How Perceived Injustice Mediate the Relationship of Exploitative Leadership and Employee Expediency

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Abstract: *Based on social cognitive theory, we investigate the impact of exploitative leadership (EL) on employee expediency (EE) with the mediating role of perceived injustice (PI) in the banking sector. For this purpose, 413 employees who were working in different banks in Punjab, Pakistan, were investigated through a survey questionnaire. The smart PLS 4.0 was used to measure the relationship and test the hypothesis. The results showed that EL directly affects EE. This study also found that perceived injustice mediates the relationship between EL and EE. The research conducted with said variables enriched the literature and scope of knowledge in the domains of OB and HRM. In conclusion, this study recommended managers that in order to get better overall organizational performance, an exploitation-free environment for employees must be developed and try to understand the emotional psychology of workers, especially in service-oriented sectors.*

Key Words: Exploitative leadership (EL), Employee expediency (EE), Perceived Injustice (PI)

Introduction

There has been a long-standing discussion and examination of leaders' influence on followers in leadership research (Dahleez & Aboramadan, 2022). Many leadership studies have emphasized the positive outcomes that can be achieved through constructive forms of leadership, such as empowerment and servant leadership (Eva et al., 2019). In recent years, it has been seen that leadership explored in a destructive way through abusive, supportive-disloyal, and spoiled (Mackey et al., 2021). Leadership of this type tends to prioritize goals that are in conflict with those of the organization or are detrimental to its followers (Bajaba et al., 2023).

A new destructive leadership style was recently introduced (Schmid et al., 2019) called exploitative leadership (EL). It is defined as "leadership that serves to advance the interests of the leader." Leaders such as these exploit others when they (1) act egoistically, (2) exert pressure on followers, (3) overburden them, or (4) consistently put under challenge their followers, preventing their development." Leadership through exploitative methods is different from destructive leadership as it focuses on the leader's self-interest through the exploitation of others in order to achieve his or her own goals. A leader who is exploitative places a high value on their own agenda/viewpoint, regardless of whether their goals match with those of subordinates and/or the organization, thus distinguishing themselves from destructive leadership forms like derailed leadership, supportive disloyal leadership, and tyrannical leadership (Einarsen et al., 2007; Schmid et al., 2019).

According to researchers who have studied organizational justice, "employees who are treated unfairly by their supervisors or organization are more likely to engage in harmful organizational behaviors as a result of being treated unfairly by them" (Dalal, 2005). Both unfairness and politics are forms of workplace maltreatment that may negatively impact individuals/employees, as this line of reasoning suggests (Syed et al., 2023).

Research into problematic, immoral, and harmful workplace behaviors like harassment, bullying, and interpersonal abuse has gained prominence in recent years, focusing on the negative impacts they can have

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on individuals and business firms (De Cieri et al., 2019). Nevertheless, this research line contributes to our understanding of workplace actions that can be overtly ethical, but it is mainly silent on the more subtle yet detrimental behaviors that violate accepted norms, referred to in organizational behavior research as employee expediency (Eissa, 2020). Academics have recently taken notice of the issue of EE as it pertains to employees using immoral techniques and unprofessional behavior to complete their work in order to fulfill their own interests and goals (Greenbaum et al., 2018). Research on EE is still in its early stages (Ren et al., 2021; Cheng et al., 2021). It has been agreed by scholars that expediency is a common workplace phenomenon but largely ignored (Eissa, 2020; Greenbaum et al., 2018). A limited volume of empirical research has been conducted on when and why employees exhibit expediency in the workplace (Fayyaz et al., 2022).

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship of EL and EE with the mediation role of PI in the banking sectors of Punjab, Pakistan. Social cognitive theory is used to explain the relationship between EL and EE. The purpose of this study was to investigate how PI influences the relationship between EL and EE. According to the researcher, the relationship has not been studied so far. As the performance of bank employees is essential to achieving organizational goals, this research has taken place on employees of banks. Banks are the leading financial institutions in any country. If banks attain the defined goals, the economy of that country automatically expands.

All the public and commercial banks of Punjab will be the population size of this research. These are the research objectives associated with this study based on the research problem.

1. To determine the relationship between EL and PI.
2. To Identify the effect of PI on EE.
3. To Assess the impact of EL on EE.
4. To identify the role of PI between EL and EE.

This study will answer the following research questions.

RQ1: What is the impact of EL on PI?
RQ2: What is the impact of PI on EE?
RQ3: What is the impact of EL on EE?
RQ4: What is the impact of PI on the relationship between EL and employee expediency?

Statement of Problems

Employees are the precious asset of any organization. Employee aspect equity and fairness in all job-related matters from their employers. But when leaders or employers show some selfish behavior, employees lose their motivation, and they feel injustice. It is often observed that many large organizations lose their public image due to the poor performance of their employees. When this reason was inquired, it came to know that sometimes the behavior of leadership is not appropriate for employees, so employees become disloyal to their organizations and do their work less attentively and responsibly. According to social cognitive theory, individual knowledge is based on social interaction and experiences. When employees face injustice at their workplace, then it leads towards negative behavior and start compromise over work standards. It leads to downfall the organization overall progress.

Significance of Study

When employees don't receive equity and fairness from their leaders. And when they realize that their leadership uses them for their own purpose. They react adversely. They also find out the shortcuts to complete tasks. This thing overall reduces the working standard of any organization. It is important to address these issues in the banking sector in a country like Pakistan, as banks are the major financial institutions of any country. Responsible working performance of employees matters a lot in such institutions. The employees in a bank deal with the customers, and if they do their job in a less responsible way, the image of the bank declines, and the overall image of the organization goes down. Banks are large organizations with an explicit role in supporting the economy of any country. So, this study is helpful for the managers or top management of banks to understand the exploitation issues in an organization and the ways to improve the performance of employees.

Development of Hypotheses and Literature Review
Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) started as the Social Learning Theory (SLT) in the 1960s by Albert Bandura. In 1986, it evolved into the Social Cognitive Theory, which suggests that learning takes place in a social context in which individuals, environments, and behaviors interact dynamically. Behaviors are determined by past experiences, which are reflected in the theory. Reinforcements, expectations, and expectations are all influenced by these past experiences, and all of these factors determine whether a person will engage in a certain behavior and why.

Exploitative Leadership and Employee Expediency

As defined by (Schmid et al., 2019), EL represents self-interested leadership behaviors. Five dimensions of EL were proposed: (1) displaying genuine egoistic behaviors, which reflect a leader's willingness to put his or her own interests above the needs of followers; (2) exerting pressure, which indicates the pressure placed on followers to achieve a leader's objectives;(3) takes credit for the accomplishments of followers;(4) keep followers under-challenged, which makes them unable to grow; and (5) it refers to manipulating followers, which is the act of deceiving or manipulating them. In light of the fact that exploitative leadership is subjective, followers may perceive exploitative leadership behaviors differently.

If we see the characteristics of EL from the service sector scenario. it is obvious that such behavior of leadership affects the performance of employees in an adverse way. The first characteristic of exploitative leaders is their egocentrism, which causes them to take credit for the achievements of their followers. Leaders can influence followers' motivation and performance by shaping their followers' work experiences, according to the management of meaning perspective on leadership. A second factor contributing to high levels of job stress is the exertion of great pressure from exploitative leaders on followers. Thirdly, EL do not provide enough opportunities for self-development to their followers. As a result, exploited followers may be unable to effectively perform their customer service tasks due to a lack of service-related skills and capabilities. Moreover, ELs are likely to manipulate or deceive their followers for personal gain. Such unethical behavior violates the norm of justice and will likely trigger anger and resentment among exploited followers (Bies, 2001). As a result of being exploited, followers may stop their efforts at work or provide a lower level of service.

Regardless of how it's characterized, EE represents an unethical and unethical manner of conduct. According to Parks et al., 2010, in order to achieve organizational objectives, employees engage in behaviors (1) intended to fulfill organizationally prescribed or sanctioned objectives but (2) are knowingly violating, bending, or stretching organizational rules, directives, or norms" (p. 703). In order to achieve the desired organizational objectives, employees who engage in such behaviors emphasize the ends rather than the means, so they conveniently break or bend organizational rules. In contrast to other unethical and dysfunctional workplace behaviors (e.g., workplace deviance, counterproductive work behavior), expedient behaviors (e.g., cutting corners) are rooted in the intention of completing tasks earlier and completing them as efficiently as possible. Employees may engage in expedient behavior not in an attempt to harm the organization or its members but out of a desire to get by (Greenbaum et al., 2018 ; (McLean Parks et al., 2010). In this way, we develop the first hypothesis that EL generates the EE.

H1: EL positively relates with EE.

Exploitative leadership and Perceived injustice

Leadership constructs that are destructive or exploitative can be distinguished conceptually. A leader who exploits followers has a greater impact on followers than a supervisor who abuses them (Schmid et al., 2019). As a second distinction, exploitative leaders also behave differently towards followers than abusive supervisors or despotic leaders. As opposed to abusive supervisors and despotic leaders, who publicly ridicule followers or act like tyrants or despots, followers of a beneficial leader are treated with an atmosphere of equality and respect (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008 ; (Tepper, 2000). The leaders who encroach on followers' benefits in an exploitative manner appear to be friendlier to their followers, but in reality, they are actually more exploitative (Schmid et al., 2019). The third major difference between

abusive supervisors and strategic bullying leaders is that they do not necessarily pursue their own self-interests. Instead, they abuse their followers in order to maximize the organization's interest (Ferris et al., 2007 ; (Liu et al., 2012). On the whole, it can be said that EL is absolutely selfish leadership and mostly draw negative outcome for the organization and for employees.

Research shows that individuals develop exchange relationships with their immediate supervisors as well as their organization (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002). When people are perceived as unfairly treated, deviant behaviors are often initiated toward their supervisors or the organization, which is typically perceived as the source of injustice (Jones, 2009). Furthermore, in other studies, blame attribution was significantly correlated with revenge (Aquino et al., 2006), demonstrating that victims will attribute mistreatment to an organization or its members. The person who perceives harm being done to them usually retaliates against the person or entity (i.e., organization, supervisor, or co-workers) who caused it. Organizations are perceived by employees as being unfair when it comes to procedures and distributions (Jones, 2009; Khan et al., 2013; Khattak et al., 2021). Consequently, employees will manifest their behaviors against the organization as retaliation against perceived injustices in procedures and distributions. Likewise, the manager or supervisor is perceived as the source of interactional injustice. The retaliation here would, therefore, be targeted at deviating from the victim or co-worker (Yang & Diefendorff, 2009). In consequence, studies have shown that individuals who observe injustice in the workplace will attribute the blame for the injustice to the person or organization they believe is responsible for the injustice, and they will make the necessary changes to ensure the injustice does not happen again (Khattak et al., 2021).

H2: PI positively relates with EL.

Perceived Injustice and Employee Expediency

According to Khan (2018), the perception of organizational injustice is when employees feel angry, frustrated, and withdraw from their jobs because of unfair treatment at work. An employee's perception of organizational injustice affects their ability to cope with work demands as a result of workplace stressors (Khattak et al., 2021)

Results of Organizational injustice perception are classified on the basis of the attitude and behavior of employees on the job (Kee & Chung, 2021). Employees' perception of organizational injustice is the feeling of being treated unfairly (De Clercq et al., 2021). As a result of another person's actions, one perceives organizational injustice as being unfairly treated, disrespectful, and suffering unnecessarily (Dajani & Mohamed, 2017). Employees' responses to perceived injustices create harmful consequences, such as EE, which are associated with perceptions of organizational injustice.

As an unethical behavior, expediency emphasizes the enhancement of one's own self-interest at the expense of an organization's rules and society's moral expectations. Consequently, expediency is considered undesirable since it involves skipping important work procedures, which leads to organizational failure and ignominy (McLean Parks et al., 2010).

In a recent study, expediency is defined as utilizing unethical strategies and shortcuts to fulfill personal interests (Greenbaum et al., 2018). It is quite convenient for employees who expedite their behaviors to increase performance while disregarding ethical standards because conventional organizations' practices are quite flexible (Greenbaum et al., 2018 ; Ren et al., 2021). In light of the above literature, it can be stated that after facing injustice from leadership, employees behave in an expedient way.

H3: PI positively relates to EE

The mediating role of PI between EL and EE

Past studies have provided sufficient proof for the detrimental effects of EL, like decreased job satisfaction, job performance, affective commitment, and innovative behavior (Schmid et al.,2019 ; Syed et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2021) and increased psychological distress, turnover intention, knowledge hiding, aggressive deviance, and employee expediency (Cheng et al., 2021; Majeed & Fatima, 2020 ;(Schmid et al., 2019).

The purpose of this study is to investigate not only the direct effect of EL on EE but also the underlying process through which PI influences it. The direct relationship between EL and EE has been examined in

some studies, but the influential mechanisms of PI on these variables still need to be investigated. Cognitive mechanisms and, in particular, psychological mechanisms haven't received the attention they deserve to provide insight into why EL promotes EE. By addressing this research gap, this study aims to bridge the gap. An important indicator of employee attitudes and behaviors is organizational justice, which refers to employees' perceptions and concerns about fairness within organizations (Colquitt, 2001).

In organizational justice research, employees' perceptions of unfair treatment at work have been extensively examined as having a profound impact on their attitudes and behaviors. In Organizational justice, researchers found that employees' performance declined as a result of the deterioration of organizational justice (Lind et al., 1990), inclined to steal more of the organization's property (Greenberg, 1993), reluctant to go for organizational citizenship behaviors (Moorman et al., 1993), do not accept the decisions of leadership (Huo et al., 1996), are expected to involve in disputing acts (Vermunt et al., 1996).

The above literature will help us to prove the effectiveness of exploitation in the presence of PI in order to prove expediency. So, the current study will explore how PI mediates the relationship between EL and EE.

H4: PI mediates the relationship between EL and EE.

Figure 1

Hypothesized model
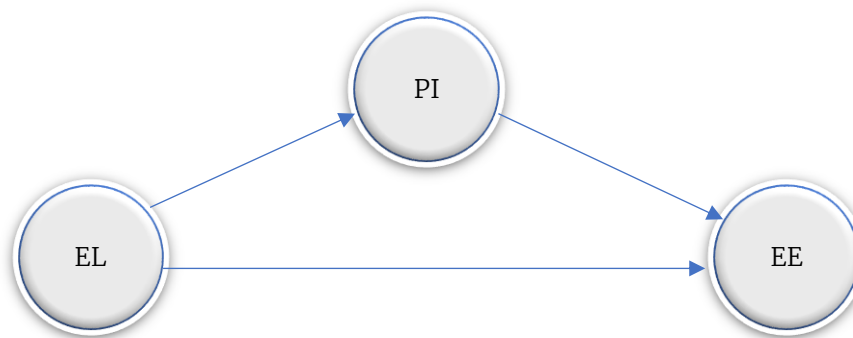
Research Methodology

To select suitable research methods, understanding the significant assumptions that underpin the research philosophy is critical (Saunders et al., 2009). It is imperative that business and management researchers understand the philosophical commitments involved in selecting a research strategy in order to understand not only what we do but also what we are investigating (B. Blumberg et al., 2014).

From a philosophical perspective, the study follows a positivist philosophy, considering its purpose and the quantitative paradigm. Since the research hypotheses proposed by the study are examined through a positivist philosophical stance, a positivist philosophical stance is chosen (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). The positivist perspective is suitable when there is a need to be quantified (Ryan, 2006). The positivist philosophy is closest to natural science because it is based on observable reality and generalizations, just like those produced by natural scientists (Saunders et al., 2009). Non-probability sampling method is used to fulfill the objectives of this study (Cooper et al., 2006). Despite probability sampling's strength, the carelessness of the individuals involved can also lead to partial sampling despite the strength of the method. It is possible to produce acceptable results with non-probability sampling when it is carefully controlled (Cooper et al., 2006). For this study's research questions and objectives, non-probability sampling was conducted using purposive sampling (restrictive). A cross-sectional data collection technique was used to collect data. A one-shot method is used to collect data in this research thesis. Data is collected from employees of public and commercial banks in the Punjab province of Pakistan using personal questionnaires and electronic questionnaires. The average sample size should exceed N=207, as reported by the latest research (J. F. Hair et al., 2012). This study primarily examines public and commercial banks in Pakistan's Punjab province as part of the investigation's population. The population is comprised of all people, things, and events relevant to the research topic. Consequently, the data has been collected from a subset of the entire population due to time and resource constraints rather than from the entire

population. Several middle managers of commercial banks were carefully selected from this population. A large sample size is needed to generalize the population. A sample size of 413 respondents is calculated according to the formula provided by (Kotrlik & Higgins, 2001). Since there is no explanation for the population, Cochran's formula is used to determine the sample size. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed at the beginning of the survey, and with 91.7%, 413 were got with full responses.

Table 1
Measurement instrument

Variables	No of Item	Authors	Cronbach's Alpha value
Exploitative Leadership	15	Schmid (2019)	0.95
Employee Expediency	04	Greenbaum (2018)	0.82
Perceived Injustice	13	Niehoff & Moorman(1993)	0.60

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Demographic data from participants was collected in section 1. We designed the survey to ensure uniformity and make it as stress-free as possible for respondents to answer each question (one for strongly disagreeing, five for strongly agreeing) on a Likert scale for EL, EE, and PI. The information on these variables was placed in section two.

This study examined exploitative leadership as an independent construct. To measure EL, a modification of Schmid's (2019) scale has been made by Ken Cheng et al. (2021). As part of the scale, there were 15 questions, including one on 'My manager uses my work to gain personal benefit from the company' and another on 'My manager manipulates or deceives his employees to achieve personal goals.' EE was the dependent variable in this study. This scale contains 4-items for measuring employee expediency. It was modified by Greenbaum (2018), which was cited in Ken Cheng et al. (2021). The following examples include "cutting corners to complete work assignments more quickly" or "only applying strict rubrics when they are in my self-interest." This study involved PI as a mediating variable. Khattah et al. (2020) have adapted Niehoff & Moorman's (1993) measurement scale to measure perceived injustice. There were 13 items in this instrument. A total of 4 items pertain to distributive injustice (DI), six items pertain to procedural injustice (PI), three items pertain to interactional injustice (II), and four items pertain to psychological contract violation (PCV). Among the sample items were 'My work schedule is unfair,' 'My manager makes biased decisions about my job,' and 'When decisions are made about my job, the manager does not treat me with kindness and consideration.'

Descriptive Statistics

In order to conduct this study, 450 employees of the banking sector in Punjab, Pakistan, were asked to complete research questionnaires. Besides out-of-range values (Dong et al., 2019), missing values are the most problematic for valid and reliable results. Statistical power is decreased when missing data is present in a dataset, which may lead to biased estimations (Kang, 2013). The researcher dropped 37 incomplete questionnaires from the final dataset, resulting in 413 scores and a 92% response rate. We found 413 questionnaires with full responses out of 450, 37 of which had missing values. Based on our analysis of the data, we found 218 male participants and 195 female participants. At the workplace, males were 52.8% of the workforce, while females were 47.2%. Among the selected population, 10.2% were bachelor's degree holders, 58.1 % were Masters, 28.1 % were MS/MPhil, and only 3.6 % were PhD degree holders.

After evaluation of the data, we found that 38.3 % of persons had 5-10 years of experience, 52.5 % had 11-20 years of personal mastery, and only 9.2 % had the experience of 21-30 years. According to the study, 25.9% of respondents were between 21-35 years' age group while 32.9 % belonged to the age group of 36-45 and 41.2 % were of 46-55 years of age group. Below is a detailed demographic assessment of the respondents:

Table 2
Demographic table

Demographic Variable	Category	Count (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	218	52.8
	Female	195	47.2

Age	21–35	107	25.9
	36–45	133	32.9
	46–55	173	41.2
Experience (Years)	5–10	158	38.3
	11–20	217	52.5
	21–30	38	9.2
Education Level	Bachelor Degree	42	10.2
	Master's Degree	240	58.1
	MS/MPhil	116	28.1
	PhD	15	3.6

Analysis Strategy

It is imperative that data distribution be considered when analyzing multivariate data (J. F. Hair et al., 2012). The advantage of Smart-PLS is that it does not account for normal distributions of data. The PLS-SEM can be used in non-normally distributed data, according to Hair et al. (2017). An evaluation of the normality of the data was made based on skewness and kurtosis. (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) suggest a threshold value of 2 for skewness and kurtosis. Stevens (2002) gives threshold values of 2 and 7, respectively; Blanca et al. (2013) give threshold values of 1.38 and 5.045, respectively. Latent variables and exogenous variables are correlated to determine the degree of multicollinearity... Hair et al. (2009) report that estimates with a high multicollinearity value are not reliable. By calculating the variance inflation factor (VIF), which measures how much variance is accounted for by other indicators of the same construct, indicator multicollinearity can be assessed. In order to prevent multicollinearity, the variance inflation factor (VIF) value should be less than 5 for $p > 0.05$. Researchers found that all values were significantly below 5, with exploitative leadership scoring the highest (2.945) and perceived injustice scoring the lowest (1.943).

Table 3
Multicollinearity intercorrelations

VIF	
EE1	1.977
EE2	2.518
EE3	2.172
EE4	2.036
EL1	1.842
EL10	2.81
EL11	2.895
EL12	2.841
EL13	2.726
EL14	2.817
EL15	2.925
EL2	2.186
EL3	1.975
EL4	1.946
EL5	2.625
EL6	2.945
EL7	2.748
EL8	2.847
EL9	2.785
PI1	2.5
PI10	2.888
PI11	2.413
PI12	2.004
PI13	2.026

VIF	
PI2	2.652
PI3	2.817
PI4	2.556
PI5	2.075
PI6	1.943
PI7	2.847
PI8	2.1
PI9	2.295

Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)

A partial least square structural equation model (PLS-SEM) is employed in the analysis of Hair et al. (2017)'s suggested theoretical model. It is possible to predict with high accuracy with models based on PLS. HTMT (Heterotrait-monotrait ratio) is a discriminant validity measure that has been proven to be superior to cross-loadings and Fornell Larcker in Monte Carlo simulations, as defined by Henseler et al. (2015). In order to assess discriminant validity, HTMT inference was recommended for PLS path modeling. The threshold value for HTMT inference, according to Roemer et al. (2021), is 0.85. It appears that all HTMT values were below the threshold. Therefore, this research has a good discriminant validity, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	EE	EL	PI
EE			
EL	0.723		
PI	0.74	0.735	

Construct Reliability and Validity

An instrument's validity is determined by its ability to calculate what it claims to measure, according to (B. F. Blumberg et al., 2005). It is defined as a measurement with consistent and equal values by (B. F. Blumberg et al., 2005). The measurement model was refined by performing reliability tests. The items were found to be reliable with a minimum alpha threshold of 0.50 by contributing sufficient internal consistency, and reliability maximization iterations were performed. The dependability of the construct is examined in order to determine the instrument's internal consistency level. Convergent validity of construct items is verified by calculating the Average Extracted Variance (AVE) is performed to verify the convergent validity of the construct items.

Table 5

	Cronbach's alpha	Reliability of Composites(rho_a)	The composite reliability of coefficient(rho_c)	AVE (Average Variance Extracted)
EE	0.873	0.876	0.913	0.724
EL	0.958	0.96	0.963	0.633
PI	0.948	0.949	0.954	0.617

As illustrated in Table 5, the model is valid based on the above-mentioned metrics. A valid construct must meet all of the requirements set forth in Table 5. An alpha value greater than 0.5 indicates that the construct as a whole is homogeneous according to Cronbach's alpha. These values fall between 0.5 and 0.9 according to Nunn Ally's guidelines (Götz et al., 2010). During discriminant validity, all elements must have a reliability of over 0.70, which is considered good and allows us to conclude that the scale is reliable. Correlations between constructs were examined in order to determine discriminant validity. As Hair et al. (2017) report, manifest variables account for more than half of the variance when the AVE is greater than 0.5. Though AVE values between 0.4 and 0.4 are acceptable (Henseler et al., 2015), AVE values below 0.4

are considered unacceptable. The table indicates that convergent validity for all three latent constructs is robust and strong, indicating the measurement scale is strong.

Figure 2
Structural Model
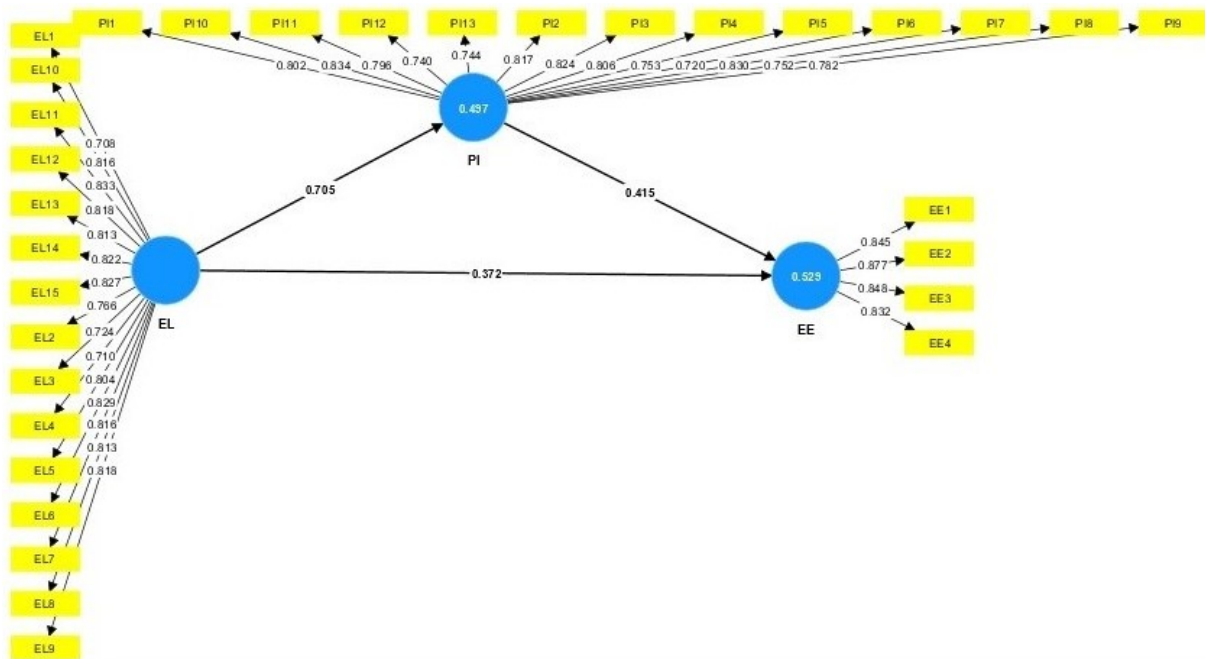
In Figure 2, identifying the existing linkages between latent constructs is possible by examining the relationships between latent variables.

Non-parametric models in the PLS are tested with the jackknife method and bootstrap method by Rodgers (1999). The Bootstrap method was used instead of the other methods since it is generally considered to be more effective (Götz et al., 2010). Two of the most important characteristics of the structural model are the t value (similar to a t-test) and the R2 values. R2 values generated by bootstrapping can be used as a metric for evaluating the forecasting capabilities of a model. A fine fit is found between the model and the data based on the R2 values for each dependent variable, which also match the central R2 values. Due to the R2 value being a minimum value, it represents the impact of the exogenous variable EL on the endogenous variable, which is EE in this study.

As illustrated in Figure 2, there is a significant relationship between the variables, and Cronbach's alpha reliability is good in all latent variables. A significant correlation is shown between the variables (with a 0.000 value where p0.05) with all outer loadings greater than 0.50. EE has the highest Cronbach's Alpha value at 0.873, while EL has the highest at 0.958. PI has the highest Cronbach's Alpha value at 0.948. The hypothesis validation or invalidation process in this study was based on Chin's (2020) hypothesis testing method. The bootstrapping method was used to determine whether to accept or reject a hypothesis. The P value needs to be less than the 0.05 threshold, and all the resulting values must fall below the 0.5 threshold to be statistically significant. To test the significance of the relationship, we use 5000 bootstrapping with a p 0.05 threshold.

Table 6
Structural model estimation on the total sample

	Path Coefficients (β)	Sample mean	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Hypothesis
EL -> EE	0.372	0.372	0.063	5.909	0	Accepted
EL -> PI	0.705	0.707	0.036	19.335	0	Accepted
PI -> EE	0.415	0.416	0.062	6.737	0	Accepted
EL -> PI -> EE	0.293	0.294	0.047	6.229	0	Accepted

Hair et al. ([2017](#)) used PLS-SEM estimation to evaluate hypothesized relationships among latent variables. It is possible to obtain a standardized approach path coefficient value between –1 and +1. It typically indicates strong relationships when values are close to 1, while weak relationships when values are close to 0 (J. Hair et al., [2017](#)). The significance of a coefficient is determined by the standard error in bootstrapping. To determine significance, each structural path model is given a t-value and a p-value. When two-tailed tests are used, t-values at different significance levels are assessed differently, i.e., 2.57 with 1.96 at a significance level of 5%, a significance level of 1%, 1.65 at a significance level of 10% (Hair et al., [2017](#)). Direct and indirect effect path coefficients are presented in the table. A hypothesized relationship between the latent constructs was used to select the expected signs. We present the results as a model path, which demonstrates the direction of the relationship. It was determined that significant t-values over 1.65 were found in both cases, while significant t-values over 1.96 were found in both cases. As for the different path coefficients, they ranged from 0.372 for direct relationships to 0.293 for indirect effects of EL on the relationship between EE and PI; both show statistical significance with t-values greater than 2.57%.

This study confirmed all hypothesized relationships based on the results in the table. It is our hypothesis that "EL affects EE" that is accepted and demonstrates a significant effect between the dependent variable (Employee Expediency) and the independent variable (Exploitative leadership). In our study, EL is positively correlated with PI. The values of the table indicate that our mediating variable (PI) has a significant positive impact on the dependent variable (EE) and is therefore accepted here as a significant variable. The third hypothesis is " PI positively related to EE," which indicates that the mediating variable (PI) has a significant positive impact on the dependent variable (EE) in a direct relationship. The fourth hypothesis, which is "PI mediates the relationship between EL and EE," indicates that our mediator has a significant impact on the relationship between the independent variables (i.e., ELs) and the dependent variables (i.e., EE), and it is an indirect effect caused by the latent variable.

Discussion
Theoretical Implications

We developed and examined a mediation model using social cognitive theory to understand why, when, and how EL influences EE. EE was positively related to EL, in accordance with our theory. Our research leads to previous studies, and it has been found that EL develops negative behavior in employees e.g. (Schmid et al., [2019](#); Cheng et al., [2021](#)).

Our findings contribute in two ways. We advance the field by verifying that EL positively impacts EE. As a result, this study will contribute to the growing literature on expediency antecedents. As far as we know, only the positive influences of employees' initiative have been studied in existing research on antecedents of EE (Eissa, [2020](#)). It has been suggested that supervisors' expediency and employees' expediency have negative effects on one another (Greenbaum et al., [2018](#)). However, a great deal of research remains to be done on how leadership impacts EE. The findings of this research proved that leadership plays a vital in the development of EE by showing the positive relationship between EL and EE. Moreover, by extending the range of outcomes of EL, our study enhances the literature on EL to some degree.

The study concludes that PI is one of the fundamental reasons for the positive impact of EL on EE due to its mediation of the relationship between EL and EE. When employees feel that their leaders are selfish, they place unnecessary pressure on them to accomplish tasks and take advantage of employees' work to get noticed (Schmid et al., [2019](#)). Consequently, employees may perceive expedient behavior as acceptable under such supervision and use it as a coping mechanism when stressful conditions arise.

Our study used social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991) to demonstrate that PI worked as a critical cognitive mechanism between EL and EE and that PI was an EE dynamic cognitive tool between both. As a result, we not only highlighted the influence of EL on EE but we also highlighted the forming processes of employee expediency under EL.

Practical Implications

A number of managerial implications can be drawn from the present study. A positive correlation was found between EL and EE. To preclude, confine, and decrease the exploitative behaviors of leaders, organizations must know the destructive effects of EL.

To stop leaders from exploiting others, organizations should adopt a strict policy by relating managerial promotions and compensation systems to "no exploitation" complaints. Leaders should also participate in training programs that cultivate their understanding of how they are interdependent with others. As well as this, safe complaint channels should be established in order to allow organizations to receive employee feedback about the misconduct of their leaders in a timely manner.

A proximal antecedent of EE was a PI. Organizations should, therefore, take some steps to ensure that employees do not feel that they are treated unfairly disrespectfully and suffer by the actions of their leaders so that employees are not tempted to engage in expedient behavior. When employees feel their leaders disregard the values of fairness and dignity, they feel injustice, which negatively impacts their performance. When they feel injustice, in return, they don't do their job task wholeheartedly. For the purpose of completing the job, they bypass traditional job protocols. As a result, expedient behavior is exhibited.

Conclusions

An analysis using the PLS-SEM method was carried out to determine the relationship between the suggested study variables.

Managers and management will benefit from the findings of the present study because they will improve the challenges and effects of EL. Employers who experience EL experience negative psychological outcomes. A policy of reserve defending would consequently be implemented by workers exposed to manipulative management (Kiyani et al., 2021).

In this study, EL induced PI, which boosted EE. The empirical findings of this study contribute to extending the concept of EE and EL by assuming a social cognitive perception, and several important suggestions are provided for organizations to decrease EL and EE.

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