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UNREVEALING GENDER DIFFERENCES; AN INVESTIGATION OF COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOR AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SINDH

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Counter Productive Work Behavior; Emotional Intelligence; Gender

ABSTRACT

Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) encompasses discretionary actions aimed at causing harm to organizations and individuals, hindering organizational objectives, and disrupting norms. This study examines the prevalence of CWB in academic staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a specific focus on gender differences in Sindh universities. We explored how negative behaviors such as aggression, rudeness, withdrawal, sabotage, theft, and absenteeism manifest in academic environments and whether they vary based on gender. A sample of academic staff (301) from multiple universities in Sindh participated in the study. Utilizing bootstrapping with 2000 bootstrap samples and 90% bias-corrected confidence intervals, we examined the significance of path coefficients and conducted a chi-square difference test and p-value analysis. SEM was developed for both male and female groups. Our findings indicate that the model was more suitable for females ($R^2 = 0.14$) compared to males ($R^2 = 0.07$) in explaining the variance in CWB. We detected significant gender differences in CWB, suggesting that females may exhibit higher levels of negative behaviors in the academic setting during the pandemic. Additionally, the study sheds light on the persistence of gender stereotypes and cultural biases in the workplace, even amidst the pandemic-induced changes in work arrangements. These findings have important implications for policymakers and organizations and highlight the need to address and support the well-being of male academic staff in Sindh universities.

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has a substantial effect on the whole world because it has spread to countries all over the world. The profound impact of the phenomenon under discussion has noteworthy

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consequences for multiple facets of human existence, such as economics and societies, as thoroughly explored (Shehzadi et al. 2020). This issue has a significant impact on both individuals and nations, resulting in persistent concern, fear, and uncertainty for the present and the future. The prevalent state of uncertainty has substantially permeated our society, causing significant disruption in our behavioral patterns, which are characterized by unpredictability and deviance (Pedrosa et al., 2020). There has been an increase in the occurrence of counterproductive work behavior at work as a direct result of people's eccentricities (Malik et al., 2020). The timeline for when the globe will be relieved of this virus remains uncertain and is a topic of somber contemplation (Lu et al., 2020). The current COVID-19 crisis exhibits a pervasive sense of instability and imminent danger, devoid of any gender or age discrimination. The entire population is affected by this catastrophe. The primary aim of the current study is to determine the differential influence of COVID-19 on counterproductive work habits between males and females and assess the magnitude of this impact on both genders. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to a range of previously unparalleled adverse effects for various participants in the academic sphere (Kuruuzum, & Koksal, 2010). These effects encompass significant changes in essential operations, priorities, and, naturally, behavioral tendencies. Hence, there exists a justifiable apprehension regarding the manner and degree to which this global health crisis may amplify adverse academic conduct (Morteza, 2020). The swift and profound impact of the global pandemic COVID-19 presented an unparalleled challenge to clinical specialists. Navigating teams through a complex and new situation, with an uncertain outcome, has generated significant distress among all those involved. This event might be associated with an ultra-marathon rather than a race, as it will require persistence and perseverance. In the upcoming weeks, there will be numerous difficult decisions to be made and countless opportunities for leadership to be demonstrated (Mokhtar, & Yusoff, 2009). The COVID-19 pandemic has placed individuals' mental well-being and emotional intelligence in a vulnerable position. Individuals that exhibit endurance are not necessarily characterized by exceptional power or intelligence, but rather by their ability to adapt and respond to changes in their environment. This information will be crucial for policymakers in order to develop a framework aimed at enhancing the moral development of teachers (Anvari, & Amin, 2011). According to Baba (2020), it is the responsibility of leaders to demonstrate compassion, hopefulness, and adaptability in order to facilitate the recovery of fellow citizens from the ongoing pandemic. The global pandemic has presented researchers with a unique opportunity to examine the

long-term impacts it has had on individuals' lives. The COVID-19 epidemic has presented academic institutions and organizations with hitherto unheard-of difficulties. As was previously said, this crisis has seriously interrupted regular behavioral patterns, which has caused academic staff to exhibit more counterproductive CWB (Malik, Sinha, and Goel 2020). This research study investigates counterproductive work behavior (CWB) within the academic staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically focusing on gender disparities, emotional intelligence, and their interplay. The current study shows a significant gap in the existing literature. While there is a growing body of research on CWB within the academic sector (Cahaya, Yusriadi, and Gheisari 2022), there remains a deficiency of knowledge regarding the manifestation of such behaviors in academic environments during a global crisis. An overlooked area in academic investigations, our study also explores the impact of emotional intelligence on CWB (Huang, Li, and Lee 2021). Additionally, we examine the role of gender as a moderator in these interactions, aiming to provide insights into the unique challenges faced by academic staff members (Sherwani 2023). This research contributes to our understanding of the consequences of the pandemic on academic professionals and offers valuable insights for improving support measures within higher education institutions. Additionally, it aims to examine the role of academic staff gender in shaping the relationship between their emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behavior. This study also seeks to address the gap in understanding regarding the impact of academic staff gender on the relationship between their emotional intelligence and unproductive work behavior, particularly within the higher education sector during the COVID-19 pandemic (Dirican and Erdil 2016a; Kundi and Badar 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Intelligence and counterproductive work behavior

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is widely acknowledged as a crucial factor, with many perspectives attributing it twice the level of significance compared to IQ. (Ahsan, Zia-ur-Rehman, and Ramay 2022). Several scholars have contributed to this perspective, but Goleman's pioneering model of emotional intelligence (EI) has gained significant popularity in this domain. Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the capacity to recognize and understand both our own and others' emotions, as well as the ability to successfully regulate and manage these emotions inside ourselves and in our interactions with others (Goleman, 1998). The effective management of the multifaceted human and emotional dimensions inherent in a

situation such as the COVID-19 pandemic can be facilitated through the application of emotional intelligence. According to Baba (2020) during COVID-19, EI became very important in dealing well with Stress, anxiety, self-awareness, management of emotions, relationships, and effective communication. Recent crisis are testing every individual's emotional stability and Emotional intelligence .Anxiety, panic, and uneasiness about future have seeped in people and economies causing undesirable, unethical, and unprofessional behaviors which may have unwholesome outcomes in the future (Malik et al., 2020). So in this situation, the one who survive are not only intelligent or strong but most adoptable to change (Baba 2020). In educational institutions the role played by academic staff is critical, because they are the role model of future generations, they are responsible to shape the future leaders. To do that, it's important for them to do their best. Performance of Academic staff depends on many factors like emotional intelligence, power of making decision, leadership style, (Benshlomo 2023), and employee's emotions can be perceived as areas of vulnerability. Many employees suppress their feelings by not openly expressing them in the work environment (Caraway 2023). Baba (2020) stated that EI is a building block to build the emotions in a sensible way and balances emotions so that an individual will be able to handle all situations in a different and effective manner. The study of Alonaz, (2020) on "Impact of emotional intelligence on Job performance in COVID-19 paradigm" recommended that emotional intelligence (EI) must be treated as an important asset among employees, and must be incorporated in practices and evaluating performances. Emotionally intelligent employees are less towards aberrant activities. Emotionally balanced employees resist negative discretionary behavior called *Counterproductive work behavior*. Consequently, individuals with higher emotional intelligence (EI) are likely to experience a less pronounced decline in affective well-being when confronted with relationship conflict, and ultimately resulting in a reduced likelihood of engaging in counterproductive work behavior (CWB) compared to those with lower emotional intelligent levels (Choi et al. 2023).

Counterproductive work behavior

Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) is an umbrella category of discretionary behavior that is intended to harm the organization and the individual working in the organization, create hurdles in achieving organizational objectives, and disrupt the norms of the organization (Bennett and Robinson 2000). These negative behaviors include aggressive or rude behavior, withdrawal, sabotage, theft, and absenteeism at the workplace (Bourdage et al. 2018). However, due to the lack of a standardized conceptualization or model to understand

such behaviors, these studies were perceived as investigations into diverse types of behaviors rather than a comprehensive effort to grasp employee deviance (Gruys and Sackett 2003). In recent times, there has been a growing concern among organizations regarding counterproductive work behavior (CWB) (Hollinger, Slora, and Terris 1992). As the literature on job performance developed, researchers recognized CWB as an important construct in addition to task and organizational citizenship behavior concepts (Rotundo 2002). Initially, research primarily focused on organizational citizenship behavior, but with the prevalence of CWB incidents causing detrimental effects on both organizations and employees, more attention has been given to understanding CWBs' impacts on productivity, well-being, and organizational costs (Muhammad Hafidz 2012). CWBs are intentional behaviors of employees that can harm the organization and its stakeholders (Spector and Fox 2002). Key to understanding CWB is recognizing that the behavior itself is intentional, and not accidental (Spector and Fox 2006). The motives behind CWB can be the intentionality of the harmful outcome, which are crucial in comprehending the underlying processes (Spector and Fox 2006). Various terms have been used in the literature to describe workplace deviant behaviors, such as organizational delinquency, antisocial behavior, workplace deviance, organizational misbehavior, workplace aggression, organizational retaliation, and organizational motivated aggression (Robinson and Bennet 1995). The CWB literature is somewhat fragmented, resulting in several definitions and labels for the same construct. This diversity has led to different classifications and names for CWB in the literature, even though many behaviors within these categories overlap (Bennett and Robinson 2000). Deviance, physical and verbal aggression, revenge, theft, absenteeism, and fraud are all considered CWBs, and they demonstrate positive correlations among themselves (Spector and Fox 2005). According to the studies of(Robinson and Bennet 1995), these behaviors are further categorized on the basis of target of action either toward an organization (CWB-O) and toward the individual working in the organization (CWB-I).

- CWB-I includes harming relational connections and disturbing social concordance in the work environment. All things considered, these practices are inconsistent with female gender roles (Amrhein, 2018). In this way, the employees intended towards CWB-I don’t encourage interpersonal communication among employees and less exhibit common personality trait of being warm and empathetic.
- CWB-O, Counterproductive work behavior that is directed to the Organization, includes theft from organization, production loss and harm the property of organization (Rayan, Aly,

and Abdelgalel 2018). Researchers have also observed that employees do not need to display behaviors from both categories to be classified as engaging in CWB (Yean et al. 2022).

However, the counterproductive work behavior (CWB-I OR CWB-O) can be controlled through emotional intelligence, as study recent study explores that higher levels of emotional intelligence are linked to lower levels of counterproductive work behavior and lower levels of emotional intelligence are linked to higher level of counter productive work behavior, this suggesting that EI might be an indicator that is influencing counterproductive work behavior (Sial et al. 2021). Therefore, this study suggests the following hypothesis in the educational institutions of Sindh:

Hypothesis 1: *Emotional intelligence of academic staff has negative significant effect on their Counterproductive work behavior*.

Moderating effect of gender between Emotional Intelligence and Counterproductive work behavior

Prior literature depicts that the gender is correlated to CWB (Counterproductive work behavior); male and female vary in Counterproductive work behavior (Dirican and Erdil 2016). Previous research suggests multiple mechanisms that may cause male employees generally shows higher level of Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) than female employees (Bowling and Burns 2015). Men are supposedly more aggressive than women because of their predisposition towards negative behavior .In fact, meta-analysis suggest that men shows higher significant level of generals (i.e. Nonworking) aggression as compare to women (Bowling and Burns 2015). Indeed, Men might be more likely to engage in certain forms of Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) than women, particularly those that involve active aggression, such as cursing at another employee, physically fighting a coworker, or destroying organization property (Eagly and Steffen 1986). Another research conducted by (Cross at el., 2011) found that Male are often less effective at handling their impulses as well as avoiding temptation (Silverman 2003) than are female. As a result, a lack of self-control is closely linked to Counterproductive work behavior (Marcus and Schuler 2004). It is important to note that aggressive attitude and lack of self-control causes counterproductive work behavior. As discussed above male proneness towards negative behavior is comparatively high as compared to women so in this complex situation of COVID-19 it's important to explore part played by gender in the relationship between counterproductive work behavior and Emotional intelligence. The blistering transformation

of COVID-19 pandemic unveils unprecedented challenges to the clinical leaders/: managing the personnel through a crossroad with unaccustomed domain and an indefinite conclusion in sight. This is an ultra-marathon, not a jog and the coming weeks will show infinite leadership phases and challenging decisions (Baba 2020). Counterproductive work behavior towards individuals (CWB-I) includes both (verbal and non-verbal) aggression. Men think that acting aggressively in response to irritation and threat is a socially acceptable and frequently desirable behavior, especially when the culture encourages it (Ahmed et al. 2021). Counterproductive work behavior towards organization (CWB-O) Men are more prone than women to develop CWB-O because these actions involve breaching organizational and ethical boundaries (Ahmed et al. 2021). Taking the group's resources for oneself or not contributing to the larger benefit is an example of organizational deviance. These actions are compatible with patriarchal gender roles characterized by genetic features such as self-serving, entitlement, and a preference for the individual over the collective. These actions, on the other hand, are incompatible with female gender roles because they demonstrate a disregard for the well-being of others; maintaining the socio-emotional well-being of others is a stereotypical feminine behavior.

Hypothesis 2: *Gender (male & female) of academic staff moderates the relationship between Emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behavior.*

Conceptual Framework

This research's framework was established after reviewing existing literature and identifying a gap in the research. The study examines three variables: Emotional intelligence, Counterproductive work behavior, and moderating role of Gender. In this theoretical structure, Emotional intelligence serves as the independent variable (IV), Counterproductive work behavior as the dependent variable (DV), and gender as the moderating variable (MV).

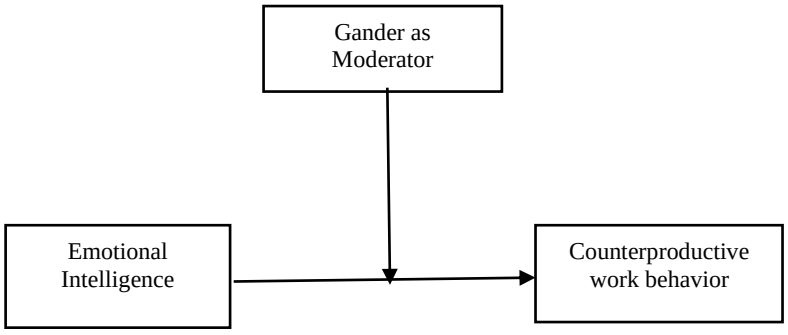

Fig:01 *conceptual framework adopted and modified from (Robinson and Bennet 1995) and (Wong and Law 2002).*

METHODOLOGY

Sample, Participants, and Scale for Measurement variables

Academic staff were selected from seven universities of Sindh's southern area to make up the study's sample. Sindh was chosen as the venue for COVID-19 because it is a geographically under-researched area (Zheng, Khan, and Hussain 2020). The sample of the study represents academic staff of educational institutes in Sindh, As the academic staff is transformer of the youth so their behavioral well health cannot be ignored This study's sample was based on cross-sectional data, with data obtained from public universities and 301 faculty members included. There are many research scholars concerning the number of respondents however, (Kline 2011) suggested five to ten cases per parameter in quantitative technique of research. Even though small sample size of 50 to 100 is also recommended for SEM technique in analysis (Afshan and Sharif 2016). Therefore, 301 sample size was enough to adopt SEM analysis and of the study. A total of 111 female and 190 male university professors were included in the study. The survey using Google form was used to obtain data from targeted respondents with the help of convenient sampling technique (Kuykendall et al. 2019).In order to achieve cost and time efficiency the data was collected electronically. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study indicating of measuring the relationship between counterwork behavior and emotional intelligence with the moderating effect of gender. Participants completed the questionnaires voluntarily and individually, and they did not receive any incentive for their participation.

Counterproductive work behavior

The Bennett and Robinson (Bennett and Robinson 2000) scale was used to measure CWB. With a five-point Likert scale, this scale consisted of 23 items.

Emotional Intelligence

The emotional intelligence scale used by Wong and Law (WLEIS) was used to assess EI in this study (Wong and Law 2002). This scale has been widely used and cited in the past literature, and it has a high level of reliability & validity (Prentice, Zeidan, and Wang 2020). This scale has 16 items and a five-point Likert scale.

ANALYSIS

The study's analysis starts with determining the characteristics of the sample that was chosen for the investigation. Table 1 presents the characteristics of the academic staff that were considered as a study sample.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and alpha reliability

Characteristics of Sample	% age Male	Female
Total	63	37
Age		
Below 30 Years	20	31
31-40 Years	60	48
41-50 Years	19	15
51-60 Years	05	06
Experience		
An Year or Below	06	13
1 -5 Years	22	37
6-10 Years	25	34
10-15 Years	35	09
16 -20 Years	03	0.9
Above 20 Years	09	08

The values of descriptive statistics (i.e., mean, SD) and alpha reliability values of constructs can be seen in the table above. Internal consistency was verified using Cronbach's alpha, and these values were higher than the recommended threshold value of 0.60 (Nunnally, 1994). The values for counterwork behavior were 0.938 for 23 items and 0.894 for emotional intelligence for 16 items, showing that construct can be utilized to analyze the model.

Configural and metric invariance test

The data were examined for configural, and metric invariance tests specified for multi-graphs analysis because this study uses two different groups i.e., male and female for comparison analysis. The data was divided into two groups based on gender differences, this was done with the help of tools such as SPSS-AMOS 21 and the configural invariance test. The results showed that freely estimated model had appropriate goodness of fit (GOF) in both groups (CFI=1, P-Close =.831, RMSEA=.000, SRMR=0.0587).

Table 1.1 Configural & Metic Invariance Test

Chi-Sqaure Test	DF	CMIN	*p*-value
0.245	01	0.096	0.757

The metric invariance test was carried out by limiting the two groups (males and females) to be equal, and it was discovered to be invariant between constrained and unconstrained models (chi-square difference= 0.245, difference in df = 01, CMIN = 0.096, and p-value = 0.757) using the Chi-square difference test. That is to say, "The gander-based groups are similar at the model level, but, different at the path level".

Common Method Bias Common

The "variance that would be attributed to the measuring method rather than the construct of interest" is known as the Common Method Bias (CMB) (Bagozzi and Yi 1988) Several recent studies have revealed that common method bias is a problem that might compromise

validity and lead to erroneous results (Craighead et al. 2011). In order to solve this problem, SPSS was used to run Harman's single factor technique.

Table 1.2 Harman's Single Factor Technique

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues	Cumulative %
1	20	37.359

The single factor technique of Harman was assessed to be 37.359, which is below the 50% cutoff value. This number indicates that no common method bias exists in the questionnaire, and that this bias is significant in the current study.

Descriptive statistics and Correlation

In table 2, counterproductive work behavior during COVID-19 is correlated negative but significant with emotional intelligence (r =-0.283). The counterproductive work behavior has positive and significant correlation with gender (r = 0.252 The emotional intelligent has positive and significant correlation with gender (r = 0.300). The mean value of counterwork behavior is 2.066 and standard deviation is .685. Similarly, the mean value of emotional intelligence is 3.787 and standard deviation is .536 and finally the mean value of gender is 1.369 and standard deviation is .483. Table 2 describes all values of descriptive and correlation tests.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and Correlation

Variables		Mean	Standard Deviation	CWB	EI	
Gender						
CWB		2.066	.685	1		
EI		3.788	.537	-0.283	1	
Gender	-(combined)	1.369	.483	0.252	.300	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The gender moderates the relationship between counterproductive work behavior and emotional intelligence with a beta value of b = -.347 with a significant level of .001 (p < 0.001). In other words, the regression weight for the interaction term (moderation) in the prediction of emotional intelligent is significantly different from zero at the 0.001 level (two-tailed) for the criterion variable "counterproductive work behavior". The main theme of this research is not only to explore the gender moderation effect on counterproductive work behavior and emotional intelligent but also to explore male and female impact on the relationship between counterproductive work behavior and emotional intelligent in the academic sector of Pakistan.

Table 3: Regression Analysis-Whole Model

Relationship	Estimates	SE	p-value
CWB → EI	-.281	.040	.000
Gender → EI	.091	.057	.077
Moderation effect	-.347	.031	.000

The Table 3 describes that counterproductive work behaviors and emotional intelligence has negative but association (-0.281 $p < 0.000$). similarly, the gender has positive and insignificant association with emotional intelligence (0.091 $p < 0.077$). The moderation effect between counterproductive work behavior and emotional intelligence has negative and significant association (-0.347 $p < 0.000$). As the objective of this study is not only to find the association among variables but to find out the gender effect between males and females. Therefore, Table 4 describes the male and female effect in education institutional institutions of Sindh.

Table 4: Regression Analysis-Moderation Analysis

Variables	Male	R^2	*p*-value	Estimate)	Female R^2	*p*-value Estimate
CWB → EI	.07	.001	-0.261	.14	.001	-.37
Chi-Square Difference	.757					

The structural model for both genders is shown in two different models for male and female. Males' influence was explained by the model ($R^2 = 0.07$), whereas females' influence was explained by the model ($R^2 = 0.14$). This shows that the model is more suited to men. After completing the path for counterwork behavior and emotional intelligence, it was discovered that both males and females (males = -0.261; females = -0.370) had negative but significant (*p*-value males=0.001; females *p*-value females=0.001) results, indicating that our hypothesis was correct. The influence of gender on the severity of path differences of the construct counterwork behavior was likewise found to be insignificant (*p*-value =0.757). As a result, the theory was accepted. It may be stated that the relationship between counterproductive work behavior CWB conduct, and emotional intelligence EI was a major worry for both genders in Pakistan. The likely explanation is that counterwork behavior in public institutions in Sindh is low for male academicians but higher for female academicians, making it a big worry for both males and females in Pakistan.

Managerial/Policy/Social Implications

Are the COVID-19 policy measures of our education sector gender neutral? Do they have policy consequences for gender equality at home? The choice of work schedules has impacted men and women differently, not only in terms of viral exposure, but also in terms of household chores and childcare. As a result, women's Counterproductive work behavior has spiked up. Determining how COVID-19 is addressed may have lasting effects on their emotional intelligence. The government must form certain policies to facilitate women specially those associated with mother work. This should help gender balance. It is important to note that the COVID-19 outbreak and accompanying changes in work arrangements have not changed gender stereotypes and cultural biases.

In our findings, it is highlighted for the managerial and policy makers to know how women have been harmed and some initiatives need to be taken in this regard for women working in universities of Sindh. On one hand, men and women want more flexibility. Work-from-home perks have also been explored, which may increase family work sharing. We found an increase in unequal household work, with women doing most of it could be a root cause that has affected women's emotional intelligence more and increased their attitude towards CWB. Certain policies need modification under this pandemic to support the female workers of universities in Sindh.

Limitation of the study

This study has conducted in the period of COVID-19 and males and female counterproductive work behavior was exogenous variable while emotional intelligence was endogenous variable. This phenomenon might be different for other organizations and may be similar to all educational institutions in the remaining regions of the country.

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