

Employee behavioural silence and organization based self-esteem: A study of psychopathic leadership in government departments in Pakistan

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Abstract: This study explores the effect of psychopathic leadership on employee behavioural silence and how the employee behavioural silence leads to work-family conflict thus, effecting the organizational citizenship behaviour. Considering the insights offered by behavioural plasticity theory, we have investigated whether the organization based self-esteem moderates the effect of psychopathic leadership on employee behavioural silence. Data is collected using a structured questionnaire at three different time lags with a gap of one month. The sample consists of 400 employees of government department in Pakistan, mainly Police department. At Time-1, 387 data received were useable and at Time-2 only 350 responses were useable. The final sample obtained at Time-3 was 228 to pursue this research study. The results obtained after data analysis using SPSS indicates that the links hypothesized are significant except the moderation hypothesis. The findings of this research suggests that due to psychopathic leadership, employees are inclined towards behavioural silence, thus, leading to work-family conflict and inversely effecting organizational citizenship behaviour. In addition, the moderation hypothesis is not proved. We have concluded our research study by sharing several practical and managerial implications and by offering some future interventions and avenues for potential researchers.

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1. Introduction

The main purpose of this research study is to conduct an empirical assessment of the psychopathic leadership and to investigate the relationship between the psychopathic leadership and other variables, including employee behavioural silence, organizational citizenship behaviour, work-family conflict and organization based self-esteem under behavioural plasticity theory. Psychopathic leadership is known as the dark side of leadership and the hidden cost associated with the consequences of this type of leadership or supervisory behaviour remained the area of attention to the researchers in the last decade. However, the impact of psychopathic leadership on the employee behavioural silence along by considering the moderating role of organization based self-esteem has not been studied yet. In Pakistan, the major problem faced by the employees in government sector organizations (specifically, police department) is that due to psychopathic leadership, employee behavioural silence is high that is ultimately decreasing their frequency of organizational citizenship behaviour and also resulting in work-family. This research study discusses the role of psychopathic leadership with regard to organizational citizenship behaviour and work-family conflict, paying particular attention to employee behavioural silence as a mediating mechanism and organization based self-esteem as a moderating variable.

In organizations, employees mostly have information, ideas, options, and opinions for constructive ways and for the improvement of work in the organization. Employee's attitude, behaviour and feedback towards the work and organization is crucial in getting the true knowledge about it. Often, employees practice voice behaviour and communicate their ideas, information and opinion, whereas, other times, they prefer to remain silent. In Pakistan, the major problem faced by the employees in government sector organizations (specifically, police department) is that due to psychopathic leadership, employee behavioural silence is high that is inversely affecting employee's organizational citizenship behaviour and contributing to the employee's work-family conflict. Past research, studies reveal that psychopathy was linked with increased use of hard tactics like threats, bullying and manipulation (Jonason *et al.*, 2012). Also, psychopathic leaders are low in empathy and patience (Skeem *et al.*, 2011). They try to invade other privacy and lack a feeling of remorse. According to Organ (1988), organizational citizenship behaviour can be defined as performing a job better and to put an effort into your work beyond the formal job requirements. As Clapham and Cooper (2005) stated that in the organization, the most reliable source of information and data are the employees but when employees feel reluctant to express or to share their views, opinion, ideas, or feedback, they are not able to recognize themselves with the organization, hence, they experience internal detachment with their work as well as the organization. Whereas, it has been observed that the organizations, where employees participate in organization related activities based on their organizational citizenship behaviour, there, they consciously retain their ideas, views, opinion or feedback. In contrast, employees who are inclined towards behavioural silence have lower tendency for organizational citizenship behaviour. Previous research studies suggest that employee performance is based on the level of satisfaction with their job, whereas, when an employee remains silent because of the fear of his leader or supervisor (Wang & Hsieh, 2013) it leads to anxiety (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995), thus, badly effecting on-job and off-job hours resulting work and family conflict.

In this research study, the researchers demonstrate the behavioural plasticity theory as an overarching theory. The behavioural plasticity theory by Brockner and Guare (1983), and Brockner (1988) suggests that "individuals differ in the extent to which they respond to the

social influences such as their team leader's behaviour". Behavioural plasticity theory elucidates the inter-individual differences based on the existence of differences in their self-esteem as defined by LePine and Van-Dyne (1998) as the degree of self-worth that a person feels for himself or herself. Furthermore, behavioural plasticity theory explains that individuals who feel low in their self-esteem are more susceptible to the social influences (social cues, leaders, other) than those individuals who feel high self-esteem (Brockner, 1988). This is due to the reason that employees with low self-esteem are comparatively less certain about their beliefs and turn to seek guidance than those with high self-esteem.

Now by applying this concept to our model, we can say that psychopathic leadership will lead to employee behavioural silence (defensive and acquiescent) and employee behavioural silence will ultimately negatively impact organizational citizenship behaviour and will positively impact work-family conflict. Also, in presence of low organization based self-esteem, the relationship between organizational psychopathic leadership and employee behavioural silence will be stronger. The study is significant in many aspects. Firstly, there is a detailed study on why under certain circumstances a witness prefer silence or participate in workplace mistreatment and how mistreatment occurs and under what condition do mistreatment grows or develop and what are the contextual or relational factors that reduce or weakens its occurrence or impact considering the role of psychopathic leadership in workplace mistreatment (bad worms)." Secondly, employee behavioural silence has seen as the mediating mechanism between psychopathic leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour and work-family conflict, which enriches the literature with a new antecedent of organizational citizenship behaviour and work-family conflict. Thirdly, this study has used behavioural plasticity theory as an overarching theory that has been rarely used by past researchers while studying employee behavioural silence.

2. Literature review

Expressing or withholding behaviours appear to be the two opposite sides of a coin as silence indicates not speaking, whereas, voice denotes speaking up on important issues, aspects, and problems in the organization (Zehir *et al.*, 2013). Employee silence can be defined as "withholding of any form of expression about an individual's behavioural, cognitive and affective evaluation of his organizational circumstances from person(s) who is perceived to be capable of affecting change or redress" (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). Morrison and Milliken (2000) considered employee silence as a negative behaviour. Also, Pinder and Harlos (2001) view silent employees who intentionally retain the assessment about the organizational problems as harmful not only to themselves and others but also to the organization. As per Morrison and Milliken (2000), Pinder and Harlos (2001), quiescent silence and acquiescence silence are the two prohibited types of silence. Psychopathic leadership is known as the dark side of leadership. Psychopathic leadership actions may often create a ripple effect in the organization, thus, setting an environment for the entire organizational culture. Few examples of such adverse effects are: increased bullying, stress, conflict, staff turnover, absenteeism, inversely effecting social responsibility and productivity. Organization citizenship behaviour is very important for the organizations because organizations seek employees who are open to perform tasks other than the casual job/duties and can perform beyond expectations. Organizational citizenship behaviour describes those activities that individuals willingly perform beyond their job or role requirements. Organ (1988) stated that the high level of organizational citizenship behaviour would lead to a more efficient organization and could help in creating new resources for the organization. Podsakoff *et al.* (2000) mentioned that in several ways the organizational

citizenship behaviour may contribute to the organizational performance, like; increase in employee productivity, provision of resources for productive purpose, coordination of activities within and across the departments/groups and strengthening the organization's ability to attract and retain their employee.

The work-family conflict can be explained as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressure from the work and family domains are, in some way, mutually incompatible.” It occurs when a struggle is made to meet the obligations and requirements of both roles in a limited time (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Thus, the limitation of time and resources may cause stress, weariness, tiredness, effecting performance, and job satisfaction (Michel & Hargis 2008), and a decrease in the organizational commitment due to the contradictory needs of an individual (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). Nonetheless, several research scholars have highlighted that the work and family conflicts have significant effects on the attitude of employees towards their organization and on their behaviours during working hours (Frone *et al.*, 1992). This is the main reason that the work-family conflict is attaining more consideration of the research scholars.

According to Coopersmith (1959), self-esteem is defined as “the approval of oneself and the degree to which one sees oneself as capable, significant and worthy”. Individuals with low self-esteem are prone to experience high work-related stress. It involves individual's self-evaluation of his or her competencies and an effective (liking or disliking) component (Pelham & Swann, 1989). Based on the concept of self-esteem, the concept of organization based self-esteem was developed by Pierce *et al.* (1989), they defined it as “the degree to which the organization's members believe that they can satisfy their needs by participating in the roles within the context of the organization”. This also comprise the satisfaction that one is capable of, significant and a worthy organization member (Avolio *et al.*, 2004). Avolio *et al.* (2004) suggests that “organizational members can assess their value through the signals communicated by the organization and the managers”. Previous researchers have studied organization based self-esteem with family and job satisfaction (Yang *et al.*, 2015). The field of knowledge and research studies are scarce that covers and explore those supervisors that are more inclined to abuse their power (bad worms)? Also, it would be valuable to study how organizational or personal factors influence perpetrators' behaviours? Several researchers have emphasized to determine why under certain circumstances witness remains silent or even participate in workplace mistreatment and whether work is required to determine the spill over effect of silence on family (Duan *et al.*, 2018). There was a need to study how different facets of silence associate with leadership? (Guenter *et al.*, 2017). Guenter *et al.* (2017) suggested to examine why employee remains silent and whether “behavioural plasticity theory” serves to foresee the effects of certain kinds of leadership on silence? There is a lack of research study that has studied the considered antecedents and outcomes associated with the employee behavioural silence? (Duan *et al.*, 2018). To fulfil the research gap, it would be useful to consider other work related or organizational factors that may influence employee behavioural silence (Akcin *et al.*, 2017).

3. Theoretical framework

This study makes theoretical as well as empirical contribution to the literature, as it investigates the situational and contextual factors which directly impact the employee behavioural silence, and which further impact the organizational citizenship behaviours and work family conflict. Mediating role of silence is adding in literature as it is answering why employees remain silent.

Antecedents and consequences of silence are also explained. The role of organization based self-esteem is crucial to determine the outcomes. However, the dark side of leadership conducted by managers also has an impact in increasing or decreasing the frequency of behavioural silence. Hence, it can be argued that both the organizational silence and organizational citizenship behaviour are key subjects for the organizations to attain their desired objectives.

3.1. Psychopathic leadership

Psychopathy can be described as “impulsivity and thrill seeking combined with low empathy and anxiety” (Babiak & Hare, 2006; Hare, 1985; Skeem *et al.*, 2011). Psychopathic leaders are characterized as “antagonistic and they have a belief in their own superiority and tendency towards self-promotion” (Binning *et al.*, 2006; Lynam & Widiger, 2007). Psychopathic leaders possess characteristics like public humiliation of others, remorseless, or devoid of guilt, they encourage co-workers to torment, harass, alienate or humiliate other peers, takes credit of other’s accomplishments, also threatens any perceived enemy with discipline and job loss, invade privacy of others, often borrow money and other material objects without any intention of giving it back and they do whatever it takes to close the deal (feeling no regard for ethics or legality). Organizational citizenship behaviour is defined as “actions in which employees are willing to go above and beyond their prescribed role requirements.” Organ (1988) argued that high level of organizational citizenship behaviour contributes to high performance of the organization and helps in gaining new resources for the organization.

The work-family conflict may be defined as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressure from the work and family conflict are in some way mutually incompatible.” On the basis of the above cited definition, there are three types of the work and family conflict; (i) the time-based conflict, (ii) the strain based conflict, and (iii) the behaviour based conflict. Time based conflict may occur when the time devoted to one role makes it difficult to perform another role. This time of conflict is faced when there is schedule conflict and excessive workload. Strain based conflict is experienced when the ability to perform one role limits the ability to meet the demands of another role or interferes with other role. Behaviour based conflict is experienced when the behaviour required in one role is counterproductive in another role. Long and steady working hours, health status, age, income (Byron, 2005), over time, autonomy status, the size of the organization, supervisory support (Carlson *et al.*, 2011; 2006; Bryon, 2005; Behson, 2002), low wages, negative attitude of the management, work relations, promotion, expectation of the family (Michel & Hargis, 2008; Byron, 2005), and employee performance (Frone *et al.*, 1992) are considered as the reasons behind work-family conflict. Behavioural plasticity theory states that people differ in the extent to which they respond towards the external stimuli such as their leader’s behaviours. Considering the insight offered by this theory, it is proposed that under psychopathic leadership, individuals will be less likely to exhibit organizational citizenship behaviours (Spain *et al.*, 2014) and will be more into work family conflict. As any behaviour is situation specific (Mumford & Fried, 2014), thus, it is expected to be true for psychopathic leadership. Therefore, based on behavioural plasticity theory, we propose that:

Hypothesis 1(a): Psychopathic leadership is negatively related to organizational citizenship behaviour.

Hypothesis 1(b): Psychopathic leadership is positively related to work-family conflict.

3.2 Employee behavioural silence

Consistent with a number of research studies like, Detert & Edmondson (2011), and Kish-Gephart *et al.* (2009), employee behavioural silence can be defined as “the intentionally withholding of input (e.g suggestions, ideas, concerns and issues) about potentially and work-related issues from persons with perceived authority to act”. Silence describes an intentional form of non-communication that employees engage in, even though they have something to say, convey or share. At times, employee may choose to remain silent over several issues, challenges, and problems at work such as safety or security concern, organizational performance, problematic issues, disagreement with the organization’s certain policies, and fairness issues (Brinsfield, 2013, Van-Dyne *et al.*, 2003). Employees are the essential part of the organization and play a role of a catalyst for the organizational change, improvement, innovation, and in influencing organization’s performance (Çakici, 2007). Rogers and Wright (1998) argued that “employees have a strong organizational culture if they actively take part in decision making and undertake their job-related responsibilities”.

According to Valentine *et al.* (2018), “the psychopath in organizations usually appears to be intelligent, powerful, sincere, witty, charming and entertaining communicators”. They can easily judge or predict what the people want to listen from them and creates stories that best fit others’ expectations. They are also supposed to con others to work for them, take credit of other accomplishments and even assign their work to the junior staff member(s). They show low empathy, shallow emotions, and low patience when dealing with other colleagues, and are unpredictable, undependable and also fail to take responsibility if something goes wrong that is their own fault.

Based on the research studies, one might expect that silence could be exacerbated by psychopathic leadership (Boddy, 2017). Psychopathic leaders expect unquestioned obedience and may signal to employees that challenging them would lead to reprisal. The decision to remain silent in such situation exhibit that people prefer to engage in behaviours that lead to desired outcomes or prevent undesired outcomes (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2019, Chamberlin *et al.*, 2017, Vroom, 1964). Thus, when people expect that speaking up will lead to an undesirable outcome (e.g., reprisal), they choose to remain silent (Xu *et al.*, 2015) as the behavioural option (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003, Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Several past research studies on the effect of supervisor and leader behaviours on employee voice (Chamberlin *et al.*, 2017) and other related constructs (e.g., issue selling, whistle blowing, spirals of silence) (Ashford *et al.*, 1998, Deter & Buriss, 2007, Miceli *et al.*, 2009) have reinforced this reason. According to the behavioural plasticity theory, individuals are influenced by the external factors (i.e., social, and contextual). Moreover, drawing from it we suggest that psychopathic leadership will lead to employee behavioural silence (Boddy, 2017). Behavioural plasticity theory states that, individual reacts to the social influences differently (Brockner, 1988). Hence, we argued that:

Hypothesis 2: Psychopathic leadership positively related to employee behavioural silence.

3.3. Organizational citizenship behaviour

Organ (1988) was the pioneer who first introduced the concept of the organizational citizenship behaviour. He described organizational citizenship behaviour as “individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization.” It means to do a better job,

make an effort above and beyond formal job requirement, to fill the gap between procedures and regulations on one hand and dynamic reality on the other. Organizational citizenship behaviour is usually perceived as performing remarkably good behaviour for the betterment of the organization and informally, to support other members. The past research studies have found that the willingness of the individual to participate in the corporative and teamwork efforts towards organization is necessary to achieve the organizational objectives and goals (Barnard, 1938). Also, the organizational citizenship behaviour is significant for the organization as it contributes to the performance and the organization's competitive advantage (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Organizational citizenship behaviour plays a vital role for the organization because they require employees who would perform other than their casual work and shows performance that is beyond expectations. Organization citizenship behaviours includes helping an individual co-worker in work related problem(s), voluntary participation in and support in organizational functioning, participation in governance of the organization, carrying duties beyond the regular job requirement and communicating others about the changes that may affect their work. Similarly, Pinder and Harlos (2001) defined employee behavioural silence as "withholding of any form of genuine expression about the individual's behaviour, cognitive and affective evaluations of his organizational circumstances from persons who are perceived to be capable of effecting change or redress".

Several research scholars argued that silence is a comparably simple and unitary concept. Morrison and Milliken (2000) assumed organizational silence as a negative behaviour. Pinder and Harlos (2001) also assumed silent employees as "those who deliberately withhold their evaluations about the organizational issues as harmful to themselves, to others and to the organization". Based on the conceptualizations by Morrison & Milliken (2000), Pinder & Harlos (2001) and Van-Dyne *et al.*, (2003), acquiescent silence can be defined as "withholding relevant ideas, information or opinions based on resignation". Also, employees avoid to share the ideas or opinion when they feel that their ideas or suggestions cannot make any difference. Similarly, defensive silence can be defined as "withholding relevant ideas, information or opinions as form of self-protection based on a fear" (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). It is a proactive behaviour that is intended to cover up oneself from external intimidations. Van-Dyne *et al.* (2003) has defined defensive silence as "preserving work related information, ideas and opinions based on the fear and with a goal of protecting self". It is a deliberate and proactive behaviour that is intended to protect self from the external threats (Schlenker & Weigold, 1989). Employee behavioural silence usually contributes to intensify negative feelings within the organization and inversely effects employee performance and capability (Perlow & Williams, 2003). As employee performance is associated with their level of satisfaction, silent employees remain incapable of satisfying their needs (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995).

Past researchers have emphasized on the fear and the risk associated with speaking up (Detert & Buriss, 2007; Morrison, 2011). As per the behavioural plasticity theory, individual responds to the certain situation based on their degree of self-esteem, individuals with low self-esteem are not firm about their belief so, they are less likely to indulge in organizational citizenship behaviour. Hence, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3(a): Employee behavioural silence is negatively related to organizational citizenship behaviour.

Employee behavioural silence by Wang and Hsieh (2013) is considered as “inherently subjective, deeply personal and influenced by some situational, economic, political, and cultural factors”. This multidimensional conception is often sketched as withholding of any expressed evaluation of work-related circumstances to person perceived to be able to effect change. This behaviour is followed by some unjust events (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). This has been expressed in literature as “mum effect.” Research studies on this “mum effect” shows that “individuals have reluctance in their personalities to convey negative information because of the discomfort associated with being the communicator of bad news” (Conlee & Tesser, 1973). Previous research studies suggested that employees might opt to remain silent about several problems if they deem that the context is unfavourable. An unfavourable context is expressed as where an employee believes that raising an issue may lead to negative consequences (Brinsfield, 2016). It can be understood from the following example that the previous research studies have highlighted i.e., how raising a sensitive issue like gender inequity can damage or effect a person’s public image? Also, research on whistle blowing highlights the risks (actual or perceived) associated with calling attention to the issue. Whistle-blowers are sometimes considered as the traitors and can suffer negative career outcomes as a consequence of calling attention to the counterproductive work behaviour in the organization, even if they were their supervisor(s). Past research studies suggests that the employees consider these costs while considering whether to speak up or not about the issues and concerns they usually face (Dutton & Brown, 1997; Abbas & Ashiq; Miceli & Near, 1992).

Organizational citizenship behaviours are “discretionary behaviours on the part of an employee that directly promote the effective functioning of an organization”. Though, these behaviours are extra role still their significance is nevertheless minimal from in role functions. According to Bolino & Turnley (2005) the “ideal employee is an individual who does not only demonstrates high level of task performance (in role function) but is also engaged in high levels of contextual performance that is termed as organizational citizenship behaviour”. Moreover, researchers Podsakoff *et al.* (2000) argued that organizational citizenship behaviours improve organizational efficiency by influencing certain areas such as increasing production, client’s satisfaction, decreasing customer complaints and improving the provision of quality service. Thus, the importance of organizational citizenship behaviour is that “they improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness by contributing to the resource transformation, innovation and adaptability” (Organ, 1988).

The employees are considered as the reliable source of data and information in the organization (Clapham & Cooper, 2005) but when employees feel reluctant to share their ideas, views, or feedback consciously, they do not feel to recognize or associate themselves with the organization, hence, they experience internal detachment with their work as well as the organization (Avey *et al.*, 2009), thus effecting involvement in organizational citizenship behaviour. Whereas it is found that employees who participate in organizational activities voluntarily based on organizational citizenship behaviours, they tend to avoid revealing their views, opinion and ideas with a conscious decision. In contrast, employees who are in the behaviour of organizational silence have lower tendency for organizational citizenship behaviour. Several past research studies also reported the remarks of employees like “I raised a concern about some policies, and I was told to shut up and that I was becoming a troublemaker. I would have pursued (the issue) further but presently I cannot afford to risk my job. This has made me go into a detached mode, making me a ‘yes man’ (Milliken *et al.*, 2003)”. Based on behavioural plasticity theory, individuals react to the social cues (Brockner, 1988) that influences their behaviours. Thus, under a psychopathic leadership, the employees

will tend to exhibit their opinions less, which thereof, decrease their recognition with the organization and thus, they will less likely engage in extra role behaviours. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 4(a): Employee behavioural silence mediates the relationship between psychopathic leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour.

3.4. Work-family conflict

In the field of literature, work-family conflict is specified as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressure of the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). According to Morrison, the organizational silence is a negative behaviour. It means withholding of any useful information, views, ideas, or opinion about an individual or the organization because of the harm associated with it (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). It is viewed as a negative phenomenon, as an employee by remaining silent, withholds his opinion and thoughts related to technical or behavioural issues about his work or workplace to protect himself from indulging into any critical situation, which can threaten his job. Previous research studies have explained that employees usually opt to remain silent about an issue, which bothers them because of their assumption that the context is unfavourable which means raising an issue may lead to negative consequences. It often leads to an increased negative emotion within the organization and decreased employee performance and effectiveness (Perlow & Williams, 2003).

Since, employee performance is associated with their satisfaction, silent employees remain incapable of satisfying their needs (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995) which results in frustration, anxiety and overthinking. Murphy and Cleveland (1995) pointed out that long-time silence puts an employee to a mental strike which badly affects not only the behaviour of the employee in on job hours but also in off job hours. They are more likely to engage in useless and baseless argumentation with their family members to protrude their anxiety and frustration. Hence, based on the behavioural plasticity theory, employees who ascribe less positive self-worth to themselves usually undergo mental strike. We hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3(b): Employee behavioural silence is positively related to work-family conflict.

Employee silence occurs while having face-to-face interaction between employees, such as in meetings or discussions in which they fail to speak up about the negative issues regarding the organization, workplace, policy, or employees due to fear or threat. Psychopathic leaders have inbuilt characteristics like public humiliation of others, remorseless, or devoid of guilt, they torment, alienate, harass, humiliate others, take credit of others accomplishments, sabotage others work, threatens any perceived enemy with job loss, invades privacy of others, often borrow money and other material objects without any intention of returning it and also, they do whatever it takes to close the deal. Work-family conflict is said to be “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressure of each domain that is work and family are incompatible and where the stress or imbalance in one role spills over the other role.” The basic reason behind work-family conflict is usually a “long and unsteady working hours, overtime working, status, autonomy, the size of the organization, work pressure, burn out, work place conflicts, injustice, low wages, negative attitudes of the management or co-workers, promotion, expectations of the family, health status, income, and employee performance” (Frone *et al.*, 1992). Thus, as per the behavioural plasticity theory individuals get influenced by the social

cues such as psychopathic leaders, and tend to exhibit silence behaviours more often, thus resulting into work-family conflict. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 4(b): Employee behavioural silence mediates the relationship between psychopathic leadership and work-family conflict.

3.5. Organization-based self-esteem

The self-esteem is referred to “an individual’s overall self-evaluation of his or her competencies (Rosenberg, 1965) as well as an affective component” (Pelham & Swann, 1989). Based on the concept of self-esteem Pierce *et al.*, (1993) developed a concept of organization based self-esteem which they defined as “the degree to which organizational members believe that they can satisfy their needs by participating in roles within the context of the organization”. It also leads to the belief that “one is capable of, significant and a worthy organization member” (Pierce and Gardener, 2004). Pierce and Gardner (2004) suggest that “organizational members can assess their value through signals communicated by the organization, supervisor(s) or the manager(s)”. Particularly, the characteristics of different management systems in placed in the organization and practices will let employees construct different organizational experiences and form various levels of organization based self-esteem (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). As employees under psychopathic leadership are less likely to have any authority or autonomy towards voice, therefore, they are less likely see themselves as vital and effective members of the organization. This may undermine their feelings of self-competence resulting in low organization based self-esteem (Brinsfield *et al.*, 2016; Yin *et al.*, 2012). Also, employees’ perception of self-value is negatively affected when there is less recognition and appreciation (Lee & Peccei, 2007) and when their suggestion, feedback or voice is unheard and are given less importance (Brinsfield, 2016). Previous research studies have revealed that self-esteem is associated with employee voice or silence behaviour (Bowling *et al.*, 2010). For instance, high self-esteem has been found to have a positive influence on people’s expressive behaviours and voice (Van-Dyne & LePine, 1998; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Similarly, Pinder and Harlos (2001) argued that low self-esteem would lead to employee silence. The organization based self-esteem is built upon individual based self-esteem and is shaped by employees’ experience of working in specific organization (Gardner, 2020; Bowling *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, the organization based self-esteem is considered to have “distinctive influence on work attitudes and behaviours than global self-esteem” (Pierce *et al.*, 1989).

The research of Jonason *et al.* (2012) has stated that psychopathy is associated with an increased use of bad tactics (bullying, retaliation, manipulation, etc.). Organizational psychopaths easily assess what individual want to hear from them and then creates stories that best fit others’ expectations and exploit their subordinates by taking extra work from them, they take credit of others work and often their own work to the junior staff members. They show low patience while dealing with others and display shallow emotions. In addition, they are highly unpredictable, fail to take responsibility of their own failure and are undependable. Employee silence is when an employee feels low commitment level with the organization because of withholding information regarding certain trouble causing issues, so as a result they less recognize themselves with the organization. Morrison & Milliken (2000) explained that silence is a result of supervisor’s attitude. It is their attitude because of which an employee does not speak or voice up in the organization.

Past research, studies found a positive correlation between organization based self-esteem and employee behavioural silence (LePine & Van-Dyne, 1998, Liang *et al.*, 2012). Individuals high on organization based self-esteem are “likely to believe that their perspectives are correct and that their speaking up will have a positive impact in the organization” (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Consequently, high level of organization based self-esteem will lead to a low level of employee silence. Thus, under behavioural plasticity theory that posits that an individual with low self-esteem is more susceptible to situational influences (social cues) than those individual high on self-esteem, we argue that:

Hypothesis 5: Organization based self-esteem will moderate the relationship between psychopathic leadership and employee behavioural silence in a way that the relationship will be stronger in presence of low organization based self-esteem.

Conceptual framework:

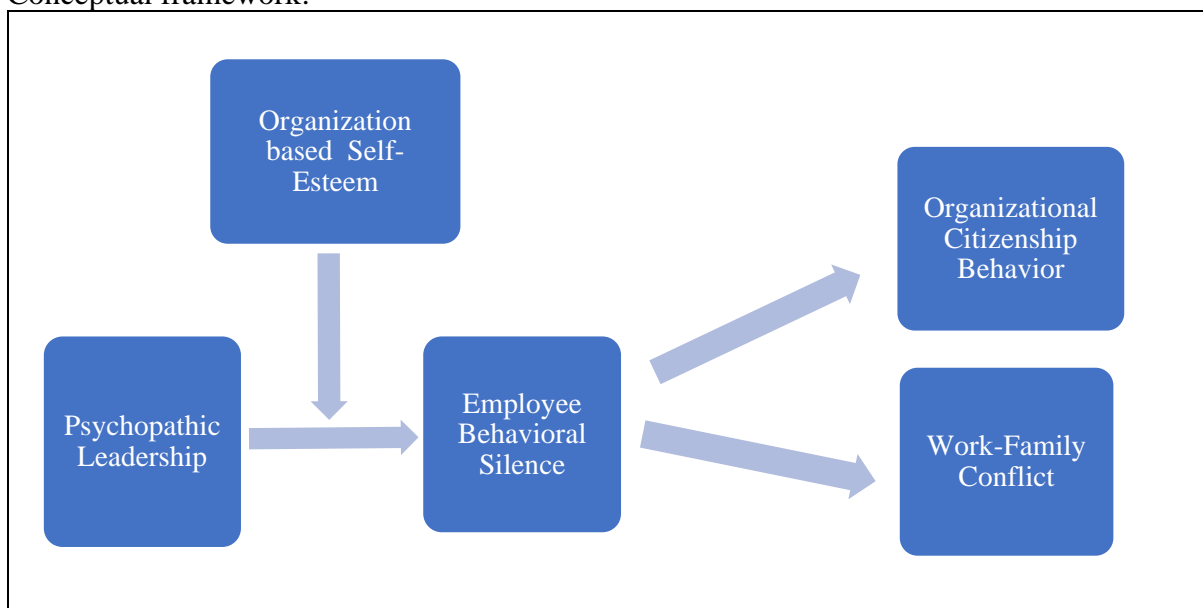


Figure 1: Depicts employee behavioural silence as mediator between psychopathic leadership and its outcomes (organizational citizenship behaviour and work-family conflict). It also depicts organization-based self-esteem as a moderator between psychopathic leadership and employee behavioural silence.

4. Research methodology

4.1. Research design

This research study was causal in nature. All the variables of interest are analysed under natural settings. The data collected for this research study was obtained at three different time lags, i.e., Time-1, Time-2 and Time-3, with a time interval of one month. Convenient and non-probability sampling technique was used to collect data. Kevin Dutton has categorized careers that have highest proportion of psychopaths. Considering his classification, Police officers falls under that category (psychopaths). Therefore, the unit of analysis for this research study were employees of government sector organization mainly Police department across Islamabad and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The data has been collected from employees working in police department. The total sample survey distributed was 400 but at the end, the sample size used for analysis was 228.

Data was collected from the employees of government department by using questionnaire. Questionnaires were used widely to collect data and this technique has already been proved to be a suitable tool for data collection in many past research studies. Data collected was coded and the identity of the respondents was kept confidential. Psychopathic leadership and organization based self-esteem were tapped at Time1, employee behavioural silence at Time2, whereas, organizational citizenship behaviour and work-family conflict were tapped at Time3. Except psychopathic leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour, which were peer-reported, all other variables of interest were self-reported.

At Time-1, we distributed 400 questionnaires among employees working at various hierarchical levels, out of which 387 responses were useable. Time-2, 350 useable responses were received and at Time-3, only 228 questionnaires were usable. Data was collected from both males and females, which consist of 96.1% males, and 3.9% females. The marital status of participants was recorded as; 17.1% individuals were unmarried, 80.3% were married and 2.2% were divorced. The age of participants ranged from 20 to 54. About 7.5% participants had master and remaining 92.5% had bachelors or below degree. About 18.9% of respondents were working at the middle level, 79.8% at entry-level, and 1.3% were working at top-level.

This study followed a quantitative approach, and the data was analysed by using SPSS21. The scales used to tap this research study's variables are well established, validated and easy to understand. In Pakistan, the official language in the working sectors is English language. Previously, research studies have also supported English language as adequate for conducting survey-based research in Pakistan (Butt *et al.*, 2005; Khan *et al.*, 2015; Raja *et al.*, 2004) and it has scored good reliability. All the respondents of this research study knew English language as they had graduate or above level of qualification. Therefore, the questionnaire was not translated into Urdu language that is a national and native language of Pakistan.

We identified demographic controls through one-way ANOVA. The demographics found to be significant on the dependent variables were controlled for subsequent analysis. Correlation analysis was performed to find out the association between the independent variable and dependent variables using SPSS. Mediation regression analysis was done to test the direct as well as the mediation hypothesis using Process technique in SPSS. Moderated regression analysis was carried out to test the interaction effect through SPSS. The Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were performed to establish the reliability and validity of the scales used for the constructs in this research study. All the items were tapped with 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The reliability of all scales used in this research study ranged between 0.82 to 0.90. Table-1 denotes the mean, standard deviation, reliabilities, and correlation among the studied variables.

4.2. Measures

- Psychopathic leadership was measured by 10-items from the Levenson peer-reported psychopathy scale (Levenson *et al.*, 1995). Cronbach's alpha in this study is 0.85.
- Employee behavioural silence was measured by Van-Dyne *et al.* (2003) 5-items scale for Acquiescent silence and 5-item for Defensive silence. Cronbach's alpha in this research study is 0.86.
- Organizational citizenship behaviour was measured with 14-item scale by William and Endorson. Cronbach's alpha in this research study is 0.82.

- Work-family conflict was measured using 5-items subscale of the work-family conflict scale (Netemeyer *et al.*, 1996). Cronbach's alpha in this research study is 0.85.
- Organization based self-esteem was measured using Liang *et al.* (2012) 10-items scale. Cronbach's alpha in this research study is 0.90.

5. Results and Analysis

In this study, gender, marital status, education, designation, and the organization type were analysed through one-way ANOVA to check the impact of these demographic variables on dependent variables. Results obtained, indicated that only type of organization was directly significant with the outcome variables i.e., organizational citizenship behaviour and work-family conflict.

The results in Table-1 denote the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for psychopathic leadership (M=5.05, SD=0.86), organization based esteem (M=4.93, SD=1.07), employee behavioural silence (M=4.84, SD=1.02), organizational citizenship behaviour (M=4.24, SD=0.77), and work-family conflict (M=4.74, SD=1.15). Pearson correlation analysis was performed to figure out the inter-correlation among the studied variables. All the correlations were found significant at $p < 0.000$, $p < 0.00$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.03$ and $p < 0.04$. The correlation results for the independent variable, i.e., psychopathic leadership and moderator i.e., organization based self-esteem has significant and positive correlation ($r = .245$, $p < 0.000$). Moreover, psychopathic leadership had a positive and significant correlation with employee behavioural silence ($r = .144$, $p < 0.030$). Furthermore, psychopathic leadership has a positive and significant correlation with one of the studied outcomes, i.e., work family conflict ($r = .237$, $p < 0.000$), whereas, it has a negative and significant correlation with organizational citizenship behaviour ($r = -.135$, $p < 0.04$). However, mediator has a positive and significant correlation with work family conflict ($r = .301$, $p < 0.000$), whereas, it has a negative and significant correlation with organizational citizenship behaviour ($r = -.192$, $p < 0.004$).

Table-1: Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation

		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	OBSE	4.93	1.07	(.90)				
2	PSYL	5.05	0.86	.245**	(.85)			
3	EMPSI	4.84	1.02	.144*	.481**	(.86)		
4	WFC	4.74	1.15	.164*	.237**	.301**	(.85)	
5	OCB	4.24	0.77	.513**	-.135*	-.192**	.231**	(.82)

Note: Demonstrate mean, standard deviation and correlation values. Values in brackets describe reliabilities of variables separately

Abbreviations: OBSE=Organization Based Self-Esteem, PSYLEAD=Psychopathic Leadership, EMPSI=Employee Behavioural Silence, WFC=Work Family Conflict, OCB=Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

N=228.

The positive association among psychopathic leadership and employee behavioural silence ($\beta = 0.56$, $t = 8.25$, $p < 0.000$), the association among employee behavioural silence and organizational citizenship behaviour ($\beta = -0.12$, $t = 2.21$, $p < 0.02$), and the association between psychopathic leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour ($\beta = -0.12$, $t = 2.05$, $p < 0.04$) is

proved by the results. Thus, the hypothesis 1a is proved. In addition, the hypothesis 4a proposed that employee behavioural silence mediates the relationship between psychopathic leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour is proved by the results shown in the Table-2 ($\beta = -0.07$, $z = -2.12$, $p < 0.03$).

Table-2: Mediation analysis (Employee Behavioural Silence mediated between Psychopathic Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour)

Mediator: Employee Behavioural Silence and DV: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour						
	B	S.E.	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
PSYL→OCB	-0.12	0.05	2.05	0.04	-0.00	-0.23
PSYL→EMPSI	0.56	0.06	8.25	0.00	0.19	0.42
EMPSI→OCB	-0.12	0.05	2.21	0.02	-0.01	-0.23
Indirect effect						
	B	S.E.	LLCI	ULCI		
PSYL→EMPSI→OCB	-0.07	0.03	-0.00	-0.15		
Normal Theory Test for Indirect Effect						
	Effect	S.E.	Z	P		
	-0.07	0.03	-2.12	0.03		

Note: Demonstrate the vales for mediation analysis of first link which is PSYL→EMPSI→OCB. Abbreviations: DV=Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), IV=Psychopathic Leadership (PSYL) and Mediator=Employee Behavioural Silence (EMPSI)

$p < .000$.

The positive association among psychopathic leadership and employee behavioural silence ($\beta = 0.56$, $t = 8.25$, $p < 0.000$), the association between employee behavioural silence and work-family conflict ($\beta = 0.27$, $t = 3.37$, $p < 0.00$), and the association between psychopathic leadership and work-family conflict ($\beta = 0.31$, $t = 3.67$, $p < 0.00$) is proved by the results. Thus, the hypothesis 1(b) is proved. Also, the hypothesis 4b that proposed that employee behavioural silence mediates the relationship between psychopathic leadership and work-family conflict is proved by the results obtained and shown in the Table-3 ($\beta = 0.15$, $z = 3.10$, $p < 0.00$).

Table-3: Mediation analysis (Employee Behavioural Silence mediated between Psychopathic Leadership and Work-Family Conflict)

Mediator: Employee Behavioural Silence and DV: Work-Family Conflict						
	B	S.E.	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
PSYL→WFC	0.31	0.08	3.67	0.00	0.14	0.48
PSYL→EMPSI	0.56	0.06	8.25	0.00	0.43	0.70
EMPSI→WFC	0.27	0.08	3.37	0.00	0.11	0.43
Indirect Effect						
	B	S.E.	LLCI	ULCI		
PSYL→EMPSI→WFC	0.15	0.05	0.05	0.28		
Normal Theory Test for Indirect Effect						
	Effect	S.E.	Z	P		
	0.15	0.05	3.10	0.00		

Note: Demonstrate the vales for mediation analysis of second link which is PSYL→EMPSI→WFC. Abbreviations: DV=Work-Family Conflict (WFC), IV=Psychopathic Leadership (PSYL) and Mediator=Employee Behavioural Silence (EMPSI)

$p < .000$.

Overall, all of the hypothesis of this study were supported with empirical evidence to the hypothesized model except the moderation hypothesis which states that the organization based self-esteem will moderate the relationship between psychopathic leadership and employee behavioural silence in such a way that the relationship will be strengthened in presence of low organization based self-esteem. Future researchers can consider other moderators between psychopathic leadership and employee behavioural silence. Also, potential researchers can study a different mediator while considering psychopathic leadership and organization based self-esteem as a moderator.

6. Conclusion

Employee silence is a concept of growing importance as it affects an individual's well-being, increase stress, and makes one feel guilty and where an employee often experience psychological problems and have trouble seeing the possibility of change, and hence they consider themselves as less important to the organization (Bagheri *et al.*, 2012). Individuals silent themselves to avoid embarrassment, confrontation and other perceived risks associated with speaking-up (Perlow & Williams, 2003). Psychopathic leadership is famous for publicly humiliation of others, and remorselessness. They are devoid of guilt, and usually encourage others to torment, harass or humiliate peers, take credit for other accomplishments, and threaten any perceived enemy, thus, leading to employee behavioural silence (defensive and acquiescent) and employee behavioural silence ultimately negatively affect organizational citizenship behaviour and positively affect work-family conflict.

6.1. Practical and theoretical implications

This research study has several contributions to the field of literature. This study seeks to identify under what condition does an employee remain silent. This study supplements the literature on employee silence (defensive silence, acquiescent silence) and its outcomes like organizational citizenship behaviour and work-family conflict. Moreover, it has studied psychopathic leadership and its role towards employee organizational citizenship behaviour and work-family conflict. Employee behavioural silence is studied as a contributor towards work-family conflict. This research study offers useful insights for the practitioners as well. For the employees in Police department, there should be counselling and training programs to make them emotionally stable, to teach them stability in decision making so that they might not turn into psychopaths when they get chance of leadership. For the organizations, these findings imply that psychopathic leadership has a significant role in employee's behavioural silence, so to let the employees speak up about the issues, psychopathic leaders should be replaced with authentic leaders who will have a positive impact on employees and will contribute to the organization in an effective way. It adds in the literature of silence as this study has taken the new antecedent of employee behavioural silence with rarely taken outcomes, so it has peculiar distinction as compared to other research studies. By taking organization based self-esteem as a moderator between psychopathic leadership and employee behavioural silence, this research study contributes theoretically. It highlights the problematic areas, which, if considered, can help in improvement of organizational performance and employee's efficiency such as resulting in decreasing the ratio of behavioural silence and encouraging employees to raise their voices about addressing the organizational issues. Additionally, improving the self-esteem of employees and motivating them to take part in an extra role behaviour is possible by satisfying their needs and providing them a anxiety free workplace environment.

6.2. Limitations and future research suggestions

There are certain limitations of this research study that can serve as avenues for future studies. Firstly, there is a research study needed to determine the role of psychopathic leadership in an individual's career advancement. Also, there is a need to understand the motive, perception and the ability complexes that underlie psychopathic leadership could help clarify the relationship between psychopathic leadership style and overt workplace behaviour. Moreover, future researchers can focus on task performance and creative performance of psychopathic leaders and task performance and creativity of individuals working under psychopathic leadership. Besides this, antecedents of psychopathic leadership and employee silence, other outcomes and other contextual factors can serve as a better option for future research. This study has collected data from only police sector, other government or private sectors and other professional group could be investigated including lawyers, surgeons, media and journalists in future where psychopathic leadership can be seen frequently. Other dimensions of silence such as prosocial silence can be studied which is generally used as a positive term in literature and prosocial silence behaviour might be beneficial to the organization and employee. Moreover, organization identification can also be used as a moderator. Further, future researchers can examine employee silence along with employee commitment through qualitative or quantitative research to highlight advanced and diverse information and opinion. Future research can compare the psychopathic leadership in different provinces of Pakistan as well as the psychopathic rates and detriments in different countries.

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Annexure-1: Questionnaire

1= Strongly Disagree	2= Somewhat Disagree	3= Slightly Disagree	4= Neutral	5= Slightly Agree	6= Somewhat Agree	7= Strongly Agree
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How much do you perceive your importance in the organization?

1	I count around here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I am taken seriously.							
3	I am important.							
4	I am trusted.							
5	There is faith in me.							
6	I can make a difference.							
7	I am valuable.							
8	I am helpful.							
9	I am efficient.							
10	I am cooperative.							

No.	How do you perceive your boss/supervisor(s)?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	For my leader, what is right is whatever he/she can get away with.							
2	My leader enjoys manipulating other people's feelings.							
3	My leader often admires a really clever scam.							
4	My leader thinks that people who are stupid enough to get ripped off usually deserve it.							
5	My leader tells other people what they want to hear so that they will do what he/she wants them to do.							
6	In today's world, my leader feels justified in doing anything he/she can get away with to succeed.							
7	When my leader gets frustrated, he/she often "let off steam" by blowing his/her top. (gets angry)							
8	Looking out for his/her self is my leader's top priority.							
9	My leader's main purpose in life is getting as many goodies as he/she can.							
10	My leader has been in a lot of shouting matches with other people.							

This questionnaire has to be filled after 1 week by the respondent

No.	How often do I think during my work that	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I am unwilling to speak up with suggestions for change because I am disengaged							
2	I am unwilling to speak up with suggestions for change because I believe that my colleagues will make the right decision.							
3	I keep my ideas about solutions to problems to myself.							
4	I keep any ideas for improvement to myself because I have low self-efficacy (confidence) to make a difference.							

5	I am unwilling to express my ideas for change in disengaged areas because I don't want to increase the work load.							
6	I withhold new information due to fear about my future in the organization.							
7	I withhold relevant information due to fear.							
8	I omit (leave) pertinent (relevant) facts in order to protect him/her self.							
9	I avoid expressing ideas for improvements, due to self-protection.							
10	I do not speak up and suggest ideas for change, based on fear.							

No.	Indicate the degree to which you have been experiencing conflict between your work and family life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.							
2.	The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities.							
3.	Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.							
4.	My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfil family duties.							
5.	Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.							

No.	How often do you believe this person (your peer/colleague) has exhibited the following pro-social/helping behaviour for the past six months at your current workplace?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	This Person.....							
1.	Helps others who have been absent.							
2.	Helps others who have heavy workloads.							
3.	Assists supervisor with his/her work (without being asked to).							
4.	Takes time to listen to co-workers' problems and worries.							
5.	Goes out of the way to help new employees.							
6.	Takes a personal interest in other employees.							
7.	Has work attendance above the norm.							
8.	Gives advance notice when unable to come to work.							
9.	Takes undue work breaks (R).							
10.	Spends a great deal of time on personal phone conversations (R).							
11.	Conserves and protects organizational property.							
12.	Complains about insignificant things at work.							
13.	Passes along information to co-workers.							
14.	Adheres to informal rules devised to maintain order.							