The Effect of Hostile Work Environment on Talent Acquisition and Retention of Workforce: Moderating Role of Psychological Hardiness

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The Effect of Hostile Work Environment on Talent Acquisition and Retention of Workforce: Moderating Role of Psychological Hardiness

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A B S T R A C T

In pursuit of adding to the body of knowledge and fill a literature gap, this research aimed at finding out impact of hostile work environment on acquisition of talent and retention of workforce, specifically in the Health Sector. This study also finds the moderating role of psychological hardiness on the relationship between hostile work environment and talent acquisition and retention of workforce. The study derives its theoretical underpinning from the Transactional Stress Theory and coping. The study was carried out with respondent belonging to the health sector organizations of Peshawar, Pakistan. A sample of 200 respondents belonging to various age groups and levels of the organizational hierarchy was used to test the hypothesis of the study. Regression analysis was used to test the impact of hostile work environment on talent acquisition and similarly on retention of workforce. Regression analysis to test the impact of hostile work environment on workforce retention showed negative and significant results with r-square value of .34, whereas, the impact of hostile work environment on talent acquisition also showed negative and significant results with r-square value of .271. The results of moderation analysis show that psychological hardiness significantly moderate the relationship between hostile work environment and talent acquisition and as well workforce retention. Significance of the results, in accordance to theory, proves a significant impact of hostile work environment on workforce retention and talent acquisition and psychological hardiness. However, the impact is more in the case of workforce retention which might prove that workforce in the health sector of KP needs to be provided with a conducive and friendlier work environment (internal & external) for increased retention. Talent may be acquired but retention of that talented workforce in a hostile environment is the real issue.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the recent era, many organizations faced new challenges while managing people through their human resource function. While there can be many factors to the success of an organization, literature suggests that Human Resource is the only asset if retained can prove to be the differentiating factor in competition. Organizations are facing the challenge of workforce retention due to increased competition in the market (Stevens, 2002). It is crucial for organizations to hire competent employees to gain a competitive advantage in the market. However, retaining competent employee is more important than hiring (Chiller & Crisp, 2012). Organizations are always searching for talented employees and spent time and money on their employees for future return aspects (Chen, 2010). Factors like lack of skilled workforce, economic growth and employee turnover demand to devise policies to increase employee retention (Manion, 2004). It is hard to measure the exact cost associated with turnover for organizations. When an employee departs from an organization, he/she brings out with him all the information about the company, clients, projects and past history, very often to competitors. It therefore has become vitally important to retain workforce to gain a competitive edge in the market (Williams, Kirk, & Wilson, 2011). This retention has become very difficult in the recent times with too many hostilities adding to the already hostile organizational environment (Vohra, 2005).

Employees, especially Asians are targeted racially adding hostility in the work environment. Such factors lead to employee turnover (McGinley, 2007). There are also some other factors due to which work environment become hostile and it destruction in an organisation. These factor include job burn out (Cosgrave et al., 2019), organizational deviance behaviour (Zeitlin, 1991), job stress (Thacker & Gohmann, 1993), work alienation (Abbas et al., 2017). Study find that hostile work environment create different negative outcomes which is very dangerous for organization as well for employees who working under these condition (Cleveland et al., 2007; Faeth & Kittler, 2020).

Having had a brief overview of hostile environment and benefit of employee retention, it is pertinent to mention about talent management, one of the key variable of the study. Research suggests that finding talent is easier than creating an environment that allows talented employees to achieve high results (Nonaka & von Krogh, 2009; Johnson, Stone & Lukaszewski, 2020). To achieve efficient talent management goals in order to retain employees a good environment is necessary to provide. Different studies finding shows that that due to hostile work environment talented employees leaves organization and stay for very short time period (Węziak et al., 2020; Crawford et al., 2020). Some of the study revealed that hostile work environment develop negative behaviour of the employees such as turnover intention, organizational cynicism, work withdrawal behaviour (Darvishmotevali et al., 2020; Murray et al., 2020; Caillier, 2020). A similar study also find that hostile work environment have negative effect on employee positive outcomes such as it reduce employee commitment level (Teo et a., 2020), reduce job satisfaction (Piotrkowski, 1998), reduce work engagement (Judge, Scott & Ilies, 2006) and decrease performance level (Afolabi & Omole, 2011). Hostile work environment and its negative impact on talent acquisition and workforce retention can be reduce through individual personality. Personality is defined "as the characteristic sets of behaviours, cognitions, and emotional patterns that evolve from biological and environmental factors" (Corr wt al., 2009). While there is no generally agreed upon definition of personality, "Most theories focus on motivation and psychological interactions with one's environment" (Adams, 1965; Sadock et al., 2017). Trait-based personality theories, such as those defined by Raymond Cattell, define personality as "the traits that predict a person's behaviour". On the other hand, "more behaviourally-based approaches define personality through learning and habits. Nevertheless, most theories view personality as relatively stable" (Corr wt al., 2009). Psychological hardiness, alternatively referred to as personality hardiness or cognitive hardiness in the literature, "is a personality style first introduced by Suzanne C. Kobasa in 1979. *Some recent studies findings shows that under stressful working condition employee personality traits such as psychological hardiness has significant and positive role and it reduce employee*

*stressful condition (*Hamre et al., 2020; Gucciardi et al., 2020; Tara & Ahsan, 2020*). Another similar study findings shows that psychological hardiness is the single factor which reduce the negative work outcomes of employees i.e cynical behavior of the employees (*Kazemi et al.,2020; Saeed et al., 2017*), intimidating behavior (*Hojatkhah, 2020*), work family conflict (McClellan, 2020) and abusive behavior (Bartone & Homish, 2020).*

Contribution of the Study

Human resource management is considered as the back bone of any organization. All the success and failure are dependent on HRM and as well future planning is also the part of HRM. The main function of HRM is to provide a healthy environment to their employees at all levels within the origination. On the basis of the sad background this study focusses on internal and external environment of the organization and its associated outcomes. Different studies conducted in western culture shows that hostile work environment have different negative consequences (Meng & Xue, 2020; Faeth & Kittler, 2020; Węziak et al., 2020). Similar studies shows that hostile work environment have worse relationship with job satisfaction (Qi et al., 2020), employee performance (Deng et al., 2020), work engagement (Paul & Kee, 2020). One of the recent study in Pakistani context found that hostile environment have negative effect on financial performance of the organization (Fayaz et al., 2020). A similar study in Pakistani context shows that hostile work environment is harmful for female and it leads to switching and loss of talented pool (Shaheen & García, 2020). There are very limited number of studies on the relationship of hostile work environment and talent acquisition and retention of workforce in Pakistani context. As we know that most of the studies have been conducted in western culture and there is big difference between western and eastern culture (Hofsted, 1984; Mulligan, 2001). Previous studies suggested that individual personality traits are main reason which controls the negative behavior and attitudes of employees (Jenaabadi et al., 2020). Different recent studies suggested that individual personality such as high level of psychological hardiness control the negative things occurring within the organization and retain themselves (McClellan, 2020; Ng & Lee, 2020; Harooni et al., 2020). From the above studies it is concluded that there is a dire need of to find the underlying mechanism which reduce the negative effect of hostile work environment on employee's behavior.

2. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Relationship between hostile work environment and talent acquisition and work retention

As of now, business associations are faced with a few difficulties and dangers identified with both the outer furthermore, interior condition. The developing impact of these wonders has prompted the advancement of an antagonistic work condition described by various latent practices, for example, the absence of useful security, imbalanced work and family lives, abuse or badgering at work, awful mental condition spoke to by business related pressure, organization's absolutist treatment, clashes, and representatives' presentation to dangers I counting a wide range of provocation (Alterman et al., 2013, p. 666-667). A few different examinations communicated tension on expanded threatening practices in workplace like clashes and brutality among representatives or among representatives and guests to the association. The disappointment and sharpness shows in different structures, for example, lack of consideration or physical brutality, reviling, consistent analysis, offending articulations, danger of mischief, noncooperation and disguise of data, all of which make the workplace hostile, upset execution, and result in diminishing correspondence and disappointment of collaboration (Huchinson and Jackson, 2013, pp. 1-2).

In the presence of hostile work environment competent employee loss their talent and involve in different negative activities within the organization (Cooke et al., 2020). Associated outcomes related to hostile work environment are complete loss of talent of employees (Mwesigwa et al., 2020), reduce commitment level (Faeth & Kittler, 2020), retention for short term (Hui et al., 2020). Most of the studies find that hostile work

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environment is the main cause of organization failure (Pollock, 2020; Salin, 2003). There are so many problems associated with hostile work environment for example job insecurity, decrease in knowledge, work family conflict, abusive behavior, low retention (Kouchaki et al., 2012; Cartwright & Cooper, 1990; Dickmann & Watson, 2017). So on the basis of above argument we developed the following hypotheses:

H1: Hostile work environment has negative impact on talent acquisition

H2: Hostile work environment has negative impact on workforce retention
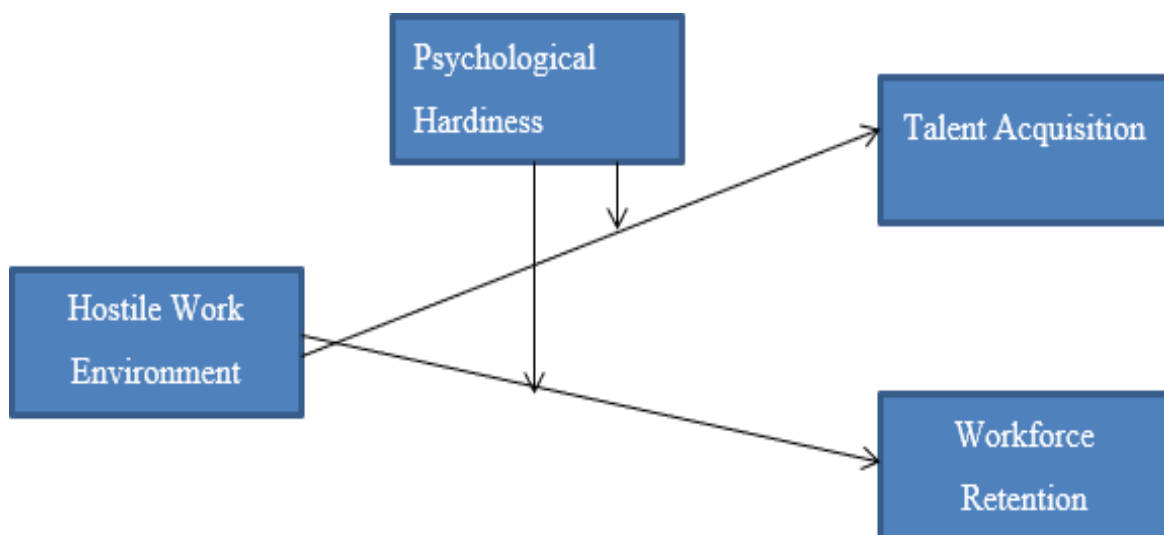
2.2 Moderating role of Psychological Hardiness

Academic hardiness theory by (Benishek et al., 2005), find that individual with high hardiness level will gain opportunity as compared to those who have low hardiness level. High level of hardiness individual has high emotional stability and considers threat as an opportunity. They are less stress oriented toward anything happened to them in their working environment (Wang et al., 2020). Workplace bullying, abusive supervision are the main reasons behind hostile work environment which further goes to create high level of organizational deviance, high level of stress, job burnout, high level of turnover intention, increase anxiety, work family conflict (Hartog & Verburg, 2004; Katou & Budhwar, 2007; Saeed et al., 2020; Nadeem & de, 2020). Scholar has of the view that due to hostile working environment it is the individual personality which stops him/her for diverting toward negative attitudes and behavior (Teng et al., 2020). Each individual is different from other while handling different problems. For example those induvial who have strong personality trait are less diverted to stress, turnover intention and anxiety while those who have low (Karababa, 2020; Hystad et al., 2009). Moreover, employees with strong hardiness level face negative things positively and respond them in a very good manner and handle it easily while those who have low hardiness level face problem not easily (Tara & Ahsan, 2020; Mazzetti, Guglielmi & Topa, 2020)

H3: Psychological hardiness moderate the relationship between Hostile work environment and talent acquisition such as talent acquisition will be high for those employees who have high hardiness level as compare for low hardiness level

H4: Psychological hardiness moderate the relationship between Hostile work environment and work retention such as work retention will be high for those employees who have high hardiness level as compare for low hardiness level.

Model of the study

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3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

According to Saunders, et al. (2009, p.109) "research approaches are mainly based on the research philosophies", whereby the "deductive approach is commonly used by researchers with traditional natural scientific views (positivism)", while "inductive approach is usually based on phenomenology (interpretivism)". Furthermore, a deductive approach is an extremely influential and intellectual approach, in which conceptual and theoretical framework is developed and tested using empirical observation (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). An "inductive research on the other hand is an approach whereby, the theory is developed from observing an empirical reality, which is typically oppose the deductive method" (Hussey and Hussey, 1997, p.210). This study is quantitative in nature and causal relationship established between variables. The study setting for this research is survey based research. A simple cross sectional approach was used in this study. Data was collected from the respondents in single wave (Reardon Denis, 2006). Employees working in health sector of Peshawar have been selected as the population for this study. This is for the reason that the researcher is a senior managerial level professional working in the health sector for quite a long time. Health sector is one of the large and most suitable sector to study such type of behavior. While in Pakistan no such type of study has been conducted in health sector. This was the reason to target health sector for the collection of data. The respondents of this research are individuals; therefore the unit of analysis is individual. The respondents for this research are those employees, both technical and non-technical and administrative staff working in organizations in the health sector of Peshawar. A total of 300 questioners was distributed among the participants and insure that this study is for research purpose and information will be highly confidential. A total of (n=200) usable response rate was obtained which the sample size of the study.

3.2 Instrument Measurement

3.2.1. Hostile Work Environment

Hostile work environment was measured using a 6-point Likert scale with options ranging from disagree very much to agree very much. There are a total of 9-items on the scale adapted from the following source:

3.2.2. Workforce Retention

The TIS-6 scale to measure the workforce retention was adapted from the following source, edited to fit the health sector of Peshawar: The 6 scale items measures the responses using semantic 6-step bipolar technique by (Osgood, 1964) ranging from not at all to completely.

3.2.3. Talent Acquisition

Talent acquisition is measured using a mix of scales from the following sources: The 6 scale items measures the responses using semantic 6-step bipolar technique by (Osgood, 1964) ranging from not at all to completely.

3.2.4. Psychological Hardiness

Psychological hardiness was measured with six items scale developed by Maddi et. (1999). An example of items is "Despite setbacks, I remain committed to accomplishing job tasks".

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4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 4.1 Correlation and Reliability

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.gender	1.45	4.70	1										
2.Age	3.01	2.20	-.170*	1									
3.Designation	3.11	0.80	-0.20	0.64**	1								
4.Tenure	3.01	2.01	-0.05	0.54**	0.62**	1							
5.Experience	3.01	2.10	-0.06	0.59**	0.62**	0.80**	1						
6.Qualification	3.01	0.37	-0.17*	0.50**	0.50**	0.39**	0.62**	1					
7.Income	4.10	0.87	-0.03	0.59**	0.79**	0.60**	0.58**	0.49**	1				
8.MeanH	3.40	0.69	-0.09	0.40**	-0.49**	-0.62**	-0.48**	-0.53**	-0.49**	**(.890)**			
9.MeanT	3.50	0.08	0.06	0.57**	0.53**	0.50**	0.60**	0.59**	0.48**	0.67**	**(.801)**		
10.MeanWR	2.93	0.08	0.06	0.08	0.02	0.20**	0.30**	0.28**	0.34**	0.32**	0.29**	**(.901)**	
11.MeanPH	3.49	0.09	0.09	0.07	0.13	0.21	0.29	0.27	0.30	0.38**	0.41**	0.53**	

The correlation table shows that hostile work environment are negatively and significantly related with talent acquisition (r= -.57, P<0.05), work retention (r= -.53, P<0.05) and psychological hardiness (r=.41, P<0.05). Talent acquisition is positively and significantly related with work retention (r= .30, P<0.05) and psychological hardiness (r=.34, P<0.05). Work retention shows positive and significant relationship with psychological hardiness (r= .53, P<0.05). Moreover, the results of reliability analysis shows that all main variables of the study have good reliability value i.e. all values are above the 0.70 which is minimum threshold for alpha value.

4.2 Regression Analysis between Hostile Work Environment and Talent Acquisition

Table 4.2 Regression Analysis between Hostile Work Environment and Talent Acquisition

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1	(Constant)	3.391	.198		17.12	.001
	MeanHWE	-.238	.070	-.236	-3.40	.000

a. Criterion Variable: MeanTA: R^2=.34, F=34.27

Table 4.2 shows the regression analysis between hostile work environment and talent acquisition. The regression results revealed that when one unit change occurred in hostile work environment it bring 34% change talent acquisition. F value is greater than 4 i.e. F= 34.27 which shows overall model is good fit. Moreover, t statistic shows (t=-3.40) which is greater than 2 but negative it also shows significant results. Coefficient shows that there is negative but significant impact of hostile work environment on talent

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acquisition. Furthermore, the level of significance shows that p value is significant i.e $p<0.05$ which indicate that hypothesis H1 hostile work environment have negative impact on talent acquisition.

4.3 Regression Analysis between Hostile Work Environment and Work Retention

Table 4.3 Regression Analysis between Hostile Work Environment and Work Retention

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.391	.149		16.04	.000
	MeanHWE	-.301	.062	-.290	-4.85	.001

a. Dependent Variable: MeanWR   **R^2= .41, F= 40.30**

Table 4.3 shows the regression analysis between hostile work environment and retention of workforce. The regression results revealed that when one unit change occurred in hostile work environment it bring 41% change retention of workforce. F value is greater than 4 i.e. F= 40.30 which shows overall model is good fit. Moreover, t statistic shows (t= -4.85) which is greater than 2 but negative it also shows significant results. Coefficient shows that there is negative but significant impact of hostile work environment on retention of workforce.

4.3 Moderating Analysis

Table 4.4 Moderating Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.391	.149		16.04	.000
	HWE	-.238	.070	-.236	-3.40	.000
	PH	.342	.043	.301	7.95	.005
	HWE*PH	.301	.041	.280	7.34	.040

a. Criterion Variable: MeanTA   **R^2= .29, F= 18.10**

Table 4.4 shows the moderating analysis of psychological hardiness on the relationship between hostile work environment and talent acquisition. For moderation analysis an interaction term was created which is the multiplication of mean value of hostile work environment and psychological hardiness i.e (HWE*PH). Moderating analysis was done for hypothesis H3 i.e *Psychological hardiness moderate the relationship between Hostile work environment and talent acquisition such as talent acquisition will be high for those employees who have high hardiness level as compare for low hardiness level.* The results revealed that employees having higher psychological hardiness will cope him/her and avoid negative behavior. Moreover, results shows that one unit change occurred in interaction term it will bring 29% change in talent acquisition. Overall model also shows good model fit. Level of significance also shows that p< 0.05 which shows that

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employees having high level of psychological hardiness will cope him/her and their behavior will not divert to negative things and will stay with their talent.

Table 4.5

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.391	.149		16.04	.000
	HWE	-.301	.062	-.290	-4.85	.001
	PH	.342	.043	.301	7.95	.005
	HWE*PH	.397	.099	.349	4.01	.05

a. Criterion Variable: MeanTA R^2= .310, F= 20.01

Table 4.5 shows the moderating analysis of psychological hardiness on the relationship between hostile work environment and retention of workforce. For moderation analysis an interaction term was created which is the multiplication of mean value of hostile work environment and psychological hardiness i.e (HWE*PH). Moderating analysis was done for hypothesis H4 i.e *Psychological hardiness moderate the relationship between Hostile work environment and talent acquisition such as retention of workforce will be high for those employees who have high hardiness level as compare for low hardiness level.* The results revealed that employees having higher psychological hardiness will cope him/her and avoid negative behavior. Moreover, results shows that one unit change occurred in interaction term it will bring 30% change in retention of workforce. Overall model also shows good model fit. Level of significance also shows that p< 0.05 which shows that employees having high level of psychological hardiness will cope him/her and their behavior will not divert to negative things and retained them in the organization for long term.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of this study was to find the impact of hostile work environment on talent acquisition and retention of workforce. This study also finds the moderating role psychological hardiness on the relationship between hostile work environment and talent acquisition and retention of workforce. This study has four hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 states that hostile work environment has negative impact on talent acquisition. Hypothesis 2 states hostile work environment has negative impact on retention of workforce. Hypothesis 3 states that psychological hardiness moderates the relationship between Hostile work environment and talent acquisition such as talent acquisition will be high for those employees who have high hardiness level as compare for low hardiness level. Hypothesis 4 states that psychological hardiness moderates the relationship between Hostile work environment and work retention such as work retention will be high for those employees who have high hardiness level as compare for low hardiness level.

This study is based on cognitive appraisal theory of stress and coping by (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). To obtain the required objectives the data for this study was collected from health sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A cross sectional method was adopted for the collection of data. To find causal relationship and hypothesize relationship a simple regression was used to find hypotheses and for moderation analysis a multiple regression analysis was used by (Barron & keny, 1984).

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5.2 Discussion

The main objective of this study is to find the impact of hostile work environment on talent acquisition and retention of workforce. This study also finds the moderating role of psychological hardiness on the relationship between hostile work environment and talent acquisition and retention of workforce. This study is based on the most renowned theory i.e. cognitive appraisal theory of stress and coping by (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The results of this study show that hostile work environment has negative and significant relationship with talent acquisition. Most of the studies shows that hostile work environment have negative effect on different work outcomes i.e. Work engagement (Abbas et al., 2017), employee performance (Alterman et al., 2013), organizational commitment (Chiller & Crisp, 2012) and talent acquisition (Cooke et al., 2020). Hypothesis 1 states that hostile work environment has negative impact on talent acquisition. The results revealed that hypothesis1 is accepted. Hypothesis states that hostile work environment has negative impact on retention of workforce. The results of the study indicate that hostile work environment has negative and significant impact on retention of workforce. Past studies also shows similar results (Crawford et al., 2020; Hystad et al., 2009; Manion, 2004). Hypothesis 3 states that Psychological hardiness moderates the relationship between Hostile work environment and talent acquisition such as talent acquisition will be high for those employees who have high hardiness level as compare for low hardiness level. The results of the study shows that psychological hardiness have significant moderating role on the relationship between hostile work environment and talent acquisition. Literature shows that those individual who have high hardiness level will easily cope him/her in the environment and their negative behavior will reduce (Mawritz et al., 2014; Mazzetti et al., 2020). Hypothesis 4 states that Psychological hardiness moderates the relationship between Hostile work environment and work retention such as work retention will be high for those employees who have high hardiness level as compare for low hardiness level. The results of the revealed that psychological hardiness have significant moderating role on the relationship between hostile work environment retention of work force. Previous studies show that employee who has high hardiness level will cope in different environment and stay for long time (Hojatkhah, 2020; Hystad et al., 2009).

5.3 Future Research Directions

Pakistan is one of the collectivist culture where people have close interaction with one another (Hosted, 1988). Most of the organizations are centralized and one men show exists in the organization. Most of the supervisor playing a hostile role and hijack the whole organization due to which employee feels uncomfortable with in the organization. The outcomes of such hostile environment lead to negative effect the employee talent and employee retention level. This study was carried out in health sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Moreover, future study can be carried out in educational sector, manufacturing sector or service sector to obtain different results. Future research can also check other factors which are harmful for organization and employee talent and retention of workforce. Other factors may be abusive supervision, work place bullying, and intimidating behavior of the leader which lead to different negative outcomes of the employees. Other moderating variables such as conscientiousness, supervisor support and strong political skills can be used. Furthermore, futures research also suggested that other underlying mechanism such as organizational cynicism, emotional exhaustion can be used as mediating variables.

It was also concluded in the study that in the health of Peshawar, workforce retention is harder than talent acquisition with hostility in the workplace. Talent may be acquired but retention of that talented workforce in a hostile environment is the real issue. Further research indicating retention strategies can be made. Furthermore, research can be carried out to discuss the retention in other sectors of economy to have a complete overview of retention strategies in the city. Additionally, the research can be replicated on a larger scale to encompass the entire country. This would indeed be a valuable addition to the body of knowledge. Social

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support provided to employees in the organization can be helpful in minimizing the impact of hostile environment on workforce retention. This can be proved through further research taking these variables into consideration for studies.

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