



EFFECT OF MISTREATMENT AND POOR LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEES' MORALE WITH MODERATING ROLE OF GRATITUDE INTERVENTION

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to examine the relation between mistreatment, poor leadership and employee morale along with moderating role of gratitude intervention of employees of district judiciary of southern Punjab. Respondents of the study are employees of district judiciary of Southern Punjab, Pakistan. Collection of data is through structured questionnaire. Target population is the lower judiciary system employees with sample size of 316. SPSS is used for measurement and analysis. Key findings of the study revealed that there is significant impact between mistreatment, poor leadership and employees' morale. Results of the study also depicts that gratitude intervention has a positive impact on employee morale as moderator.

KEYWORDS: Mistreatment, poor leadership, employee morale, gratitude intervention and employees of district judiciary of southern Punjab

1. INTRODUCTION

Institutional success has many factors but employees' morale is a key factor for employees satisfaction. Satisfied employees' with high morale bring success to an institute on the other hand low morale causes failure (Pattnaik & Jena, 2020). If employees are more satisfied with their bosses employees' morale will be high as well as productive for institutional success (Ali & Anwar, 2021). The efficiency and performance of employees depend upon employees' morale. Employee morale has become increasingly important for maintaining exceptional organizational performance and staff retention. Mistreatment at the workplace by bosses is one of the major factors that damage employee satisfaction in any kind of organization (Irabor & Okolie, 2019). The morale of employees is adversely affected by mistreatment (Davis Kendrick, 2020). In the year 2019 different scholars like Rasool, Maqbool et al. argued that the morale of employees is based on different factors and employee morale can be negatively affected by various forms of mistreatment which may include gossip, incivility, ostracism, harassment, poor working conditions, and workplace bullying (Rasool, Maqbool, Samma, Zhao, & Anjum, 2019). It has been argued that the working atmosphere is greatly affected by various factors such as disreputable issues which are likely to damage, disgrace, and endanger a healthy working atmosphere which leads to Low employee morale (Anjum, Liang, Durrani, & Parvez, 2020). Thus, the prominent goal of the current study is to identify the impacts of workplace mistreatment and poor leadership that can negatively affect organizational consequences. This is the reason why our study explores the effects of mistreatment and poor leadership on employees' morale. In this study, mistreatment is taken in three forms i.e. gossip, incivility, and ostracism. First of all, in the year 1990, the idea of gossip was pioneered. Gossip is a global phenomenon that accounts for around 65% of people's speaking time (M. L. Robbins & Karan, 2020). Defining gossip we can argue that gossip is talking about other people who are not present there, neither items nor events (Yang, Minjock, Voss, & Colarelli, 2021). Gossip talks about others who are not at the event, neither items nor events (Brady, Brown, & Liang, 2017). Gossips are conversation about someone who is not present at that moment between two or more employees at the workplace (Kuo, Chang, Quinton, Lu, & Lee, 2015). Gossip between workforces has negative effects on employees as well as is the main reason for incivility in the workplace (Kirk, Schutte, & Hine, 2011). Workplace rudeness is negative behaviour with colleagues at the workplace (Mahfooz, Arshad, Nisar, Ikram, & Azeem, 2017). It is stated that disrespect and carelessness between employees at the workplace is a form of incivility (Han, Harold, Oh, Kim, & Agolli, 2022). People who face ill-mannered behaviour at the workplace, their work is greatly affected which resultantly distracts their colleagues, they try to stay away from the main driving force towards their work job performance (Akella & Lewis, 2019). Generally speaking, Ostracism can be defined in many different ways depending upon the nature of working organizations and types of job performance. Robinsnson and wang in the year 2013 argued that Ostracism can be defined as excluding a member previously included in the workforce is known as Ostracism (Robinson, O'Reilly, & Wang, 2013).

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Gratitude intervention is noticing, acknowledging, and appreciating things in your life. Gratitude intervention is a responsive action by a benefactor when a benefit is received by a person and observed by the recipient (Algoe, Haidt, & Gable, 2008). Gratitude is vital in positive organizational culture and is said to show and grow organization members' morale. The role of gratitude in converting mistreatment and poor leadership at the workplace is assessed into a cooperative work environment by exploring the moderating role. Gratitude experienced by the employees at the workplace can counter workplace mistreatment and poor leadership to improve a cooperative work environment, building harmony in society. The study offers a gratitude-based organizational culture that prevents workplace mistreatments and poor leadership to support a shared work environment. This study tried to unlock the dark sides through which gratitude interventions can help to build workplace harmony and collaboration (Sarkar, Garg, Srivastava, & Punia, 2023; Imran et al., 2023). Gratitude is the foundation for concentration in both the popular press and social sciences research, due to the prominent influences of gratitude in the literature, pro-sociality, and interpersonal relationships (Emmons & McCullough, 2004). Usually gratitude is not stated in the workplace, related to other dimensions of life, and individuals report feeling under-appreciated by their leaders and co-workers (Kaplan, 2012).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the literature review, mistreatment and poor leadership had not been paid much attention to employee morale. Apart from this gap, such studies are rare in the lower judiciary department. This study measures the negative effects of mistreatment and poor leadership with gratitude intervention as a moderator. Judges' and Lawyers' behaviour is not up to par with the lower ranks of judiciary employees at the workplace. They do not respect their employees because they think their education level is inadequate compared to theirs. As a result, lower judiciary department employees working at lower ranks feel insecure, which leads to reduced morale.

Positive employee morale leads to employee efficiency in the workplace, which harvests a productive environment for employees (Mallik, Mallik, & Keerthi, 2019). Employees' attitudes and employees work closely align with performance results. If the employees are supported by the leaders, resulting fulfilment transpires, allowing performance goals to be met (Yargo-Gatchell, 2015; Imran et al., 2021).

Futile, negative, bad, poor, or immoral leadership are all terms that define poor and undesirable leadership qualities. History does not pay much consideration to futile and crushed leaders (Andrian, Ming, Harianto, & Daliman, 2021). Relatively, it focuses on those countless winners who were wise leaders and who influenced history. Positively, their unqualified successes are motivated to hide the lacklustre activities of incompetent leaders. But it is the leaders who are unsuccessful to motivate those who are just talking about in the history books. Nowadays, the best and the worst leaders alike are under continuous inspection and are the concentration of many negotiations (Andrian et al., 2021; Imran et al., 2022).

However, one modification is that despite the fact history cares slightly for unsuccessful leaders, modern-day business forecasters observe the whole thing, as well as problems, fables, and the disasters of unsuccessful leaders (Day & Schoemaker, 2019). The activities of a futile leader are typically a load that falls on assistants and after them on to the organization and as a final point on the individual himself. It means that every person compensations for the price of failure affected by ineffectual leaders. As there has been a rise in unproductive organizational leadership, several exercise courses have been planned and countless scholars have been led to discover methods through which to deal with futile leaders (Tourish, 2020).

"Poor leadership," is unsuccessful, risky to a company, immoral, and unsafe to society, organization, employees, and a channel on organizational assets (AlQersh, 2020). Poor leadership can be assumed as in a straight line different successful leadership; whereas the latter has a helpful impact on workers to achieve common goals, poor leadership, on the other hand, damages employees' inspiration to achieve shared objectives. However, it is generally recognized that poor leadership, which lacks moral principles or involves dull actions, can have negative consequences for an organization over the long term (Jenkins & Credle Jr, 2021).

Barbara Kellerman has proposed a framework that highlights two broader dimensions of ineffective leadership: the ineffective side and the immoral side. This perspective implies that ineffective leadership can be characterized by both inefficiency and unethical behaviour. Several reasons can contribute to the failure of ineffective leadership in achieving desired targets (Kellerman & Pittinsky, 2020).

These include Poor personal traits of leaders: Leaders who possess negative qualities such as arrogance, lack of empathy, or poor communication skills may struggle to effectively guide and motivate their teams. Skills shortage: Inadequate leadership skills or a lack of necessary competencies can hinder a leader's ability to make informed decisions, delegate effectively, and address complex challenges. Negative strategies: Adopting counterproductive or ill-conceived strategies can lead to inefficient allocation of resources, poor planning, and ineffective implementation, ultimately hampering the achievement of goals. Short-term focus: Leaders who prioritize immediate gains over long-term sustainability may neglect essential aspects such as employee development, organizational culture, or stakeholder relationships. This short-sightedness can undermine long-term success. By considering these factors, organizations can better understand the challenges associated with ineffective leadership and work towards developing effective leadership practices that prioritize efficiency, ethical conduct, and long-term organizational success (Kurtuluş, 2020).

Employees want to be respected at workplace by their supervisors, not only to receive heavy compensations without respect. As a result, morale of employees will increase when they are respected at workplace. Employee

Morale, in simple terms, is a mix of numerous elements that inspire an employee to do well in his or her profession. "Morale encompasses various aspects that contribute to the satisfaction of a work environment. It includes factors such as enthusiasm, emotional well-being, dedication, loyalty to the organization, and job engagement. These elements collectively influence an individual's attitude and behaviour in the workplace" (Ali & Anwar, 2021). "Employee morale is greater than group unity and management objectives". In a friendly work environment, employee connection with fellow employees increases. Job satisfaction helps to meet the personal satisfaction as well as growth and development of employees. These factors also explain the primary dimensions related to employee morale at workplace. These factors can be applied in different useful methods in different types of organizations. Furthermore, it reinforces the significance of the attitude employees hold toward their immediate supervisor in shaping the structure of employee morale (Martinez, 2020).

Mistreatment with subordinates by supervisors are more likely to respond with deviant retaliatory acts, fewer citizenship behaviors, and less effort directed at job tasks (Cahyono, Haryono, Haryanto, & Harsono, 2020). Abusive supervision, for example, refers to hostile verbal and nonverbal supervisory behaviors (Hongbo et al., 2020) and is estimated to cost the organization in terms of absenteeism, healthcare costs, and lost productivity (Ahmeti, 2022).

The phenomenon of mistreatment at workplace has received considerable attention over the last few years from both academicians and practitioners (Srivastava & Dey, 2020). This refers to the display of aggressive or irrational behavior or negative actions toward one or more individuals in the workplace in a repeated, sustained, and systematic manner (Srivastava & Dey, 2020).

Supportive evidence for the detrimental effects of workplace bullying is presented. It found that employees exposed to bullying are more likely to experience adverse psychological and job-related consequences, including mental and physical health problems, increased intentions to quit, reduced job satisfaction and commitment, and more frequent absenteeism (Nielsen, Christensen, Finne, & Knardahl, 2020).

- **Hypothesis 1:** Mistreatment has a negative relationship with employees' morale.

Leadership refers to the ability to inspire and guide others to establish and implement a shared vision and cultural diversity (Ali & Anwar, 2021). While poor leadership contributes to low employee morale (Khumalo, 2022). With the introduction of the term 'poor leadership' in 1996, employees would be more driven if their bosses don't recognize them (Ali & Anwar, 2021). It is stated that poor leadership is the key factor that lessens the morale of employees (N. R. Robbins, 2003). Poor leadership considers an umbrella that covers related dimensions (e.g. workplace bullying, abusive leadership). Poor leadership is a combination of self-centered attitudes, motivations, and behaviours that have adverse effects on subordinates, the organization, and mission performance. There are three key elements of this poor leadership: an apparent lack of concern for the well-being of subordinates, a personality or interpersonal technique that negatively affects organizational climate, and a conviction by subordinates that the superior is motivated primarily by self-interest (Laguda, 2021).

Employees experiencing a toxic leader's behavior may have feelings of helplessness, reduced autonomy, reduced efficiency and innovation, lower job satisfaction, and psychosomatic problems such as anxiety, depression, frustration, and gastrointestinal problems (N. Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2020). An effective leader makes available practices to the organization and the employees (Balyer & Özcan, 2020). The role of a leader includes developing trust essential to gain a helpful connection with employees (Yargo-Gatchell, 2015). If best practices are based on leaders inspiring employees to work together in a cooperative environment of working, nurturing a positive work environment (Mallik et al., 2019). Tierney (1988) sought to better realize the organizational culture and its worth for enhancing leaders and performance within an organization (Museus & LePeau, 2019).

Hypothesis 2: Poor leadership has a negative relationship with employees' morale

3. THEORETICAL SUPPORT

The "Self-regulation theory" states that self-control resources impact an individual's behaviour (Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998). Research on resource-building interventions describes how gratitude interventions can grow resources instantly and create a long-term increase in resources by changing behavior (Gilbert, Foulk, & Bono, 2018). It is believed that gratitude interventions increase resources because they motivate people to mindfully focus on the helpful parts of their lives, counteract adverse devotion biases, and increase hedonic adjustments (C. E. Smith, 2021). When individuals adopt a grateful perspective, they tend to safeguard and conserve resources. This is because their focus is directed towards the positive aspects and away from the negative ones (Locklear, Taylor, & Ambrose, 2021). Thus gratitude intervention will enhance self-control resources and loss of those resources can lead to negative interpersonal behavior like gossip, rudeness, and ostracism (Meier & Gross, 2015). Gratitude intervention may reduce mistreatment by growing self-control resources ability.

Self-regulation theory is a psychological framework that explains how individuals actively control their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to achieve desired goals and adapt to their environment. This theory, developed by Carver and Scheier (1981), emphasizes the importance of self-regulatory processes in various domains of human functioning, such as motivation, emotion regulation, and goal pursuit (Righetti, Đurić, Hofmann, & Finkenauer, 2022), (Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987).

According to self-regulation theory, individuals engage in a continuous feedback loop of monitoring their progress, setting specific goals, and applying strategies to regulate their thoughts, emotions, and actions. The process involves two main components: standards and feedback. Standards refer to the desired outcomes or expectations

individuals set for themselves, while feedback provides information about their current performance relative to those standards (Robson, Allen, & Howard, 2020).

Self-regulation encompasses several crucial processes, which encompass self-monitoring, self-judgment, and self-reaction. Self-monitoring involves observing and assessing one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors about the desired goals. Self-judgment involves comparing the current performance to the standards set, evaluating whether progress has been made, and determining the level of success. Self-reaction involves responding to the feedback received, which can involve various strategies such as self-reinforcement for successful progress or self-correction for inadequate performance (Tee, Leong, & Abdul Rahim, 2021).

Self-regulation theory highlights the importance of self-control, self-discipline, and willpower in achieving long-term goals and maintaining optimal functioning. It recognizes that self-regulation is a limited resource that can be depleted, leading to self-regulatory failures or lapses. Factors such as motivation, self-efficacy, and environmental cues can influence the effectiveness of self-regulatory processes (Jordalen, Lemyre, & Durand-Bush, 2020).

Overall, self-regulation theory offers a comprehensive structure for understanding how people standardise their thoughts, reactions, and behaviours to achieve desired outcomes, adapt to challenges, and maintain psychological well-being.

3.1. GRATITUDE INTERVENTION

Gratitude is a feeling of important worth, which yields an extensive range of useful consequences. At the same time, there is evidence of an alternate. Some organizations nurture gratitude and thankfulness, promoting high-quality associations and pro-social behaviour (Fehr, Fulmer, Awtrey, & Miller, 2017). In organizations, gratitude can play a serious role. An increasing body of work in the social sciences has exposed that thankfulness progresses life satisfaction (Lasota, Tomaszek, & Bosacki, 2020), lessens violent behaviour (Wolanin & Rybak, 2022), and provokes pro-social behaviour (Kong et al., 2023).

Even in domains where gratitude would seem like to play a vital role (e.g., assistant leadership, organizational citizenship, and customer service), it is hardly mentioned. At the occasion level, we define gratitude as a feeling of gratefulness in reaction to an practise that is beneficial to, but not attributable to, the self (R, Thakur, & Patre, 2023). Many different involvements can generate feelings of gratitude. In its most prototypical form, people experience gratitude after getting a tangible or intangible benefit from a benefactor (Fehr et al., 2017). For example, an employee might practise a feeling of gratitude when a co-worker sacrifices her free time to help the recipient meet a deadline.

Similarly, an employee might experience gratitude when a supervisor spends an afternoon helping her develop new skills. In each of these cases, the alleged benevolence and sacrifice of the benefactor play serious roles gratitude in the workplace can be defined as the action of identifying and escalating the positive aspects of employee's work life (Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010). Exactly, employee gratitude involvements are deliberate initiatives or activities implemented to promote and cultivate the practice of gratitude within the workplace.

In the gratitude intervention employees were instructed to maintain a gratitude log or journal, reflecting on what they were grateful for in their job. The participants were encouraged to engage in this activity three times a week. The focus of the log was to acknowledge and appreciate various aspects of their work, such as supportive work relationships, personal sacrifices, or any other positive experiences related to their job (S. Kaplan et al., 2014). Indeed, gratitude interventions have shown to be a robust strategy for enhancing employee job well-being (Wood et al., 2010).

Organizations can nurture a healthy workplace through the implementation of gratitude interventions that may provide helpful resources that can minimize the negative effects of mistreatment and poor leadership. The term "gratitude intervention" is defined as any advantage, program, or practice that aims to improve or promote the employees' morale at the workplace. These interventions nurture gratitude such that employees experience higher levels of booming in response to mistreatment and poor leadership in the workplace (Granziera, Collie, & Martin, 2021). Everyday connections between colleagues, bosses, and assistants present various chances for conveying gratitude. Employees often go beyond their titled duties by helping one another and engaging in practical, pro-social behaviors. These flexible struggles are usually concentrating towards improving the well-being of their colleagues and supporting the overall working of the organization (Bozdoğan, 2021).

- **Hypothesis 3:** Mistreatment has a strong relationship with gratitude intervention
- **Hypothesis 4:** Poor leadership has a strong relationship with gratitude intervention

3.2. MODERATING ROLE OF GRATITUDE INTERVENTION

Gratitude Intervention found to be effective in decreasing workplace rudeness by improving participants' self-control (Lee & Ashton, 2009). Alongside investigating the impact of the gratitude intervention on reducing rude behaviour, the study also explored its effects on participants' tendencies to gossip about or ostracize their co-workers'. The consequences showed that employees in the gratitude condition reported high levels of self-discipline and, as completed by their colleagues, exhibited reduced levels of rudeness, gossip, and ostracism in the workplace (Mangus, Bock, Folse, & Jones, 2022). While these experiments provide evidence supporting the role of gratitude journaling in mitigating mistreatment within organizations, it is vital note that it isn't a preserve all solution. Simply distributing thankfulness journals to the team is not sufficient to eliminate negative behaviour at work. Instead, it is recommended that managers address the multifaceted issue of workplace mistreatment by fostering a culture of gratitude (Geier & Morris, 2022).

Encouraging employees to express gratitude or appreciation publicly can be met with ambivalence, so it is important not to impose it. Instead, managers should provide a designated space and time for gratitude, whether it be physical or virtual. One approach is to establish an appreciation wall or a dedicated Slack channel where employees can acknowledge and commend their colleagues (Salem et al., 2019). Another effective strategy is to initiate meetings with gratitude "check-ins," allowing team members to share something they are thankful for (Self et al., 2021). By utilizing these practices, such as creating an appreciation wall or implementing check-ins, employees who actively participate provide social proof that can motivate their hesitant colleagues to follow suit (Salem et al., 2019).

The predominant focus of studying the outcomes of organizational resources on employees has revolved around employee well-being, employee feelings, and job fulfilment (R. S. Kaplan et al., 2014). However, the exploration of employee gratefulness as an "other engaged" positive emotion (Eamons & Mc Cullough, 2003) has been mostly neglected in the context of examining the impacts of organizational resources. While inner-directed outcomes like individuals welfare and positive move have received considerable attention, the significance of employee gratitude has been overlooked. Multiple mechanisms have been identified by scholars to explain the connection between gratitude and welfare. Grateful individuals practise higher levels of welfare due to representation biases that make them perceive helpful activities from others as more beneficial to themselves (Emmons & Mishra, 2011). The practice of gratefulness also helps in handling with stress and lessens the negative impact of social associations, which often lead to toxic feelings (Emmons & Mishra, 2011).

Moreover, the routine experience of positive emotions among grateful individuals subsidizes to their elasticity against mental disorders and general stressors (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). Moreover, gratitude is related with several other instruments that influence welfare, including improved self-esteem, improved access to positive memories, higher levels of spirituality and mindfulness, increased likelihood of achieving goals, greater social resources, and improved physical health (Wood et al., 2010). In summary, various theoretical explanations and mechanisms establish direct and indirect connections between dispositional gratitude and different aspects of well-being.

- **Hypothesis 5:** Gratitude intervention positively moderates the relationship between employees' mistreatment and employees' morale
- **Hypothesis 6:** Gratitude intervention positively moderates the relationship between poor leadership and employees' morale

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, Employees Morale is taken as the dependent variable. Mistreatment and Poor Leadership are treated as independent variables. Gratitude Intervention is termed as a moderator through, according to literature, dependent and independent variable are negatively associated. By focusing on employees' morale in the lower judiciary department of South Punjab in Pakistan.

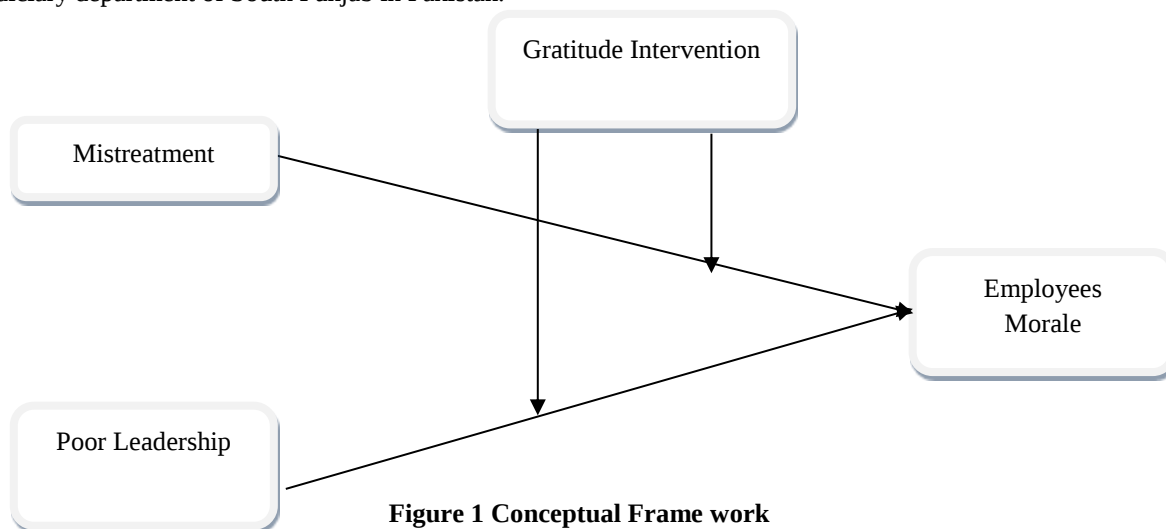


Figure 1 Conceptual Frame work

4.1. METHODOLOGY

Staff employees of lower judicial courts of southern Punjab are chosen for the collection of data. The literacy rate in southern Punjab is very low compared to other part of the Punjab. So, most of the employees are bound to work on lower ranks jobs including in the judiciary system. So, the lower judiciary staff of the civil and session courts are the target population. From the targeted population, our sample is the complete clerical staff ranging from BPS-11 to BPS-17. The population included clerical staff, senior Clerical staff, stenographers, accountants, librarians, junior auditors, and computer operators and senior computer Operators. The data has been collected through online Google Forms through structured questionnaires. The questionnaire comprises a 05-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly disagree. All employees of the lower judiciary at civil

and session courts of southern Punjab districts has been covered for data collection. A simple random sampling technique has been used for the collection of samples. MS Excel and SPSS softwares has been used for data entry and analysis.

Table 1: Summary of Population District wise in Southern Punjab

Sr. No.	Number of Regions	Number of Districts	Number of Courts	Number of Employees
01	Multan	• Multan	68	408
		• Lodhran	32	188
		• Khanewal	34	204
		• Vehari	38	260
		• Bahawalpur	48	288
02	Bahawalpur	• Rahim Yar Khan	51	306
		• Bahawalnagar	37	222
		• Dera Ghazi Khan	24	144
		• Layyah	20	120
03	Dera Ghazi Khan	• Muzaffargarh	43	258
		• Rajanpur	18	108
Total	03	11	383	2506

Table 1 showed the total population of the study from 11 districts of southern Punjab. These Elven districts are 1. Vehari 2. Multan. 3. Khanewal. 4. Lodhraan .5 Muzfar Garh 6. Layya 7. Bahwalngar 8. Bhawalpur 9. Dera Ghazi Khan 10. Rajan Pur and 11. Rahim Yar Khan. The data for this research has been collected from these locations comprising the total population of the study.

The study used previously developed and validated questionnaires to gather data. Gossip at work has been measured by a 5-item questionnaire developed by (Estévez, Wittek, Giardini, Ellwardt, & Krause, 2022). Incivility at the workplace has been measured by a 5-item questionnaire developed by (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta, & Magley, 2013). Ostracism at the workplace has been measured by a 5-item questionnaire developed by (Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008), Employees morale and Poor leadership has been measured by a 5-item questionnaire developed by (Yargo-Gatchell, 2015) while Gratitude intervention has been measured by a 5-item questionnaire developed by (Doss & SoosaiNathan, 2022).

4.2. CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Table 2 showed the inter-item correlation matrix produced by SPSS. A coefficient range of 0.41 to 0.70 often denotes a moderate association between the variables. Coefficients between 0.21 and 0.41 show a weak but present link between the variables. The range of the coefficients, from 0.00 to 0.21, indicates that there is little correlation between the variables.

The correlation table provided shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between the variables: Mistreatment, Poor Leadership, Gratitude Intervention, and Employees Morale. Significant correlations are indicated by asterisks (**), with a significance level of 0.01 (2-tailed), and a single asterisk (*) indicates a significance level of 0.05 (2-tailed). The results reveal several significant correlations. Firstly, Mistreatment is positively correlated with Poor Leadership ($r = .509, p < .01$), Gratitude Intervention ($r = .408, p < .01$), and Employees Morale ($r = .258, p < .01$). These findings suggest that higher levels of mistreatment are associated with poor leadership, lower effectiveness of gratitude interventions, and reduced employee morale.

Secondly, Poor Leadership is positively correlated with Mistreatment ($r = .509, p < .01$) and Gratitude Intervention ($r = .240, p < .01$). This indicates that poor leadership is associated with higher levels of mistreatment and potentially impacts the effectiveness of gratitude interventions.

Table 2: Results of Correlation

		Mistreatment	Poor Leadership	Gratitude Intervention	Employees Morale
	Pearson Correlation	1	.509**	.408**	.258**
Mistreatment	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	316	316	316	316
	Pearson Correlation	.509**	1	.240**	.141*
Poor Leadership	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.012
	N	316	316	316	316
	Pearson Correlation	.408**	.240**	1	.159**
Gratitude Intervention	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.005
	N	316	316	316	316
	Pearson Correlation	.258**	.141*	.159**	1
Employees Morale	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.012	.005	
	N	316	316	316	316

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Thirdly, Gratitude Intervention is positively correlated with Mistreatment ($r = .408, p < .01$) and Employees Morale ($r = .159, p < .01$). This suggests that the implementation of gratitude interventions is associated with lower levels of mistreatment and potentially higher employee morale. Finally, Employees Morale is positively correlated with Mistreatment ($r = .258, p < .01$) and Gratitude Intervention ($r = .159, p < .01$). This indicates that higher employee morale is associated with lower levels of mistreatment and the potential effectiveness of gratitude interventions. In summary, the correlation analysis reveals relationships between different variables related to mistreatment, poor leadership, gratitude interventions, and employee morale. These findings suggest that mistreatment at work is associated with poor leadership, reduced effectiveness of gratitude interventions, and lower employee morale. Furthermore, implementing gratitude interventions may contribute to lower levels of mistreatment and potentially higher employee morale. These insights can be mean full in understanding the dynamics within the workplace and identifying areas for improvement in terms of leadership, employee treatment, and fostering a positive work environment.

4.3. MODERATION ANALYSIS

The hierarchical regression analysis investigated the moderating effect of Gratitude Intervention on the relationships between Mistreatment and Employee Morale at Work, as well as between Poor Leadership and Employee Morale at Work.

Table 3: Results of Moderation
Hierarchical Regression for Moderation

Variables	M1(Beta)	M2(Beta)	M3 (Beta)
Step-1			
Mistreatment	0.264**		
Poor Leadership	0.240**		
Gratitude intervention	0.270**		
R ²	0.61		
Step-2			
Mistreatment*Gratitude intervention		-.068**	
Poor Leadership *Gratitude intervention			0.050**
R ²		0.61	0.60

Mistreatment, Poor Leadership, and Gratitude Intervention are entered as independent variables in Step 1 of the analysis to investigate their relationships with Employees 'Morale at Work. Maltreatment was found to have a significant positive relationship with Employees 'Morale at Work (Beta = 0.264, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that higher levels of maltreatment are associated with worse outcomes. Similarly, Poor Leadership demonstrated a significant positive relationship with Employees 'Morale at Work (Beta = 0.240, $p < 0.01$), indicating that greater levels of poor leadership are associated with weaker outcomes. Furthermore, Gratitude Intervention demonstrated a significant positive relationship with Employees 'Morale at Work (Beta = 0.270, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher levels of gratitude intervention are associated with improved outcomes. The R² value of 0.61 indicated that these three predictors explained 61% of the variance in Employees 'Morale at Work.

In Step 2, interaction variables between Mistreatment and Gratitude Intervention and between Poor Leadership and Gratitude Intervention are included in the analysis to determine the moderating effect of Gratitude Intervention on the relationships. The results revealed that the interaction term Mistreatment * Gratitude Intervention had a

significant negative coefficient (Beta = -0.068, p 0.01), indicating that Gratitude Intervention moderates the relationship between Mistreatment and Employees' Morale at Work. This suggests that when individuals are subjected to greater levels of mistreatment, the presence of a gratitude intervention can mitigate or reduce the negative impact of mistreatment on Employees' Morale at Work.

Similarly, the interaction term Poor Leadership * Gratitude Intervention had a significant positive coefficient (Beta = 0.050, p 0.01), indicating that Gratitude Intervention moderates the relationship between Poor Leadership and Employees' Morale at Work. This suggests that when individuals experience greater levels of poor leadership, the presence of a gratitude intervention can amplify or intensify the negative impact of poor leadership on Employees' Morale at Work. The increase in R^2 from 0.61 in Step 1 to 0.61 in Step 2 indicates that the interaction terms accounted for an additional 1% of the variance in Employees' Morale at Work.

In conclusion, the results suggest that Gratitude Intervention moderates the relationship between Mistreatment and Employee Morale at Work, as well as the relationship between Poor Leadership and Employee Morale at Work. Specifically, the presence of gratitude intervention can mitigate the negative effects of mistreatment and amplify the negative effects of poor leadership on the Employees' Morale at Work. These findings highlight the importance of considering the role of gratitude intervention in understanding the impact of mistreatment and poor leadership on outcomes in the given context.

5. DISCUSSION

The study indicates that gratitude intervention when implemented in the workplace can moderate the relationships between Mistreatment and Employees' Morale at Work, as well as between Poor Leadership and Employees' Morale at Work. This indicates that the presence of a gratitude intervention program can influence the effect of mistreatment and poor leadership on employee morale, either by mitigating the negative effects of mistreatment or by exacerbating them. Employees who experience maltreatment in the workplace, such as bullying, discrimination, or unfair treatment, typically have lower morale. The study suggests, however, that instituting a gratitude intervention program can mitigate some of the negative effects. A gratitude intervention could, for instance, consist of regular expressions of appreciation and recognition for employees' contributions, thereby fostering a positive and supportive work environment. By instilling gratitude practices, employees may feel more valued and appreciated, mitigating the detrimental effects of maltreatment and boosting their morale.

Conversely, ineffective leadership practices can have a significant impact on employee morale. This may include a dearth of communication, favoritism, or inconsistent decision-making. Implementing a gratitude intervention alongside subpar leadership may exacerbate the negative effects on employee morale, according to the study. This is because a gratitude intervention highlights the gap between employees' expectations of effective leadership and the actuality of ineffective leadership practices. For example, if employees receive tokens of appreciation for their work but still have to deal with an unsupportive or inconsistent leader, the positive effects of gratitude may be overshadowed by the frustrations caused by poor leadership, resulting in a further decline in morale.

Overall, the findings highlight the significance of evaluating the role of a gratitude intervention in the context of mistreatment and inadequate leadership. While implementing a gratitude intervention program can help mitigate the negative impact of maltreatment on employee morale, it may not be enough to counteract the negative effects of poor leadership on its own. Organizations must address the underlying causes of ineffective leadership practices and cultivate a culture in which gratitude practices align with effective leadership behaviors.

Overall, the results highlight the significance of contemplating the role of a gratitude intervention in the context of mistreatment and poor leadership. Although implementing a gratitude intervention program can help mitigate the negative impact of maltreatment on employee morale, it may not be sufficient to counteract the negative effects of poor leadership on its own. Organizations must address the root causes of ineffective leadership practice and cultivate an environment in which gratitude practices align with effective leadership behaviors.

6. CONCLUSION

This study concludes by highlighting the importance of gratitude interventions in moderating the relationships between mistreatment, inadequate leadership, and employee morale. The findings demonstrate that gratitude intervention can be an effective tool for mitigating the negative effects of maltreatment while amplifying the detrimental effects of poor leadership on employee morale. The significance of this study's implications for organisations and leaders is substantial. Recognising the negative effects of mistreatment and poor leadership on employee morale, organisations should consider instituting gratitude interventions as a means of fostering a positive work environment and enhancing employee well-being. These interventions can serve as valuable strategies for mitigating the negative effects of maltreatment, ultimately leading to increased employee job satisfaction and productivity.

This study contributes to our understanding of the critical role of gratitude intervention in mitigating the negative effects of maltreatment and poor leadership on employee morale, despite its limitations. By recognising and implementing gratitude interventions, organisations have the potential to cultivate a positive and supportive work environment that prioritises employee well-being and ultimately contributes to the success of the organisation as a whole.

6.1. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are two implications of this investigation. Prioritise the creation of a positive work environment by addressing maltreatment and encouraging respectful interactions among employees. A gratitude intervention programme can serve as a buffer against mistreatment, nurturing psychological safety and inclusiveness. To maintain high employee morale, this implies that organisations should establish distinct channels for reporting and addressing mistreatment issues promptly.

Second, the research emphasises the significance of effective leadership in influencing employee morale. Poor leadership practices can have a significant impact on employee satisfaction and well-being. Therefore, organisations should invest in developing effective leadership skills and promoting employee-centric behaviours. Nevertheless, it is essential to recognise that a gratitude intervention programme may not be sufficient on its own. Such initiatives must be complemented by strategies that resolve leadership deficiencies and improve communication channels.

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