (inner model) this study follows (J. F. Hair et al., 2021) suggestions, and determines path coefficients (beta value), coefficient of determination (R^2), and t-values. Moreover, effect size (f^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2) were also suggested by them for the evaluation of the inner model. For this, current research uses the Bootstrapping approach with 5000 resamples and performed a two-tailed test at the accepted level i.e. 0.05 (Henseler et al., 2009). The proposed hypothesis is demonstrated in Figure 3.

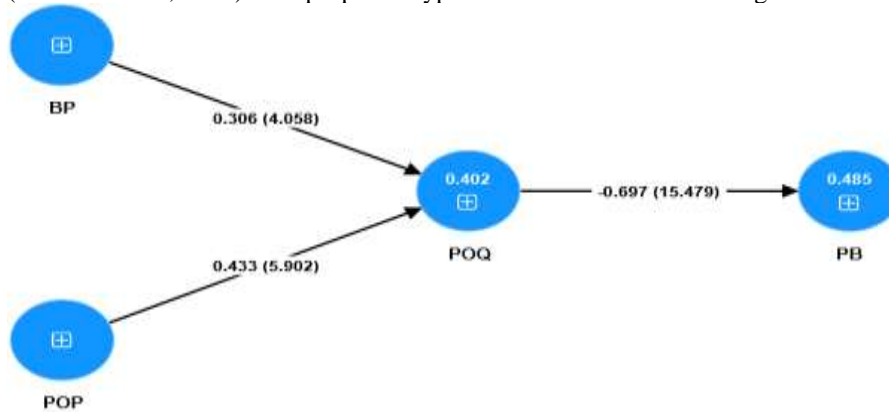


Fig 2: Structural Model

The given above table 4 shows the findings of the proposed hypothesis. For antecedents to POQ, boredom proneness ($\beta = 0.306$, $t = 4.058$, $P < 0$) and POP ($\beta = 0.433$, $t = 5.902$, $P < 0$) is positively related to POQ. Thus hypotheses 1 and 2 related to antecedents are significant and supported. Regarding the hypothesis about POQ to proactive behavior, POQ has a negative relationship with proactive behavior ($\beta = -0.697$, $t = 15.479$, $P < 0$). So, hypothesis 3 is also supported.

Table 4: Testing Direct path

Hypothesis	Direct Relations	Path coefficients	(STDEV)	t-value	P values	CI LL/UL	Decision
H1	BP -> POQ	0.306	0.075	4.058	0	[0.166/0.463]	Accepted
H2	POP -> POQ	0.433	0.073	5.902	0	[0.287/0.568]	Accepted
H3	POQ -> PB	-0.697	0.045	15.479	0	[-0.781/-0.606]	Accepted

Note(s): The value of *P for the 2-tailed test is significant at 0.05; CI = confidence intervals; STDV = standard deviation; LL = lower and UL= upper limit

Source(s): PLS-SEM output of the structural model

Likewise, this research considers the indirect effect of antecedents (boredom proneness and POP) on proactive behavior to analyze if POQ mediates their relationships. The findings are summarized in given below table 6. The findings confirm that POQ ($\beta = -0.213$, $t = 4.157$, $P < 0$) mediates the relationship between boredom proneness and proactive behavior. Likewise, POQ ($\beta = -0.301$, $t = 5.125$, $P < 0$) mediates the relationship between POP and proactive behavior. So, hypotheses H4 and H5 about the mediating mechanism of POQ between predictors and proactive behavior are accepted.

Table 5: Total effect

Total effect	Path coefficients	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
BP -> PB	-0.213	4.157	0
POP -> PB	-0.301	5.125	0

Source(s): PLS-SEM output of the structural model

Table 6: Indirect effect of antecedents on outcomes

Hypothesis	Mediation	Path coefficients	(STDEV)	t-value	P values	CI LL/UL	Decision
H4	BP -> POQ -> PB	-0.213	0.051	4.157	0	[-0.322/-0.119]	Accepted
H5	POP -> POQ -> PB	-0.301	0.059	5.125	0	[-0.418/-0.192]	Accepted

Note(s): The value of *P for the 2-tailed test is significant at 0.05

Source(s): PLS-SEM output of the structural model

4.3. Predictive relevance (Q^2) and explanatory power (R^2)

The present research utilized two criteria to examine this study framework's explanatory power (R^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2). First, to determine the explanatory power of current research R^2 was utilized. R^2 also termed the coefficient of determination was used to determine the model goodness (J. F. Hair, Anderson, Babin, & Black, 2010). Henseler et al. (2009) recommended criteria for the evaluation of R^2 as follows: 0.25 R^2 value is small, 0.50 is moderate and 0.75 is substantial. The results (check Table 7) denote that the values of R^2 for proactive behavior (0.485 = small) and POQ (0.402 = small) follow the criteria recommended by Henseler et al. (2009).

Second, this research used the Stone-Geisser (Q^2) approach to analyze the current research framework's predictive relevance (Geisser, 1974). Chin (1998), describes that Q^2 determines to what extent the framework and its computed variables are effective in duplicating observed values. The results of this research (check Table 7) depict that Q^2 for proactive behavior (0.28), and POQ (0.372) were >0 , demonstrating acceptable predictive relevance.

Table 7: Predictive power

Constructs	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Q^2	Predictive power
POQ	0.402	0.395	0.433	Large
Proactive behavior	0.485	0.482	0.339	Large

Note(s): The value of *P for the 2-tailed test is significant at 0.05; Q^2 is predictive relevance; R^2 is coefficient of determination

Source(s): PLS-SEM output of the structural model

5. Discussion

Overqualification impacts individual performance as they are not fully leveraging their KSAs. Many individuals are presently working on jobs where their KSAs are more than the requirements of their job. Thus, they are dissatisfied with their work and believe that their work is worthless. Overqualification emerges in multiple fields and can affect individuals of any profession.

We collect data from multiple organizations in Pakistan to examine the interlinkages behind POP, boredom proneness, POQ, and proactive behavior. We investigated POQ as a mediating construct between predictors and proactive behavior based on (P-E) fit theory. H1 specified that boredom proneness has a positive association with POQ. Our findings supported and identified that boredom proneness has a significant and positive association with POQ. Prior researchers displayed that boredom proneness has a positive relationship with underemployment (a form of overqualification) (Watt & Hargis, 2010). H2 described that POP has a positive association with POQ. Our results revealed that POP and POQ have a positive association. This hypothesis result is aligned with the past study assumption which assumes that POP can lead to POQ (Liu & Wang, 2012).

Further, H3 demonstrates that POQ has a negative association with proactive behavior. This hypothesis result is in line with past studies that show the indirect effect of POQ on proactive behavior (Demir, Dalgıç, & Yaşar, 2022; Peng et al., 2023). Moreover, H4 depicts that POQ mediates the relationship between boredom proneness and proactive behavior. Likewise, H5 describes that POQ mediates the relationship between POP and proactive behavior. These hypothesis findings are consistent with the recent study of (Arvan et al., 2019). The results suggest that POQ fortifies the impact of POP and boredom proneness on proactive behavior. According to the results, boredom proneness and POP escalate the underutilization of KSAs that is POQ, and thus impede the proactive behavior of individuals.

5.1. Theoretical implications

The current study advances literature related to POQ, particularly in the tourism, telecommunication, and banking literature specifically. First, previous studies investigate the indirect effect of POQ on proactive behavior (Ma, Lin, & Wei, 2020a; Peng et al., 2023). we tried to improve our understanding of the direct effect of POQ on the proactive behavior of employees. We added to the research by finding that overqualified employees feel incompetent and under-challenged because of underutilization of their talents thus, they reduce their beneficial behavior which is proactive behavior.

Second, the main contribution of our study is to identify boredom proneness and POP as antecedents of POQ. Previous studies mainly examined relational and job factors as antecedents of POQ (Alfes et al., 2016; Lobene, Meade, & Pond III, 2015) while ignoring personality traits and organizational factors. Therefore, our study responds to (Andel, Pindek, & Arvan, 2022; Erdogan &

Bauer, 2021) recent calls to identify the antecedents of POQ and examine personality trait and organizational factor effects on POQ. Boredom proneness and POP as predictors of POQ reveal the importance of recognizing organizational factors and personality trait impact on the overqualification experience. POP in the workplace is about giving assignments, incentives, and benefits to the favorite person thus this increases the underutilization of KSAs of workers (Liu & Wang, 2012). Likewise, the boredom proneness effect on POQ expands our understanding that certain individuals can be more susceptible to the overqualification experience.

Third, our work integrates the PET of misfit perspective to extend the discussion regarding the mechanism of POQ. The results regarding the mediating mechanism of POQ confirm how POP and boredom proneness can affect proactive behavior via POQ. The probability that workers' proactive behavior may be impacted by POQ which has a strong association with both POP and boredom proneness had to date no verification. However, the findings of Peng et al. (2023) suggest that POQ negatively impacts proactive behavior through anger. The mediating role of POQ between predictors and proactive behavior has not yet been examined. Our results demonstrate that when boredom proneness individuals experience underutilization this leads to POQ which reduces the workers' participation in proactive activities. Similarly, our findings depict that when POP undermines the individuals' efforts this results in underutilization i.e. POQ which decreases the individuals' motivation to demonstrate proactive behavior. In this way, our research contributes to inconclusive findings of POQ

Our study also expands the previous studies on boredom proneness and POP as predictors of POQ (Alfes et al., 2016; Arvan et al., 2019) and proactive behavior. In representing the negative indirect association between predictors (boredom proneness and POP) and proactive behavior through POQ, our results broaden the existing research by recommending that boredom proneness and POP have implications.

5.2. Practical Implications

The findings of our research have offered practical implications for practitioners. POQ has turned into a common issue nowadays. First, considering that POQ might reduce the proactive behavior of employees, managers or recruiters should select the right participant instead of the supreme candidate recruitment process to save employees from developing negative feelings toward the employers and subsequent negative behavior. If employers want to have overqualified personnel, then to improve the deterioration in workers' proactive behavior, employers could take effective measures such as removing barriers, incorporating ethical practices, and providing complex tasks so that those workers feel fully utilized and less inclined to their overqualification feeling. Second, our results inform employees and organizations about the factors that begin to realize individuals that they are overqualified. First, since POP restricts individuals from expressing their abilities(Liu & Wang, 2012). Boredom proneness leads individuals to believe that they have repetitive and less stimulating jobs. The dissatisfactions that may arise from such factors could trigger the experience of POQ. Erdogan and Bauer (2009) provide evidence that if empowerment can be thoughtfully enhanced by employers then it is an effective way to control negative behavior. This research highlights the need to incorporate empowerment and controlling unlawful activities to combat POQ. Similarly, to reduce the POQ feelings arising from employees' personality disposition this study states that to increase the engagement of employees in their job tasks managers should try to provide them with challenging job tasks backed by rewards. In short, this research provides a potential understanding that managers can mitigate the feeling of overqualification by improving the factors behind them and might improve subsequent behavior i.e. proactive behavior.

5.3. Limitations and Future Avenues

This study still has a few drawbacks to address. First, our study collects responses using self-report and single-time frame design, drawing attention to the issue of CMB. However, our research's methodological and empirical approaches explained that CMB is not an issue. Future researchers are recommended to use experimental and three-wave designs or longitudinal designs for data collection.

Second, our study focused on non-manufacturing organizations such as tourism, telecommunication, and banking in Pakistan which is an underdeveloped country. This raises concerns regarding the generalizability of our study results. Therefore, we recommend that future researchers replicate and investigate our framework in developed economies and manufacturing sectors (pharmaceutical and textile).

Third, however, this research tests how organizational factors such as perception of organizational politics, and personality trait boredom proneness predict POQ. Still, studies exploring predictors of POQ are at the back. It would be recommended to examine how other organizational factors such as underutilization of skills can cause POQ. Also, in this research one personality trait i.e. boredom proneness is tested with POQ. Thus, this research recommended examining how other personality traits such as openness to experience and neuroticism can predict POQ.

Fourth, this research identified that POQ is negatively related to proactive behavior. Still, various types of extra-role behavior might be affected by POQ and need to be acknowledged. For example, resilience, and supportive voice behavior. To increase organizational performance, upcoming researchers should investigate another form of extra-role behavior. Lastly, our research focused on the mediating mechanism of POQ. Researchers suggest that incorporating moderating constructs can attune the effect of POQ on proactive behavior (Ma et al., 2020a). Therefore, we recommend future researchers incorporate some moderating constructs such as ethical leadership to buffer the negative impact of POQ on proactive behavior.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, using cross-sectional research data from 187 employees from tourism, telecommunication, and banking this research integrated the (P-E) fit theory and discovered that boredom proneness and perceived organizational politics are the predictors of POQ. Additionally, POQ mediated the relationship between predictors (boredom proneness and POP) and outcome proactive behavior. Advancing the research on proactive behavior, this study contributes important implications on why individuals experience POQ which decreases proactive behavior that is advantageous to the organization.

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