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Workplace Hazing and Employee Turnover Intention: Understanding the Mediating Effect of Emotional Exhaustion

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the association between workplace hazing and turnover intentions in the police department of Larkana city. In addition to it, the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion is also checked with workplace hazing and turnover intention. A survey-based method is used to collect data from respondents. A sample of 346 sizes was used in this study. Data was collected from the employees of the police department. A convenience sampling technique is used to collect data. The study is quantitative and it is conducted to measure the cause-and-effect relationship of the variables. Workplace hazing is an independent variable, the turnover intention is a dependent variable and emotional exhaustion is a mediating variable. It was found that employees are willing to leave an organization when they became victims of hazing-based activities like verbal abuse and mental stress. This system affects the performance of the organization. For the analysis of data SPSS and PLS-SEM were used to check validity, reliability, correlation and other tests were also done.

Introduction

Hazing is an act of disgracing others that involves unethical behaviors from a senior-level person toward a junior-level person; this dangerous act is usually done without the permission of the victim (Kowalski et al., 2021). However, hazing is mostly connected with brotherhood and sisterhood, it is found in siblings (Nuwer, 2018). Hazing is also observed in armed forces (Kim et al., 2019), groups of students (Owen et al., 2008), team members of games (Tofler, 2016), and at different workplaces (Thomas & Meglich, 2019). Activities related to hazing may consist of bullying, harassment, and abuse at the workplace or bullying on internet platforms (Tofler, 2016). Research on hazing was mostly done on a group of students and team members of the game (Allan, 2009).

There is a scarcity of literature on management on workplace hazing, based on the practices of socialization, hazing can stop newcomers to become effective members of their new groups.

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Hazing in the organization can hamper positive relations of newcomers with their subordinates (Allan, 2009). In many areas of the world and organizations, hazing has been encountered and it is identified in multiple ways. Every group or area has different characteristics but the dynamics of hazing are often constant to disgrace new ones at the workplace. In this regard, humiliating activities may be compared to some extent (Dias & Sá, 2014). Hazing has been recorded by literature in numerous groups of socialization and the workplace is one of them (Josefowitz et al., 1989).

Newcomers in their groups are offered by the hazers to become the victim of hazing by enduring disrespect and difficulties. It includes working on unimportant tasks for a longer period, remaining in solitude in the workgroups, and facing no positive response from the group members. Hazing creates many functions for the group members, initially, new workers are asked to be part of this group while paying no amount while using the resources of the group, later on, existing members demand the contribution of newcomers. Hazing is used by the organization to pick people willing to make sacrifices in exchange for membership and, in the end, to turn an outsider into an insider. (Cimino, 2011).

One of the new constructs, onboarding; is usually interconnected with socialization. The human resources department is used to welcome newcomers and guide them about the system of the organization (Klein et al., 2015). In various organizations, employees are hazed that can be newcomers of entry-level or managers of higher positions. In different areas of occupations like banks, accounting firms, stores of retail, and medical and engineering firms, hazing has become part of it (Meglich-Sespico et al., 2007). No doubt newcomers at the workplace can learn and make connections with others but there are negative consequences of hazing over new employees, it can cause stress and worriedness within an employee that can harm the goals of the organization. Some of the examples of hazing are as follows; A firm comprised of fifty members conducted a meeting in which new employees were asked to share their experience of their past where they were hazed, it was reported by one of the employees that he was given a nickname within his group. These names were also based on race-based nicknames like (Mr. Myagi). Employees were called these names until they receive acceptance from the group. Another employee stated that he was asked to

do work with low pay or work that is not related to his skills. It can be considered task-related hazing (Mawritz et al., 2020).

Employees who are exhausted emotionally could not manage their work at the workplace rather they provide harm to the assets of the company. They are more stressful and employees considered this stress inevitable. Sometimes employees behave in such a way that they share secret information about the company with others. All these situations generate a financial loss. Employees make themselves engage in unethical conduct and try to get rid of the demands of the job (Linden et al., 2005). Emotionally overwhelmed employees deal with the customers in an unethical way because they don't possess cognitive resources (Baumeister, 2001).

Literature Review
Regularities of hazing: Making scratches on skin, starvations, working like servants, and usage of toxic material are some of the adversities of hazing that are recorded throughout the culture. Nevertheless, there are some ongoing qualities and conditions that can be the basis of the study of hazing in the workplace (Cimino, 2013).
Temporary: There is a stop to hazing activities; this means hazing has to meet the deadline or date of expiration. All the adverse activities of hazing are time bound; these adversities can be restarted at an interval of time and then ends. However, hazing expectations and materials are rarely used outside of the induction procedure for any purpose.
One Direction: Newcomers are focused on hazers. Hazing is not done on new employees at the time of induction rather it also targets those experienced once with the same activities. Therefore, hazing doesn't follow such type of mutual element in all workplaces (Cimino, 2011).

Forcible Hazing: Pressure is applied by hazers. Victims are compelled to get through hazing activities until it is completed. Mostly hazers put pressure on the newcomers to involve themselves in humiliating activities. Such activities can include shouting, flattering, scaring, and insobriety (Cimino, 2018).

Theoretical Underpinnings
The conservation of resource (COR) theory is a stress theory that explains why people want to keep their

current resources while also seeking new ones. In 1989 COR theory was presented by Dr. Stevan E. Hobfoll. This theory advises that if there is an actual or imagined depletion of resources, it will generate a behavior to engage in efforts that conserve the resources of human capital (Hobfoll, 2001). There is a loss of a resource at a personal level because of frequent loss of disrespect, dignity, and standard all these elements are generated due to hazing at the workplace. If the situation of anxiety remains the same then individual resources can be diminished which is reflected in human behavior like an individual will make an intention to leave the organization, loss of work engagement (Naseer, 2016), and emotional exhaustion (Jeon et al., 2018).

Workplace Hazing and Turnover Intention

Hazing means negative abusive conduct that is deliberate and repeated in nature. This misconduct usually affects the work of the employee. (Einarsen et al., 2002). Hazing behavior leads to harassment and employees are realizing that they are socially disconnected from the group. It is considered the most destructive and annoying problem that the rest of the work provides stress at work collectively (Einarsen et al., 2011). In the current situation, research scholars and policymakers have observed that workplace hazing has more impact on the employees, however, there is scant research on it. According to the conservation of resource theory, the victim of activities of hazing is going to be encouraged to protect his or her resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), which causes employees to leave the organization (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). Employee turnover is followed by turnover intention, which represents the possibility that people will depart the organization and look for employment elsewhere (Haque et al., 2019). Employee desires to leave the employer are mostly influenced by the environment at work, background, and behavior of other employees at the workplace (Oruh et al., 2020). Moreover, uncomfortable working conditions in the existing workplace and better job opportunities in other places will lead to employee turnover (Rožman & Štrukelj 2021). However, firms can get massive losses in both human and social resources along with business disruptions (Oruh et al., 2020). Turnover of employees is often deemed as expensive and complex while managing employees at the workplace. New employees mostly withdraw from an organization when they feel uncomfortable in socialization (Rubenstein et al., 2018).

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between workplace hazing and employee turnover intention.

Workplace Hazing and Emotional Exhaustion

Individuals experience exhaustion mentally based on their work; it creates a result of cognitive and physical stress for an individual at the workplace (Smyth, 2016). Emotional exhaustion is the basic sign of workplace hazing situations that has a chronic influence on physical and emotional health. Employees show minimum effectiveness while performing any task at the workplace when they are going through hazing activities and eventually they are exhausted (Giorgi et at., 2016). Conservation of resource theory state that outbursts responses are driven by job and incapacity and available resources to manage stress (Hobfoll & Shirom). The behavior of employees is governed by their thinking patterns or mental state of mind (Miner et al., 2005). Workplace hazing has negatively influenced the mind of an employee; it causes depression, anxiety, stress, and fatigue. Employees are exhausted mentally while facing all these chronic activities (Einarsen, 2012). Therefore, the above statements hypothesized that

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between workplace hazing and emotional exhaustion.

Emotional Exhaustion and Turnover Intention

New workers are often emotionally exhausted on account of workplace hazing; it involves the elements like helplessness, distress, and less self-esteem. In addition to it employees are not interested in that type of workplace; they remain more absent and depict a negative direction towards task and organization (Ogungbamila et al., 2014). It can be further defined with COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001) since such negative emotions will harm individual resource workers and will indulge in unethical conduct to preserve resources. One of the serious emotions generated by these feelings of exhaustion is the turnover intention of the employee; leaving a job in one organization and finding another employer (Marchand & Vandenberghe, 2016). There is a positive and significant relationship between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention; this is stated by research scholars (Noh et al., 2019, Kraemer& Gouthier, 2014).

H3: There is a positive and significant relationship between employee exhaustion and turnover intention.

Mediating effect of Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion can be defined as a state when there is more workload or excessive demands by others to do more work and employees get exhausted (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). One of the significant factors of mental illness is emotional exhaustion and it is mostly caused by ongoing work stress therefore most employees tolerate this burnout (Noh et al., 2019). Compelling an employee to leave any specific group creates stress for the group member; it harms resources that are related to mental, emotional, and psychological. Self-respect, possession, control, and ability to manage certain situations are easily affected by this ostracism (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009). Fatigue in the services sector environment entails a sensation of mental and physical exhaustion. Employees often go for leaving an organization once they face burnout like exhaustion due to frequent depletion (Shih et al., 2013, Noh et al., 2019). Employees are busy fighting for the conflict that causes stress; employees want to eliminate discomfort from their working conditions that have generated emotional stress (Tepper et al., 2007). This stress-managing approach comprises acceptance of the situation as it is by thinking that the condition would remain the same (Cronkite & Moos, 1995). It reflects that employees are unable to maintain the stress at the workplace when they are emotionally exhausted (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). It involves cerebral, psychological, or interpersonal requirements and refers to the top degree of exhaustion and negativity and all three indicators of burnout (Chen & Cunradi, 2008). Taking support from the above statements, below given hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Emotional Exhaustion mediates the relationship between workplace hazing and employee turnover intentions.

Conceptual Framework
Based on the study of literature review, states that Workplace hazing is an independent variable, emotional exhaustion is mediating variable, and turnover intention is a dependent variable.

Figure 1
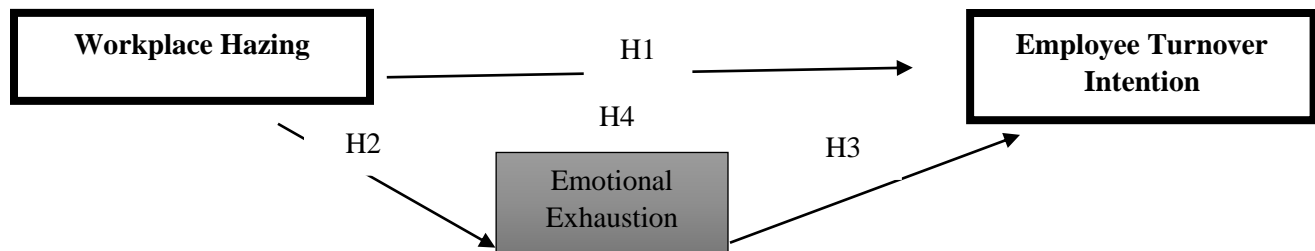
Research Methodology
An explanatory research design has been used in this study. Conservation of resource (COR) theory is used to test the hypothesis among two independent variables, namely; workplace hazing, a mediator, namely; emotional exhaustion, and dependent variables, namely; turnover intention. A quantitative research method is used in this study. Casual research is used in this study that will test the connection between dependent constructs and independent constructs. Primary data has been used in this study. This study follows an individual unit of analysis. Each response is considered an individual source of data.

Sampling Design
For this study, the target population consists of males from those organizations who are working in the police department, Larkana, Sindh, Pakistan. Larkana city is considered one of the rural areas of Pakistan.

The population chosen for this study includes employees (Police constables, clerks, Munshi & others), and officers include SHOs and other workers who are working in police stations, and forensic labs. Besides it, data were also collected from Traffic policemen. In this research study, the convenience sampling technique is used to generate data. Data was collected from 346 respondents to get a better representation of the population.

Measures
To collect data from the respondents, the questionnaire follows a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree), and survey forms were distributed among respondents through hard copy and soft copy (Google forms). Data was

collected through a questionnaire that consists of close-ended 31 items. It includes;

Workplace Hazing is an independent variable; Hazing is an act of disgracing others that involves unethical behaviors from a senior level person toward a junior level person; this dangerous act is usually done without the permission of the victim (Kowalski et al., 2021). This construct is measured by using the items that are developed by (Mawritz et al., 2022). The scale contains 15 items. The reliability of this scale was 0.90.

Turnover Intention is a dependent variable when an employee is willing to leave an organization due to some issues and switch to another organization is known as turnover intension of the employee. This variable consists of five items that are taken from (Dwivedi, 2015). The reliability of this scale was 0.839.

Emotional Exhaustion is one of the chronic conditions of mental state. It is considered burnout when employees are feeling stressed due to more workload. This variable is measured by taking five items from (Francis et al., 2004). The reliability of this scale was 0.883.

Data Analysis Technique

After collecting data from the sample size, all the statistical tests were conducted that included descriptives, reliability, and validity test through SPSS 21 and PLS 3.0. Structural Equation Modeling using Partial Least Squares was used to evaluate the data since it is statistically extremely efficient and provides greater predicted accuracy.

Results

The data was collected from 350 responses, out of which 346 respondents were considered right responses. Missing values were found in 4 responses. There were 276 males and 70 males. There were 45 respondents whose age was less than 21 years, 156 respondents' age was between 21 to 30 years, 129 respondents are between 31 to 40 age group while age of 14 respondents is between 41 to 50 years. Only 2 respondents are above 50 years of age group. The education level of respondents shows that 11 respondents have a matriculation background, 21 respondents are from the intermediate background, 114 are undergraduate and there are 197 graduates. Only 3 respondents are from the doctorate level.

Table 1 Demographics

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	276	79.7
	Female	70	20.2
	Less than 21 years	45	13.0
Age	21 to 30 years	156	45.1
	31 to 40 years	129	37.3
	41 to 50 years	14	4.0
	Above 50 years	2	0.6
	Matriculation / O Level	11	3.2
Education	Intermediate / A Level	21	6.1
	Undergraduate	114	32.9
	Graduate	197	56.9
	Doctorate	3	0.9
	Less than 1 year	390	11.0
Work Experience	1-3 years	125	36.1
	4-6 years	153	44.2

7-10 years	25	7.2
More than 10 years	5	1.4

N=346

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics that consist of mean, standard deviation, correlation, and reliability. This study has used three variables that are listed below; Workplace Hazing (WPH) is an independent variable. Emotional Exhaustion (EE) is mediating variable and Turnover Intension (TI) is the dependent variable. WPH has a mean value of 3.7973 (SD=.47613: CR= .746). Mean value of EE is 3.8085 (SD=.53685: CR= .741) and the mean value of TI is 3.9104 (SD=.58933: CR= .554). Correlation between all the variables depicts significance at 0.01*

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Constructs	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha	WPH	EE	TI
WPH	3.7973	.47613	.746	-	-	-
EE	3.8085	.53685	.741	.777**	-	-
TI	3.9104	.58933	.554	.688**	.756**	-

Note.   WPH = Workplace Hazing, EE = Emotional Exhaustion, TI = Turnover Intension

All of the variables were regressed on a common variable, and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was calculated; if the VIF was less than 3.3, the single source data was found to be free of bias. The research revealed that the VIF for all variables was less than 3.3 (Table 3), indicating that single source bias was not a significant concern.

Table 3 Full Collinearity Test

WPH	EE	TI
2.682	3.294	2.483

Measurement Model

In this study, two steps technique is used to test the model as was proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). To evaluate the validity and reliability of an instrument, first, all measurement model was used (Hair et al., 2019). Later on, the structural model was tested to check the hypotheses that were developed for this study. Composite reliability (CR), Items loadings, and Average variance extracted (AVE) were obtained to check convergent validity and reliability, The cutoff of loadings is ≥ 0.5. The limit of AVE is ≥ 0.5 and the criterion for CR is ≥ 0.7. Table 4 depicts that AVE is greater than 0.5, CR is greater than 0.7 and all the loadings approved are greater than 0.6 (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 4 Measurement Model for first-order constructs

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
EE	EE2	0.715	0.884	0.561
	EE3	0.712		

	EE4	0.779		
	EE5	0.728		
	EE6	0.738		
	EE7	0.816		
TI	TI2	0.748	0.842	0.572
	TI3	0.723		
	TI4	0.802		
	TI5	0.751		
WPH	WPH10	0.781	0.922	0.664
	WPH11	0.789		
	WPH13	0.859		
	WPH14	0.828		
	WPH15	0.824		
	WPH8	0.805		

Note.　　　EE = Emotional Exhaustion, TI = Turnover Intension, WPH = Workplace Hazing

Later on, the Discriminant validity test was evaluated through Fornell and larger (1981) and Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). All the values that are on the diagonal level must be above the values of non-diagonal values in Fornell and locker. Table 5 depicts all the values of diagonal and greater than non-diagonals. The criterion of HTMT is advised by Note.

(Henseler et al., 2015) and it was upgraded by (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019). The requirement of the values of HTMT must be up to 0.85 and table 6 shows the same requirement. In this way, it can be stated that all the constructs were considered different by respondents, and the items were deemed reliable and valid.

EE = Emotional Exhaustion, TI = Turnover Intension, WPH = Workplace Hazing

Table 5 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

		1	2	3
1	EE	0.762		
2	TI	0.731	0.746	
3	WPH	0.509	0.402	0.750

Note.　　　EE = Emotional Exhaustion, TI = Turnover Intension, WPH = Workplace Hazing

Table 6 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

		1	2	3
1	EE	-	-	-
2	TI	1.209	-	-
3	WPH	0.796	0.673	-

Note. EE = Emotional Exhaustion, TI = Turnover Intension, WPH = Workplace Hazing

Structural Model

In this study, 500 samples of the bootstrapping method to mention path coefficients, t-values, standard errors, and p-values for the requirement of the structural model (Ramayah et al., 2018). Furthermore, based on the critiques of Hahn and Ang (2017) that p values are not a fine requirement to test the hypothesis and its significance level. In this regard collection of t values, confidence intervals, p values, and effect sizes are used in this study. Table 7 shows the direct effect summary of the hypothesis.
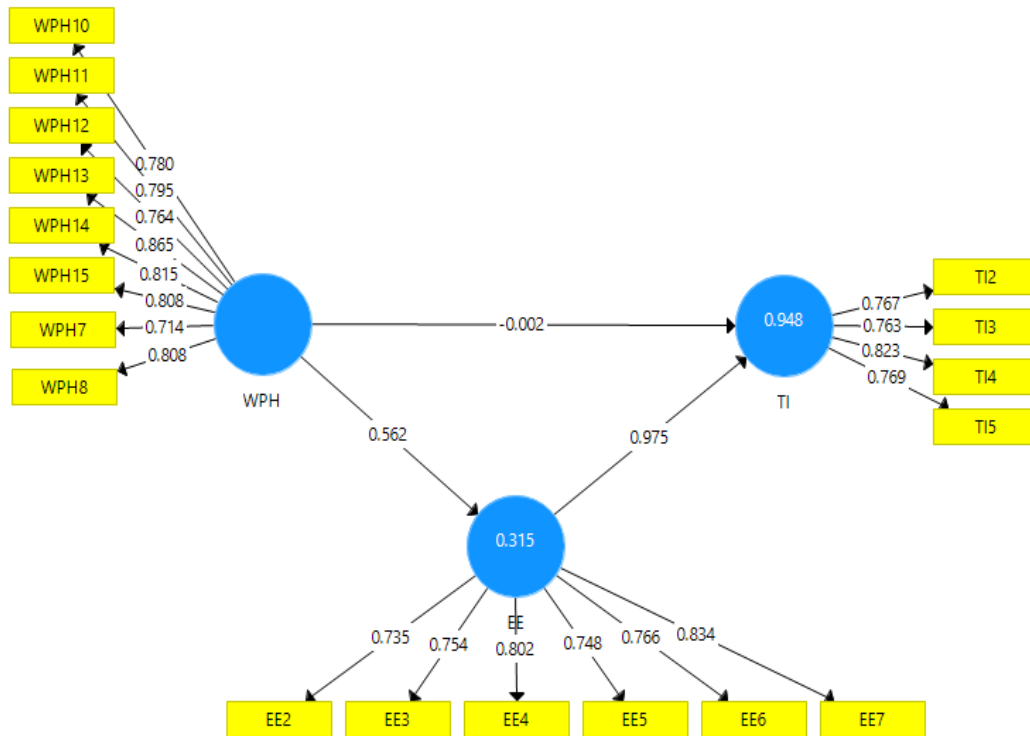
Emotional Exhaustion (EE) shows a direct relationship with Turnover Intension (TI) with the values $\beta = 0.968$, and $P = 0.000$, therefore this hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant relationship between workplace hazing (WPH) and Emotional Exhaustion (EE) with the values $\beta = 0.511$, and $P = 0.000$. However, this hypothesis is also accepted. There is a direct association between workplace hazing (WPH) and Turnover intention (TI) with the values $\beta = 0.004$, and $P = 0.787$, this hypothesis is rejected on account of a greater P value.

Table 7 Direct Relationship Results

		B	Mean	SD	T Statistics	P Values
H1	EE -> TI	0.968	0.969	0.009	110.884	0.000
H2	WPH -> EE	0.511	0.517	0.045	11.409	0.000
H3	WPH -> TI	0.004	0.004	0.016	0.271	0.787

Note. EE = Emotional Exhaustion, TI = Turnover Intension, WPH = Workplace Hazing

Figure 2 Structural Model

Table 8 shows mediating effect of Emotional exhaustion (EE) with workplace hazing (WPH) and Turnover Intension (TI) with the values β = 0.495, P = 0.000. This hypothesis is accepted.

Table 8 Specific Indirect Effect

		B	Mean	SD	T Statistics	P Values
H4	WPH -> EE -> TI	0.495	0.500	0.044	11.348	0.000

Note.　　　　　EE = Emotional Exhaustion, TI = Turnover Intension, WPH = Workplace Hazing

Table 9 Hypotheses Assessment Summary

	Hypothesis	Status	Remarks
H1	There is a direct association between workplace hazing and turnover intention.	Insignificant	Rejected
H2	There is a positive and significant relationship between workplace hazing and emotional exhaustion.	Significant	Accepted
H3	Emotional Exhaustion mediates the relationship between	Significant	Accepted

workplace hazing and turnover intention.

H4	There is a significant relationship between emotional exhaustion and turnover intension	Significant	Accepted

Discussion

An attempt was made in this paper to understand the relationship between workplace hazing and turnover intentions with mediating effect of emotional exhaustion. Organizations have observed that high level of abuse in the shape of hazing activities in the workplace (Bloisi & Hoel, 2008). An indirect effect of workplace hazing and turnover intention via emotional exhaustion is made, driven by COR theory. Activities related to hazing always create negativity like distress and torture that compels employees to leave the organization and it approaches emotional exhaustion. Employees with a higher level of exhaustion feelings are willing to turnover intention. This study has depicted some findings that are stated as COR theory supports the relationship of emotional exhaustion with workplace hazing and turnover intention of the employees. There is a loss of individual resources because it creates stress, this framework is the explanation of COR theory. The mechanism is developed in this paper about the hazing activities done on employees with a mediator emotional exhaustion and their intention to leave that place on account of self-respect. Most of the employees are targeted for such practices that cause stress like verbal abuse or physical harm. However, employees demand resignations and it affects the performance of the organization. The ratio of employees who claim that they had suffered hazing or seen it happening before their eyes were nearly equal. There is less number of employees who admitted that they don't face hazing-related activities. Developing an attractive brand of employer will attract good quality talent and business will be imperative (Thomas, 2021). In these connections, HR specialists are advised to reflect a positive image of the employer's brand and encourage all new employees for better job opportunities (Miles & McCamey, 2018). Moreover, we provide a small collection of knowledge on workplace hazing in large. There is a lack of research that examined the hazing effect on turnover intention (Thomas & Meglich, 2019) and emotional exhaustion (Mawritz et al., 2022) Therefore we focused on these variables to identify the relationship between hazing with turnover intention and Emotional Exhaustion.

Conclusion

Based on clear evidence of damaging consequences, workplace hazing seems to be frequent and enduring in several workgroup conditions. Hazing activities are considered stress creators among employees that need to be encountered in the organization because it also affects other measures of the organization (Einarsen et al., 2018). It has discouraged the moral and ethical values of an employee to work together. This current research is considered a foundation for research scholars and professionals to better understand the concept of hazing and turnover intention. Employees who have gone through hazing-related activities will appreciate the scholarly work done to explain how it occurs and how it affects people's personal and professional life. After completing this study, we came to know that number of employees are willing to quit their jobs because of hazing and no doubt employees became the victims of Exhaustion. The current study depicts that emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between workplace hazing and turnover intention. This research paper is contributed to the domain of HRM to understand new concepts of hazing.

Managerial Implications

Based on the results of this study, it is known that workplace hazing is one of the key indicators of turnover intention. This can lead employees to leave an organization and negatively affects the performance of the organization. However, managers of organizations need to work on the hazing activities at the workplace so that employees may show more willingness towards the organizations, which can reduce turnover intentions. A department is one of the important departments for the people of society. They must be emotionally strong as compared to the public. Higher authorities must create a friendly environment within the organization to avoid hazing activities. Since the model has used emotional exhaustion as a mediating variable, managers must create justice and use such elements that are against stress, anxiety, and torture. There must be fairness among all the employees working in the police department of Sindh province. In this regard, researchers have suggested starting to do such practices that are ethical and remain fruitful for the betterment of the department. Training practices like happiness coaches must be encouraged at the workplace to get rid of hazing activities.

Limitations and Future Research

In this study only three variables are used, there could be other variables like interpersonal deviance, work burnout, and bullying at the workplace, these variables could have been used to check the moderating effect in this study. Convenience sampling is used that hampers the requirement of generalizability because the survey was conducted only from the police department of Larkana city of Sindh province. A roundabout 350 sample size was used in this study that could be increased to get a better representation of data from a specific population. The model of workplace hazing must be used in the context of other departments and other cultures of different regions to know its effect on the turnover intention of the employees. In addition to this future research must use qualitative methods to get in-depth results and to know the workplace hazing context from the perspective of the employees.

A self-administered questionnaire was adopted that could create a bias within respondents. Furthermore, other studies could use a longitudinal design to know the role of both bullying and hazing in the workplace with the results of team cohesion and interpersonal deviance. Due to time constrain this study is conducted shortly and it can be further explored as suggested above.

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