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Impact of Gender Bias on Counterproductive Work Behavior: Evidence from Pakistan's Banking Sector

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ABSTRACT

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This research aims to examine the impact of gender discrimination on counterproductive work behavior (CWB), with organizational politics (OP) serving as a moderator in the banking sector of Pakistan. Using social role theory, the study investigates the association between gender bias (GB) and CWB, focusing on workplace inefficiency (WI), workplace sabotage (WS), and downtime behavior (DB). The study employs closed-ended questionnaires and a quantitative primary research approach, administered to 401 respondents using a convenience sampling design. The responses were analyzed and tested in Smart PLS, where it was confirmed that the constructs exhibit reliability and validity through confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. The findings reveal that GB in career progression significantly affects CWB, WI, WS, and DB. OP directly influences CWB, WI, and WS but does not impact DB. Furthermore, OP moderates the effect of GB on career progression (GBCP) concerning DB and WI, but not WS. This study highlights the need for policy interventions addressing gender bias and professional growth in the banking sector, aiming to ensure equal opportunities for leadership positions. Future research should explore additional factors within this framework and investigate how they contribute to understanding the impact of gender bias on career growth.

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1.0 Introduction

This article explores the influence of gender bias on counterproductive work behavior within Pakistani banks and the moderating role of organizational politics. For any business to realize its strategic objectives, human inputs are irreplaceable resources. Discrimination has led to a complex work environment due to an increasingly diversified workforce. For example, discrimination is the treatment accorded negatively to some indemnities and results in monetary loss, decreased innovation, and competitiveness, among others (Edgar et al., 2020a). Gender discrimination concerning promotions, retrenchment, and wage increases creates a scene wherein people are not treated according to their merit but as women or men (Jaffe, 2017). By this, it makes subtle yet apparent forms of gender discrimination make employees feel powerless and confused.

The research will focus on the impact of gender discrimination in career development on the job performance of female employees working within Pakistan's banking industry. Although female education has come a long way, the extent of gender differentiation in pay levels and hierarchy is relatively high. While there is still extensive literature on the gender pay differential, there is not so much on uneven career promotion and opportunities. This study is intended to accomplish precisely that by investigating gender bias in career progression in the banking sector: the reservoir of concern for public and organizational policy action (Atinc et al., 2010).

Human resource departments must be able to see gender bias in career progression as a problem when they try to address contemporary organizational challenges. This study looks at whether gender bias in career progression is viewed as a problem and its relationship with female employees' counterproductive work behavior. More specifically, it tests whether these gender biases are translated into workplace inefficiency, sabotage, and downtime behavior and whether organizational politics moderate these relationships. It is conducted through the quantitative research design using closed-ended questionnaires to analyze the data collected from 401 respondents with the help of Smart PLS.

Gender bias in the workplace is one of the most critical issues facing HR departments, especially in developing countries like Pakistan. Recognition of this fact remains minimal even with the United Nations 2030 agenda for sustainable development, which posits gender equality. Organizational politics that dictates employees' behaviors and perceptions complicates the matter. Thus, this study focuses on the banking sector to alert the management and employees about appropriate policies and procedures to be worked out. This will counteract gender bias and its impacts on career progress and work behavior (Basurto-Barcia & Ricaurte-Quijano, 2017).

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Gender Bias in Career Progression

Gender discrimination in career progression results in financial loss and hampered organizational growth (Edgar et al., 2020b; Herrbach & Mignonac, 2012). It is considered the discrimination of an individual based on gender norms, and it affects compensation, promotions, and job opportunities (Channar et al., 2011). Also, social roles in the workplace and gender identity are directly related to unfair workplace practices, leading to counterproductive behaviors. Across Pakistan, gender bias is all-engulfing, and although women are equally qualified, some of them

are denied the chance to advance their careers in other regions (Muhammad Amin et al., 2020). As a consequence, gender subordination entrenched in culture and society at significant works to preclude women from full-fledged economic participation.

2.2 Social Role Theory, Gender Stereotypes, and Management

Requirements of candidates are explained by social role theory to account for gender-based stereotyping, with socio-economic categories, such as gender. Social roles are assumed and propagated by men and women in society and affect them according to their class expectations (Skelly & Johnson, 2011). Men are believed to be dominating and aggressive, while women are expected to be loving and caring all along. This has hampered women's progress in management (Koenig & Eagly, 2014). Many prefer male managers, believing women are more demanding (Jain & Mukherji, 2010). However, gender stereotypes hinder women's career progression, despite opportunities for equal work in most organizations (Tripathi et al., 2021). These stereotypes remain mainly because of socio-cultural factors.

2.3 Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)

CWB involves intentional actions aimed at the harm of one's organization or one of its members (Spector & Fox, 2005). Included are theft, sabotage, inefficient work practices, and rule-breaking at work (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). The personal/organizational base of the CWBs is financially damaging; it is a factor leading to 20% of business failures in the U.S. (Russen et al., 2021). The issue of gender discrimination further inflames CWBs; employees who are at the receiving end of such treatment may retaliate by being deviant (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). Organizational factors, including culture and policies, also play a significant role in the occurrence of CWB, affecting efficiency and morale among employees. Overall, the results of CWB can affect not only the organizations (Ostroff & Schmitt, 1993).

2.4 Organizational Politics

Organizational politics is characterized as self-serving actions that predominate toward individual objectives more than organizational ones (Drory & Meisler, 2016; Kacmar & Baron, 1999). What is political and not what happens determines employees' response and can adversely impact workplace equity and productivity seriously (Ferris et al., 1996). It was also noted that the interrelatedness of the employee's perception of equity and politics concerning job satisfaction. Provis (2006) emphasizes organizational politics, which are underground and individual–based perception interpretation of the organization environment.

2.5 Gender Bias and Counterproductive Work Behavior

Gender discrimination leads to counterproductive work behavior (CWB), and the deviant acts of female employees are due to career hindrance (Crino, 1994). Such behavior like downtime, inefficiency, and sabotage leads to a failure of the organization's success (Gorsia & Leong, n.d.). CWB disrupts internal performance and is associated with exorbitant cost that affects the employee's progression (Klaus & Schwab, 2012). Any such intentional behaviors that harm organizations and the stakeholders are against the organizational objectives. Contextual factors are often considered in the WCBD prediction, and theft and property destruction are typical behaviors of time misuse (Gruys & Sackett, 2003).

2.6 Gender Bias in Pakistan: Socioeconomic Implications

There is a strong undermining of women's empowerment and their access to education and economic opportunities in Pakistan due to culturally diverse, deep-seated gender biases and socioeconomic disparities (Saeed Ali et al., 2022). Patriarchal norms, despite international commitments to gender equality, have still limited the rights of decision-making of women and kept them marginalized (Marques et al., 2001). Socioeconomic disparity aggravated by gender disparity in education and employment enlarges the gap between people's classes, fostering social injustice (Priesemuth et al., 2013a). Efforts should be made toward promoting gender equality, especially in decision-making and economic participation, to reduce discrimination if approaches to sustainable development are to be effective.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The model explores that how gender discrimination in career growth affects counterproductive work behavior with organizational politics as the moderator. It facilitates unfair treatment of some groups that costs money, reduces innovation, slows down economic growth, and leads to a loss in competitiveness. This study investigates how workplace inefficiency, sabotage, and downtime behaviors result from acts of discrimination. In such cases, organizational politics can have either a positive or a negative effect while working as a moderator.

2.8 Conclusion and Research Gap

Gender bias in the workplace slows down career growth and is very much responsible for counter-productive work behavior. Organizational politics is mediated by gender bias, mediating employee behavior and productivity of the member working individuals. However, an understanding of how gender bias and organizational politics capture several gaps between workplace dynamics and outcomes. This study will try to fill this gap by studying the effects of gender bias on counterproductive work behavior, using social role theory as its basis. (Barksy et al., 2011).

3.0 Methodology

In this study, the research design was employed to establish the sampling technique, population, and data collection technique. Additionally, the study's instrument reflected the chosen research approach and data analysis technique. These components were crucial for drawing meaningful and reliable conclusions from the study. The research design served as the general plan for guiding the collection and analysis of relevant data. Following Bell (2022), a blueprint was created for data collection and in-depth analysis using quantitative research methods. Surveys were utilized to capture and measure data, which facilitated hypothesis testing. The research philosophy guiding this study was positivism, as it aligned with the objective of gathering observable and quantifiable data. A deductive approach was used, enabling the development of hypotheses based on existing theories. The research strategy involved a survey type, and the choice followed a mixed-method approach. Data was gathered at a specific point in time, making the study cross-sectional. The technique used for data collection was the administration of surveys, while the procedure focused on data analysis.

The sampling method for this study was convenience sampling, which involved selecting

respondents who were most readily available to the researcher. This method was cost-effective and fast, making it widely used in social and behavioral sciences. Other studies in the same field also adopted this method, ensuring consistency in the research methodology. The target population for this research consisted of working professional females within the banking industry of Pakistan. Data was collected through both online and paper-based questionnaires. These questionnaires included demographic questions and construct-related items to study gender bias, counterproductive work behaviors, and organizational politics. For the instrument of the study, a self-administered survey was used, employing a five-point Likert scale. The items in the survey were derived from previously validated measures, ensuring the reliability of the instrument.

A deductive approach guided the study, where hypotheses were developed based on theoretical frameworks. This approach enabled the collection of data within a quantitative framework, facilitating the analysis of relationships between the variables involved (Priesemuth et al., 2013b). Data analysis was conducted using the SPSS software package and Smart PLS. SPSS provided demographic details, descriptive statistics, and correlation tests, while Smart PLS was used for Partial Least Squares (PLS) path modeling in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). PLS-SEM was crucial for estimating path models that involved latent variables and assessing model fit (Sreejesh, 2014). This research design ensured that the data collection and analysis process was systematic and rigorous. The study applied established research techniques and tools to derive valuable insights into the relationship between gender bias, counterproductive work behavior, and organizational politics, particularly in the context of Pakistan's banking sector.

4.0 Findings and Results

This section furnishes deep-seated statistical analysis results, including the application of descriptive and inferential statistics to affirm the research hypotheses. The study was carried out using SPSS for demographic data and Smart PLS for structural equation modeling.

Construct Validity and Reliability Analysis

To test the reliability of the research instruments, Cronbach's Alpha was computed. The result was 0.947, with 50 items on the survey questionnaire, which is a very high-reliability value compared to the widely accepted threshold of 0.70.

Table 1: Cronbach Alpha for Survey Questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
0.947	50

Sampling Adequacy and Sphericity Tests

The KMO measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity were used for testing the adequacy of sampling and interrelationship among variables. The KMO value of 0.952 indicated good sampling adequacy, and the Bartlett test was significant ($p < 0.001$), confirming that the variables were further analyzed.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett Test

Measure	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.952
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Approximate Chi-Square	14556.076
Df	1225
Sig	0.000

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were computed to provide an overview of the sample characteristics, including age, education, and experience.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Demographics

Demographic	Valid	Missing	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Age	401	0	1.7681	1.0000	0.829	1.00	4.00
Education	401	0	2.4788	2.0000	0.510	1.00	4.00
Experience	401	0	1.7855	2.0000	0.394	1.00	3.00

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic distribution was such that the majority of respondents were young professionals in the age group of 20-29 years, with quite a number holding advanced degrees and moderate work experience. Fifty percent of the participants are in the age category of 20-29 years, 53.1% have MS/MPhil qualifications, and 56.1% fall in the experience category of 1 to 6 years. This shows its profile as a young, highly educated one with moderate experience.

Table 4: Age of the Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
20-29	203	50.6	50.6	50.6
30-39	108	26.9	26.9	77.7
40-49	70	17.6	17.4	95.0
Above 50	20	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	401	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 Education Level of the Respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
PhD and above	16	4.0	4.0	4.0
MS/MPhil	213	53.1	53.1	53.1
BA/MA/M.Sc	138	33.9	33.9	91.0
BA/BS.c	36	9.0	9.0	100.0
Total	401	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 Experience Level of the Respondents

Experience Level	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Less than 1 Year	131	32.7	32.7	32.7
1 to 6 Years	225	56.1	56.1	88.8
6 to 10 Years	45	11.2	11.2	100.0
Total	401	100.0	100.0	

Correlation Analysis

Results of correlation analysis indicated significant positive relationships among the variables, with organizational politics and gender bias at work showing the highest relationship (0.773). The relationship between gender bias and downtime behavior was the weakest (-0.138).

Table 07 Correlation Matrix

Variables	Method	GB	WI	WS	DB	OP
GB	Pearson	1	0.380**	0.241**	-0.138**	0.773**
WI	Pearson	0.380**	1	0.521**	0.362**	0.373**
WS	Pearson	0.241**	0.521**	1	0.697**	0.255**
DB	Pearson	-0.138**	0.362**	0.697**	1	-0.107*
OP	Pearson	0.773**	0.373**	0.255**	-0.107*	1

Normality Test

The skewness and kurtosis values for all the variables were within the acceptable range of -2 to +2, thus indicating that the data distribution was normal.

Table 08 Skewness Kurtosis

Constructs	Skewness	Kurtosis
Gender bias	-1.443	1.958
Workforce inefficiency	-0.836	-0.011
Workforce sabotage	-0.410	-0.382
Downtime behavior	0.359	-1.071
Organizational Politics	-1.286	1.337

Smart PLS Algorithm

The constructs further confirmed their validity and reliability because the use of composite reliability coefficients was much greater than the threshold of 0.7.

Table 09 Validity and Reliability

Constructs	Composite Reliability
Gender Bias in Career Progression	0.923
Organizational Politics	0.899
Workplace Sabotage	0.870
Workforce Inefficiency	0.790
Downtime Behavior	0.859

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to verify the discriminant validity of the latent variables. Acceptable values are observed in this criterion. Diagonal values are more significant than the inter-construct correlations, which means there is a distinctiveness of the measured variables.

Table 10 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Constructs	GB	WI	WS	DB	OP
Gender Bias in Career Progression	0.768				
Organizational Politics	0.601	0.753			
Workplace Sabotage	0.501	0.558	0.706		
Workforce Inefficiency	0.556	0.513	0.412	0.742	
Downtime Behavior	0.445	0.569	0.515	0.411	0.735

Statistical Analysis

Table 11 P-Values and T-Values

	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Gender Bias in Career Progression -> Downtime Behavior	2.340	0.020
Gender Bias in Career Progression -> Workplace Inefficiency	3.466	0.001
Gender Bias in Career Progression -> Workplace Sabotage	3.037	0.003
Organizational Politics -> Downtime Behavior	0.502	0.616
Organizational Politics -> Workplace Inefficiency	2.333	0.020
Organizational Politics -> Workplace Sabotage	4.066	0.000
Moderating Effect OP (GBCP-DB) -> Downtime Behavior	5.209	0.000
Moderating Effect OP (GBCP-WI) -> Workplace Inefficiency	4.117	0.000
Moderating Effect OP (GBCP-WS) -> Workplace Sabotage	0.859	0.391

The table depicts the statistical significance of the variables. Gender bias significantly influences downtime behavior, workplace inefficiency, and sabotage. Organizational politics significantly influence inefficiency and sabotage. Moderating effects are also significant.

Table 12 R^2 and R^2-Adjusted

	R Square	R^2 Adjusted
Downtime Behavior	0.047	0.043
Workplace Inefficiency	0.179	0.174
Workplace Sabotage	0.225	0.221

R^2 and adjusted R^2 values show the variance explained by other factors. The R^2 values are 0.047, 0.179, and 0.225 for the downtime behavior, workplace inefficiency, and sabotage, respectively.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 13 Hypothesis Testing- Results

Hypothesis number	Direct Effect	path value	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Remark
H1 (C)	Gender Bias in Career Progression > Downtime Behavior	-0.185	-0.185	-0.188	0.079	2.340	0.020	Accepted

H1(a)	Gender Bias in Career Progression > Workplace Inefficiency	0.274	0.274	0.279	0.079	3.466	0.001	Accepted
H1(b)	Gender Bias in Career Progression > Workplace Sabotage	0.221	0.221	0.220	0.073	3.037	0.003	Accepted
H2	Organizational Politics -> Downtime Behavior	-0.042	-0.042	-0.044	0.083	0.502	0.616	Rejected
	Organizational Politics -> Workplace Inefficiency	0.175	0.175	0.173	0.075	2.333	0.020	Accepted
	Organizational Politics -> Workplace Sabotage	0.284	0.284	0.287	0.070	4.066	0.000	Accepted

The hypothesis testing results reveal the significant relationships between gender bias and downtime behavior, workplace inefficiency, and workplace sabotage at $p < 0.05$. Organizational politics significantly influence workplace inefficiency and sabotage but not downtime behavior, where the path values and T statistics confirm the power and significance of these associations.

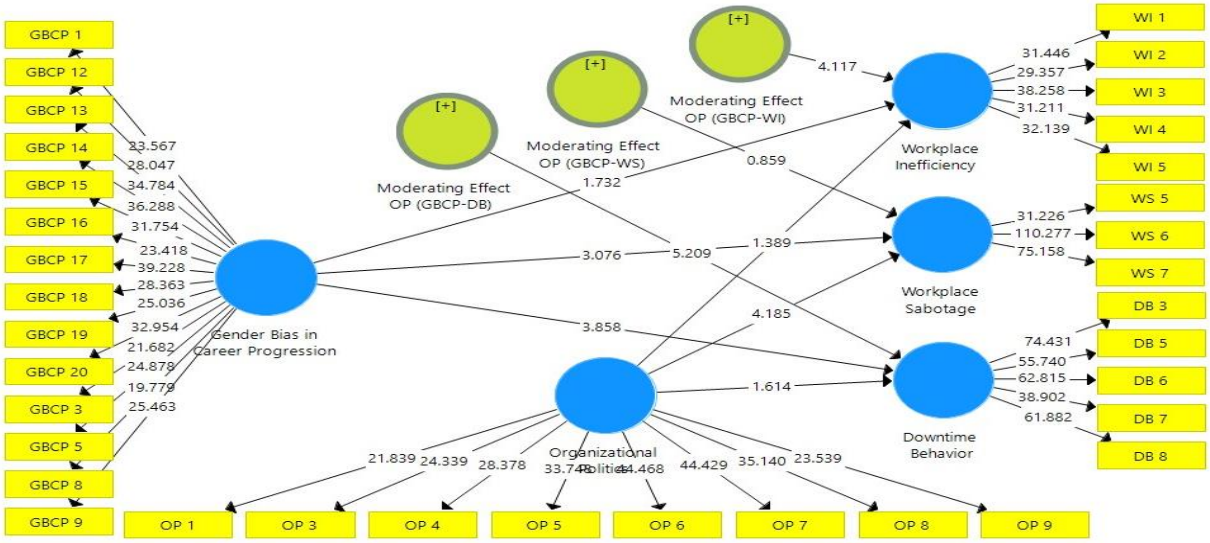

Figure 1: Structure Equation Modeling

This figure illustrates the path diagram post moderation, depicting relationships between constructs and their moderated effects.

Moderation Analysis

Three moderation effects were analyzed: OP(GBCP-DB) -> Downtime Behavior (-0.239, p < 0.001), OP(GBCP-WI) -> Workplace Inefficiency (-0.165, p < 0.001), and OP(GBCP-WS) -> Workplace Sabotage (0.034, p = 0.391).

Table 14 Moderation Analysis

Hypothesis	Path Value	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	remark
Moderating Effect OP (GBCP-DB) -> Downtime Behavior	-0.239	-0.239	-0.240	0.046	5.209	0.000	Accepted
Moderating Effect OP (GBCP-WI) > Workplace Inefficiency	-0.165	-0.165	-0.167	0.040	4.117	0.000	Accepted
Moderating Effect OP (GBCP-WS) -> Workplace Sabotage	0.034	0.034	0.034	0.039	0.859	0.391	Rejected

Graphical Representation

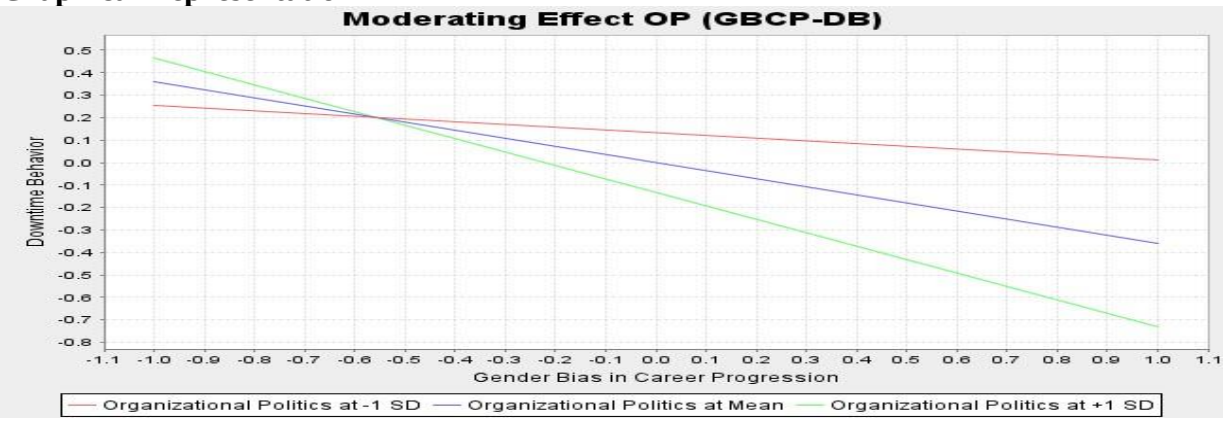

Figure 2 Mean DB- Graphical Representation

Figure 2 illustrates the mean values of organizational politics, gender bias in career progression, and downtime behavior. It highlights a shift from the mean towards moderation effects.

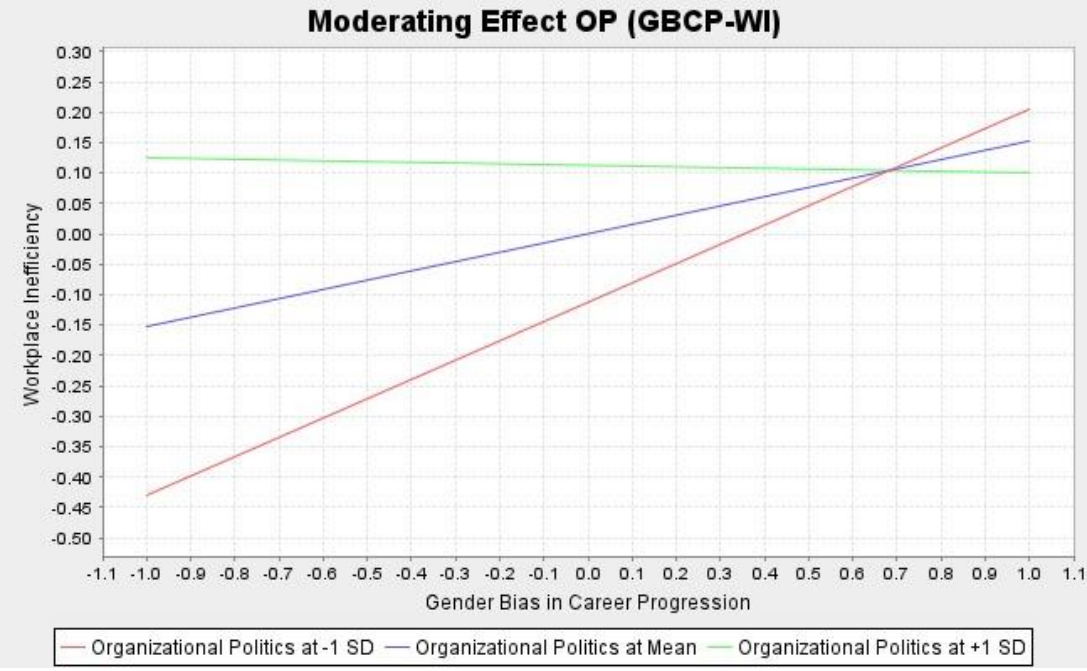

Figure 3: Mean DB- Graphical Representation

Above figure represents the mean values of organizational politics, gender bias in career progression, and workforce inefficiency, demonstrating a shift towards moderation effects.

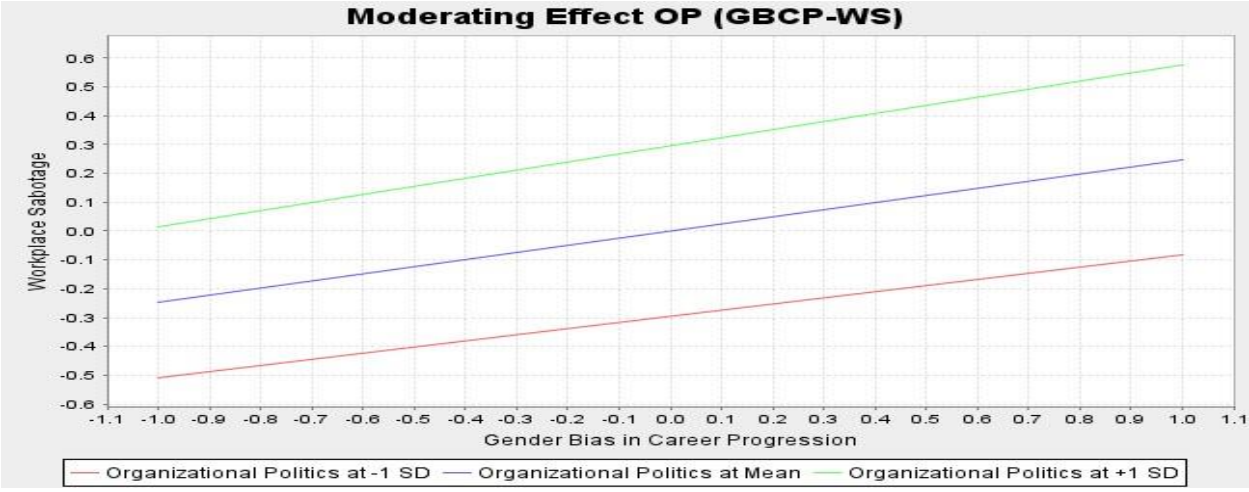

Figure 4 Mean WS- Graphical Representation

Figure 4 displays the mean values of organizational politics, gender bias in career progression, and workforce sabotage, indicating a shift towards moderation effects.

Distributed Data

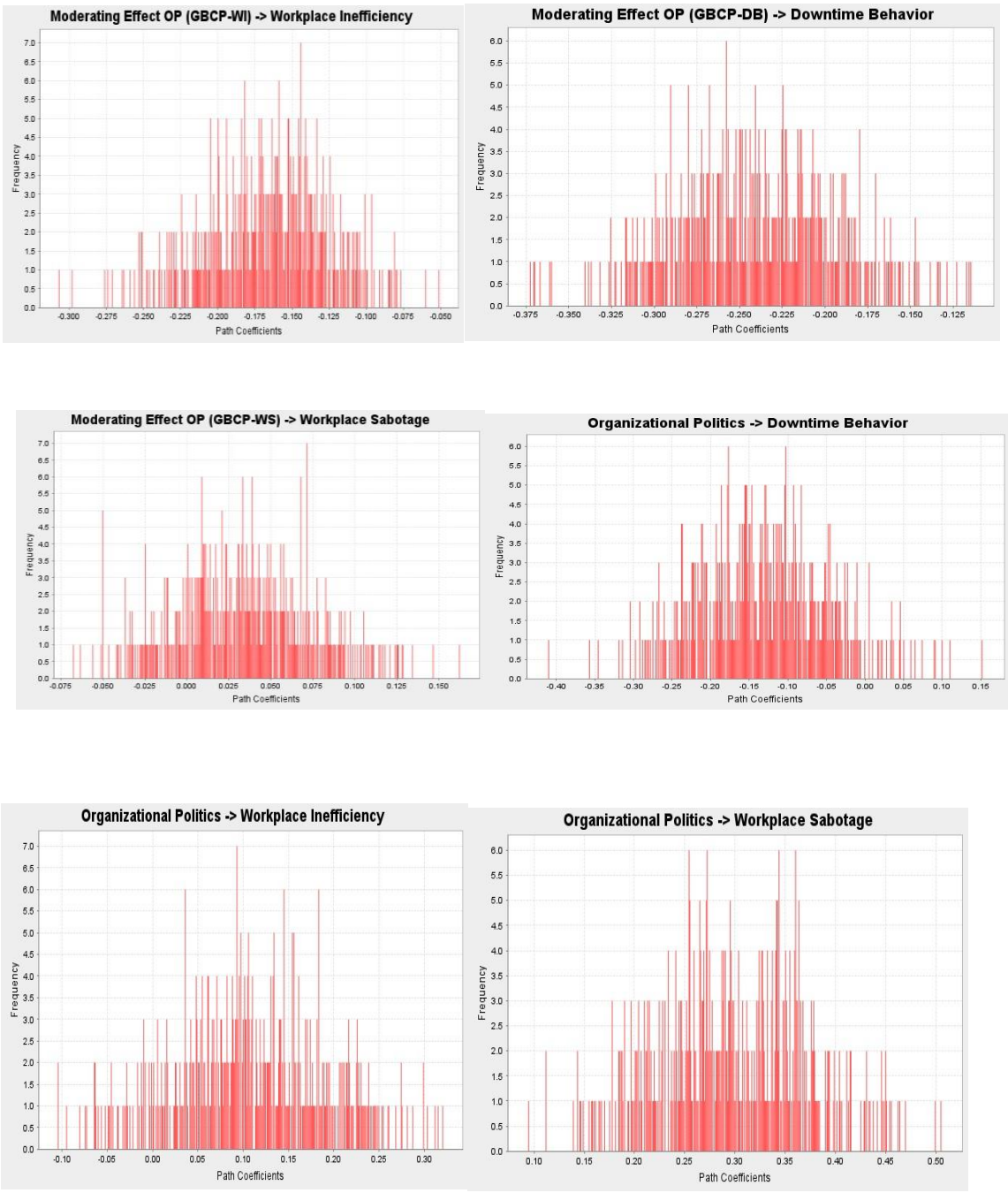

Figure 5 Distributed Data

Figure 5 shows the graphical representation of distributed data among constructs, suggesting a well-distributed dataset

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

This is a significant step towards the study and resolution of gender bias in career advancement within the banking sector of Pakistan. Applying the social role theory, the current research highlights the intricate relationships between gender bias, organizational politics, and counterproductive work behavior. The evidence supports existing literature while further highlighting the specific adversities that women have to face in their career advancement.

This is the first such research in the banking sector of Pakistan and, hence, is likely to be an essential base for future studies and preparations for gender-sensitive interventions. The findings from this study highlight the need for quick actions against gender biases and their implications for organizational dynamics concerning employee welfare. Only organizations that strive against gender bias will give all employees, irrespective of gender, environments that are more supportive and thereby enable employees to contribute in the organization fully.

Recommendation

It is the universal acknowledgment that this deep-seated influence can be overcome only through an all-out effort on the part of everybody. Organizations should practice policies and practices that would provide equal opportunities to all employees regardless of gender and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Programs on inculcating an awareness of unconscious bias and tools for reducing their impact should be embedded in all training programs at all levels.

In reality, the legislative bodies of government should create laws that provide a structure for implementing and enforcing accountability measures relating to gender equality in the workplace autonomously of discriminatory practices. Future research initiatives should explore these more robust insights, which are deep-rooted and confer gender bias, and have new inventions that adequately ward off the harmful phenomena that it creates.

At the root of gender bias, friendly and supportive work environments can be developed where both males and females have an equal chance of success. Such recommendations are impactful not only in terms of gender equality but also in creating a more just and fair society in general, which is being developed in Pakistan and around the globe.

Muhammad Shaukat Malik: Problem Identification and Theoretical Framework
Uneeza Azhar: Data Analysis, Supervision and Drafting
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