



ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

## An Empirical Investigation of Leader Motivating Language and Voluntary Work Behaviors in the Healthcare Sector of Pakistan

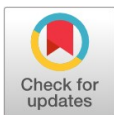
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**Abstract**— The performance of nurses and doctors is vital for the proper functioning of the healthcare system of any country and for providing quality care to patients. However, the working of the healthcare personnel in Pakistan has deteriorated over previous years, and they are engaged in more negative workplace behaviors. The current study examines the direct effect of leader-motivating language on counterproductive work behavior. The indirect mediating effect of perceived interactional justice is also examined in this relationship. Purposive sampling was used to collect the data from 440 healthcare staff working in hospitals operating in the Multan region, Pakistan. The analysis was done using SPSS and the hypotheses were tested with PROCESS macro technique. The results supported the four hypotheses developed for the study and it was proved that leader motivating language has significant impact on both counterproductive work behavior and perceived interactional justice. Moreover, interactional justice was also significantly related to counterproductive work behavior. The mediating effect of perceived interactional justice was also confirmed. The study contributes to Motivating language theory by investigating the proposed new integration of variables and establishing the underlying mechanism of interactional justice. The findings of the study are practically useful for the hospitals so that negative behaviors among staff can be reduced and overall effectiveness can be improved.

**Index Terms**— Leader motivating language, Perceived interactional justice, Counterproductive work behavior, Healthcare, Pakistan

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### Introduction

Voluntary work behavior includes Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB), which are conceptualized as part of job performance (B. Cohen, Almirall, & Chesbrough, 2016; Spector & Fox, 2010). Voluntary organizationally valued behaviors, which form Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCBs), include things like lending a hand to a colleague who is overwhelmed by work or showing up to unscheduled meetings. However, typical CWBs are defined as intentional acts that cause harm to the company, such as arriving late for work, stealing from the employer, or making fun of coworkers (B. Cohen et al., 2016). Because these appear to have the opposite consequences of their possible antecedents, scholars usually investigate them separately.

Many organizational factors influence employees' workplace behavior. In this regard, the degree to which employees believe they are treated fairly or unfairly in their organizations is a significant factor determining CWB. For example, previous studies show that employees

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who feel they are treated unfairly are more likely to participate in CWB and less in OCB. This, in turn, decreases employee productivity, which affects overall organizational productivity. Thus, organizational justice plays a critical role in determining the success or failure of an organization. i.e., whether or not workers believe they are treated fairly at work. It is noteworthy to emphasize that early research has shown that interactional justice is the best indicator of deviant behaviors in the workplace, particularly for CWB (Bies, 2015; Nadisic, 2008).

The routine leader-employee communication is the main source of justice perceptions (Bies, 2001, 2015) and is critical to both interactional justice in specific and leader performance in general (Riggio, Riggio, Salinas, & Cole, 2003). This shows that leaders must be aware of the verbal exchanges they have with their staff members. Based on the Motivating language theory put forward by Sullivan (1988), a Leader's Motivating Language (LML) is one communication method that incorporates a wide range of linguistic qualities and provides desired organizational results by stimulating positive psychological responses in the employees. The motivating language is comprised of direction- giving, empathetic and meaning- making languages. Direction – giving language clarifies the roles and tasks to be performed by employees to remove any ambiguity. Empathetic language is relationship- oriented, while the meaning- making language provides a meaning and identity to the employees via their work contributions. Motivating Language Theory (MLT) emphasizes the use of all three components of language integrated in a comprehensive way to attain complete benefit (J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2019).

The healthcare sector is important as it provides healthcare services to people so that healthy human capital can be maintained to contribute to the development of society and the country. Unfortunately, this sector faces several challenges related to the counterproductive work behaviors of its staff members (Maqbool et al., 2024; Umoren & Umoren, 2023), for which the administration must be deeply concerned. Studies show that the public health care system must be investigated to examine how positive behavior can be increased and negative behavior could be reduced among nurses, as the literature available is limited (Khan, Yasir, & Khan, 2021). Understanding factors that may reduce CWB is important as despite the growing interest in CWBs, knowledge of its determinants remains insufficient (A. Cohen & Abedallah, 2021; Kim & Jo, 2024; Ying & Cohen, 2018). RJ Singh, Sharma, Mittal, and Chand (2022) and Yue, Qin, and Men (2024) argue that leaders can boost the morale of healthcare providers, engaging them more in their work to serve humanity. Reed (2017) highlighted the significance of LML in the healthcare sector (Mittal, Mittal, & Aggarwal, 2021) and argued that LML has been mostly investigated in the education sector, while the healthcare sector has not been explored much. Other studies contend that the linkage of LML to improving several employee attitudes and behaviors has been fairly explored in the literature (J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017; M. Mayfield, Mayfield, & Walker, 2021). However, the effect of LML on CWB has not yet been studied (Alikaj & Hanke, 2021). A recent study suggested analyzing if leader language can reduce workplace destructive behaviors (Fuller, 2023). Addressing these gaps in the management literature, the current study aims to assess the role of LML in influencing an employee' voluntary work behaviors. More specifically, this study has the following objectives:

### **Research objectives**

The study has the following objectives

- To examine the impact of leader motivating language on counterproductive work behavior.
- To examine the impact of leader motivating language on perceived interactional justice.
- To examine the impact of perceived interactional justice on counterproductive work behavior.
- To examine the mediating impact of perceived interactional justice between leader motivating language and counterproductive work behavior.

The present study makes several important and original contributions to the body of knowledge. First, by broadening the breadth of employee outcomes impacted by leader-motivating languages, like CWB, the research advances the area of corporate communication in general and motivating language theory in particular. While there has been a prior study on LML and OCB, the leadership communication literature has not addressed the simultaneous analysis of OCB and CWB. Second, by revealing the previously unknown underlying mediating path in the LML-CWB process through interactional justice, the study adds to our understanding of how LML affects CWB. This linkage is important because previous studies have shown that LML can influence the perceived Interactional Justice (Alikaj & Hanke, 2021) and Interactional justice can influence CWB (Le Roy, Bastounis, & Poussard, 2012; Maqsood, Qayyum, & Tariq, 2021; Ni, Liu, & Zheng, 2021). Thirdly, this study analyzes the research model in the South Asian context to establish its generalizability. The previous studies on LML have mainly focused on Western cultures, such as the studies by (Hanke, 2021; J. Mayfield, Mayfield, & Neck, 2021; M. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2021; M. Mayfield et al., 2021); however, scholars have now recognized the importance of analyzing research in non-Western cultures as well the reason that Western culture has great differences with the Asian ones (Ahmad & Sheikh, 2024; A. Cohen & Abedallah, 2021). Hence, this study aims to contribute to the research trend by investigating this unique integration of variables among the Pakistani healthcare staff. Practically, this study is likely to address the problem of counterproductive work behavior among hospital staff, and it helps leaders/bosses recognize the importance of their verbal language, which they can strategically mold to generate positive behaviors from their followers. This strategy can also be applied to other sectors, such as education, textiles, banking, etc., where the ratio

of negative work behavior is high. This is important as such type of work behavior harms the organizations' reputation, performance, and stakeholders in the long run.

## Review of Literature

### Hypothesis development

Drawing from the Motivating language theory, this section develops the following conceptual model (figure 6.1). The model shown in figure 1 depicts the direct effects (H1, H2 & H3) of LML on CWB and PIJ, as well as the effect of PIJ on CWB. The study also tests for the mediating effect of PIJ (H4) between LML and CWB. The following section discusses the relevant literature on these variables and develops hypothesis from the lens of MLT.

### Role of leader motivating language on counterproductive work behavior

Today's changing workplace has made business activities more complex. Therefore, leaders must provide guidance, directives, and constructive criticism to keep things running smoothly and inspire their subordinates on a continuous basis. Leaders who use directive language can make difficult work easier for employees to grasp and reduce job-related ambiguities, both of which can assist in reducing negative work behaviors (Mustapha, Fauzi, Soon, Wei, & Yee, 2024). At this point, using empathetic language to express gratitude and care for the employees' well-being persuades them to work even harder and inspires them to come up with original, innovative solutions to the challenging problems being faced (H. Abu Bakar & Connaughton, 2022; Tao, Lee, Sun, Li, & He, 2022). By outlining the organizational structure, norms, culture, and values for members, a leader can motivate their team members and help them feel that their contributions matter. This is accomplished through the use of meaning-making language (H. Abu Bakar & Connaughton, 2022; Hanke, 2021). As a result, the followers may avoid doing things that are counterproductive for the organization, making it easier for them to complete tasks and go above and beyond.

Previous research indicates that leaders who fail to establish goal setting and role clarity, show little regard for others, and communicate incoherently can lead to negative conflicts, unhealthy competition, and employees who act in a punitive and hostile manner. These behaviors may be mitigated by effective communication (Holtz & Harold, 2013). In an organizational setup, communication shapes the relationship between a leader and their subordinates, which influences their behavior at work (R. Abu Bakar, Darus, Kulaseharan, & Jamaluddin, 2011). This demonstrates that low relationship quality may be reflected back in "poor or bad" conduct, such as unproductive work practices on both an individual and an organizational level. However, a strong leader-follower bond developed via good communication between leaders and followers may lessen CWB. This demonstrates how a leader's use of motivating language may inspire the workers and influence their perceptions and behaviors in a manner that may lower CWB. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

**H1:** There is a significant relationship between leader motivating language and Counter Productive Work Behavior (CWB)

### Role of leader motivating language on perceived interactional justice

By giving followers sufficient and correct explanations of the various organizational procedures, leaders can also utilize motivational language to improve followers' perceptions of informational fairness. By using language that provides instructions, leaders clarify the information that staff members need to know in order to complete their tasks. This eliminates uncertainty, facilitating staff members' ability to perform efficiently and perceive a better standard of informational justice. By using language that has meaning, leaders can have informal conversations with staff members about the organization's norms, values, and vision. This helps the staff realize that they have access to important organizational information and feel like they are involved in decision-making, which improves the staff members' perceptions of informational justice. The application of an empathic strategy and inspirational language happens when followers learn about the poor choices they have made. These arguments imply that interactions between leaders and their subordinates have the power to alter subordinates' perceptions of interactional justice in a number of ways. Previous research has demonstrated a substantial relationship between leader communication and interactional justice, which is consistent with these findings (Karam et al., 2019; Tran & Choi, 2019). A favorable correlation between LML and interactional fairness was discovered in another study as well (Alikaj & Hanke, 2021). In light of this conversation, we suggest that the LML can enhance perceptions of interactional justice. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

**H2:** There is a positive relationship between LML and perceived interactional justice.

**Role of perceived interactional justice on counterproductive work behavior**

Studies show that the workers' psychological resources and degree of dedication to their jobs are compromised when they sense reduced levels of interactional justice. Consequently, individuals feel less responsible, transgress their social norms, and as a result, they don't respond well. Employees become irritated, lose energy, and become less motivated to work when they believe that interactions are unfair (Jam et al., 2011; Saari, Koivisto, Hintsu, Hänninen, & Hallikainen, 2022). They may become disengaged from productive work and show increased CWB in such a setting. According to scholars, CWBs result from injustice, which could alter their perceptions (A. Cohen & Abedallah, 2021). Therefore, behaviors like workplace deviance, sabotage, and aggressiveness are encouraged by weaker perceptions of organizational fairness. Prior studies substantiate inverse correlations observed between PIJ and CWB (Dar & Rahman, 2022; Ni et al., 2021). Therefore, we argue that the higher the perceived interactional justice, the lower the CWB will be, implying a negative association between them. So, we make the following hypothesis:

**H3:** There is a positive relationship between perceived interactional justice and counterproductive work behavior.

**Mediation of perceived interactional justice**

Previous research has demonstrated that using LML with subordinates affects their views of interactional justice and may have a significant impact on their work behaviors, such as CWB. Higher degrees of interactional justice are recognized when leaders treat their subordinates with integrity and respect and when they show them enough regard for their rights and interests. As a result, employees feel obligated, and they frequently respond favorably by becoming more engaged at work. One explanation for this might be the rise in followers' self-esteem brought about by the leader's fair interactions with them, which in turn inspires them on an internal level (Blader & Tyler, 2003), and they may exhibit less CWB. On the other hand, when leaders do not use effective motivating language, lower levels of PIJ can result, which may lead to more negative social exchange and higher CWB. This indicates that PIJ may serve as the underlying path between LML and CWB. Therefore, we propose the following mediation hypothesis:

**H4:** Perceived interactional justice mediates the relationship between LML and CWB.

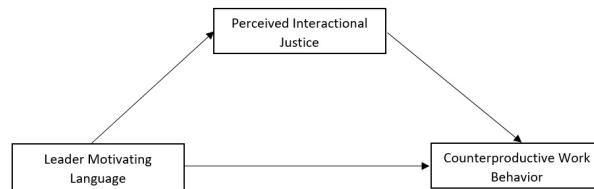


Fig. 1 Conceptual model

**Methodology**

**Research design**

The study uses a descriptive research design with deductive approach and quantitative methodological choice. The research strategy for this study is survey as it allows to collect quantitative data required for a cross-sectional time horizon.

**Population, sampling technique, and sample size**

The healthcare personnel employed by hospitals is the study's target population. For research purposes, we focused on the hospitals in Multan district, which forms the most densely populous district in the entire South Punjab region with a staggering population of over 5.5 million and a density of 1400 per km<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, there is a need to assess the work behavior of healthcare staff in this area. Sampling was done in two phases, with the initial phase included selecting 8 largest hospitals in the Multan district on a convenience basis, which include Buch Hospital, Nishter Hospital, City Hospital, Fatima Medical Centre, Mukhtar A. Sheikh Hospital, Bakhtawar Amin Hospital, Ibn-e-Sina Hospital and the Institute of Cardiology. In the next phase, purposive sampling was done as sample respondents were chosen on purpose from among those who have worked under a supervisor or leader for at least a year. This sample included doctors, nurses, and other healthcare staff. The sample size was decided using the recommendation of Haier et al. (2017) that at least a sample size above 300 must be taken for conducting factor analysis. Therefore, in order to get high accuracy in the results, the sample size was further increased to 450. Hence, overall, 450 questionnaires were personally administered, and 440 were received back, which were included in the sample. The data was collected over a time period of 30 days, in which the participants were contacted, a questionnaire was distributed, and the data was received back.

## Data collection and analysis

The data on the study variables was collected using scales adopted from previously established and validated scales and were rated on 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree), as given below:

Table I  
Measurement scales

Study Variables	Scale Developed By	No. of Items
LML	(J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2007)	9
PIJ	(Colquitt, 2001)	9
CWB	(Dalal, Lam, Weiss, Welch, & Hulin, 2009)	8

After collection, the data was entered into SPSS and was checked for missing values. This scrutiny revealed that the data had only 5 missing values. The mean substitution method was used to replace the missing values and was recommended for data sets containing a small number of missing values (Hair Jr, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Later, the data analysis was done with the SPSS (Statistical Procedures for Social Sciences) version in three stages. The first stage includes sample demographics in terms of age, gender, and experience, while the second stage involves sample statistics, such as Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, Kurtosis, and reliability. The third stage includes hypothesis testing with correlation and regression, while mediation analysis is done via PROCESS macro.

## Research Results

### Sample demography

The sample demographics included their gender, age, education, overall experience, and duration of work with the current supervisor. The table shows that the sample was free from gender disparity as almost 46% of the sample is male and 54% are female. The sample comprised mainly of young and middle-aged people, mostly from 20 to 40 years, as 41.4% of the sample falls within the age group of 20 to 30 and 40% within 31 to 40 years. Only 17.7% of the sample belonged to the age bracket of 41-50 years, while just 78 participants were above 51 years old. The majority (62%) of the sample participants were married. 66.4% of the sample hold a Bachelor's degree, while the remaining had a Master's and other qualifications. The sample had a good experience, as shown in the table, and most of them (43%) had worked with their current supervisor for almost 6-10 years, which shows that they are in a better position to rate their leader.

Table II  
Distribution of employment

Items	Code	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	202	45.9%
	Female	238	54.1 %
	Total	440	100%
Age(Years)	20 to30	182	41.4 %
	31 to 40	176	40.0 %
	51 and Above	4	.9%
	Total	440	100%
Marital Status	Married	269	62%
	Unmarried, single/ divorced	171	38%
	Total	440	100%
Education	Bachelors	292	66.4
	Masters	109	24.8%
	Others	39	8.9%
	Total	440	100%
Overall Experience	1-5	65	14.8%
	6-10	150	34.1%
	11-15	178	40.5%
	16 and Above	47	10.7%
	Total	440	100%
Duration with Supervisor	1-5	81	18.4%
	6-10	191	43.4%
	11-15	124	28.2%
	16 and Above	44	10.0%
	Total	440	100%

**Descriptive statistics and reliability analysis**

Table 3 presents the results of descriptive statistics and measures of normality. The means and standard deviation of the variables are close to 3, which shows that the sample mainly agreed with the statement of items related to study variables. The table also shows that the data seems to be free from skewness and kurtosis, as its values fall within the acceptable range of +3. As can be seen from the table, Cronbach's alpha value of the variables ranged from 0.862 to 0.934. According to the criteria, the value of Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.7 indicates high internal consistency, and this indicates that the scales are highly reliable.

Table III  
Descriptive statistics & reliability

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach Alpha
LML	1.00	5.00	3.3124	.70139	-.662	.443	.862
PIJ	1.00	5.00	3.1460	.90165	-.573	-.315	.934
CWB	1.00	5.00	2.7690	1.07940	.113	-.969	.918

**Correlation and regression**

Overall, four hypotheses were tested in the study. The first three employed regression techniques for this purpose. Table 4 presents the correlation among variables and regression results. Any value of correlation (*r*) less than 0.3 means weak, between 0.3 and 0.6 means moderate, and *r* above 0.6 indicates a high correlation. The direction of the relationship is determined by the + or - sign with the magnitude of correlation values. Table 4 shows the existence of a moderate positive (+.497) correlation of LML with PIJ, while moderate negative correlations (-.432) of PIJ and LML exist with CWB, indicating a negative relationship between the two. This shows that while LML promotes PIJ, PIJ itself lessens the incidence of CWB. LML and CWB are also found to have a negative moderate correlation (-.316).

Table IV  
Correlation & regression analysis

	LML	PIJ	CWB	Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
LML	1	.497**	-.316**	H1	LML→CWB	-.316	-6.969	0.000
PIJ	.497**	1	-.432**	H2	LML→PIJ	.497	12.002	0.000
CWB	-.316**	-.432**	1	H3	PIJ→CWB	-.432	-10.020	0.000

H1 hypothesized a negative relationship between LML and CWB, and through regression analysis, it was found that LML has a significant negative relationship with CWB ( $\beta = -.316, p = .000$ ). Thus, H1 is fully supported. H2 tested the positive relationship between LML and PIJ; results revealed that LML has a significant positive relationship with PIJ ( $\beta = .497, p = .000$ ). These results provide full support for H2. The negative relationship between PIJ and CWB was hypothesized in H3, and it was found that PIJ has a negative relationship with CWB ( $\beta = -.432, p = .000$ ). Thus, H3 is fully supported. The significance of the results is confirmed by *p*-value equal to zero. Hence, the three direct relationships hypothesized (H1, H2 & H3) in the study found full support.

**Mediation analysis**

In the present study, the fourth hypothesis was related to the mediating role of PIJ in the impact of LML on CWB, and it was tested through the bootstrapping method using Hayes and Preacher (2014) process macro. This mediation approach is considered more effective than Sobel's test for assessing the indirect effects. The mediation model was examined using model 4 of PROCESS macro, and a 95% confidence interval of the parameter estimates was obtained by running a resampling 5,000 times

Table V  
Mediation analysis

Effect of LML on CWB	Effect	SE	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i> -value	LLCI	ULCI
Total	-.4862	.0698	-6.9690	.000	-.6233	-.3491
Direct	-.2068	-.2068	-2.7245	.0067	-.3560	-.0576
Indirect	-.2794	.0448			-.3697	-.1945

*N*=440, LLCI=lower level confidence level, ULCI=upper level confidence level

Table 5 revealed that the indirect effect of PIJ in the relationship of LML with CWB is significant as zero falls outside the 95% confidence level (-.3697, -.1945). It was also shown that the direct relationship between LML and CWB is significant (-.3560, .0576); thus, H4 is also

partially supported. The *t*-values comply with the 2-*t* rule, which states that the *t*-value must be more than +1.96 for significant results. As shown in the table, the two *t*-values are above 1.96. The *p*-value is close to zero, which also confirms the significance. The total effect size is negative and moderate (-.4862). Here, both direct and indirect effects are significant and in the same direction; therefore, complementary partial mediation is established. Therefore, we can confirm that PIJ partially mediates the relationship between LML and CWB.

**Discussion**

With the objective to empirically articulate the direct and indirect effects of LML on CWB via PIJ, the study developed four hypotheses (as shown in the table below). The empirical findings indicate acceptance of these hypotheses. The first hypothesis indicates a significant relationship between LML and CWB. To the best of my knowledge, no study has investigated the direct and indirect effects of this relationship so far. Hence, the results of hypotheses H1 and H2 are unique and are the novelty of the study. However, previous studies have proved a positive effect between LML and PIJ (Alikaj & Hanke, 2021), which supports the results of hypothesis H2. Further, PIJ and CWB are negatively related to each other, which has been proved empirically in early studies, such as (Dar & Rahman, 2022; Macias, Chapman, & Rai, 2024; Maqsood et al., 2021). This is in conformity with our findings of hypothesis H3.

Table VI  
Results of hypothesis testing

Sr. No.	Effect	Hypothesized Relationships	Result
H1	Direct Effect	There is a significant relationship between Leader Motivating Language (LML) and Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)	Accepted
H2	Direct Effect	There is a significant relationship between LML and Perceived Interactional Justice (PIJ)	Accepted
H3	Indirect Effect	There is a significant relationship between Perceived Interactional Justice and CWB.	Accepted
H4	Indirect Effect	Perceived informational justice mediates the relationship between LML and CWB.	Accepted

**Research implications**

This study has an important contribution to theory and practice. Theoretically, it has added to the Motivating Language Theory (MLT) by establishing LML as a determinant of yet another variable, i.e., CWB. It is important to note that the direct effect of CWB and the indirect effect via PIJ have not been tested before. This linkage is important because previous studies have shown that LML can influence the perceived Interactional Justice (Alikaj & Hanke, 2021) and Interactional justice can influence CWB (Le Roy et al., 2012; Maqsood et al., 2021; Ni et al., 2021). Secondly, this particular study focuses on the healthcare sector as it is gaining dominance, especially after the COVID-19 era. In the past, the main focus of LML studies was on the education and tourism sectors. Finally, this research examined LML and PIJ as determinants of CWB in a traditional South Asian setting for generalizability, which was focused mainly on the Western countries in the previous literature, such as the studies by Hanke (2021), J. Mayfield et al. (2021), and M. Mayfield et al. (2021).

Furthermore, this study offers managers and leaders in businesses generally, as well as the healthcare industry specifically, useful insights into how to use effective communication to counteract employees' deviant behavior. In order to realize its significance and advantages for the workplace, businesses must fund training and workshops for managers to hone their abilities in employing motivating language when speaking to their subordinates. In addition, leaders need to understand the advantages of honing their ability to coordinate the use of all three types of motivating language as needed. This study has implications for Pakistan's healthcare industry, as the industry faces a number of work-related issues related to employees' counterproductive behaviors (Yasir & Jan, 2023). The administration is deeply concerned about these issues, and leaders must play a major role in addressing them. Research indicates that there is a dearth of information regarding OCB and CWB among Pakistani public health care providers, necessitating more study (Yasir & Jan, 2023). This is extremely important since better health outcomes for Pakistan's populace are closely related to the productivity of hospital employees, including physicians and nurses, and the general efficacy of healthcare facilities (Shafique, Ahmad, & Kalyar, 2020).

**Limitations and future recommendations**

In spite of the contributions this study makes, future scholars may address several caveats in their research, the acknowledgement of which is necessary for supporting the research findings' validity, transferability, and generalizability. Firstly, the study is based on the theoretical underpinnings of MLT, whereas future scholars may ascertain how other leadership theories may contribute to the use of LML, such as how leaders with different leadership styles may be using LML in different ways. Secondly, the model may be enhanced by incorporating other

variables, such as the impact of LML on OCB may be tested, which will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of employees' attitudinal and behavioral responses to leaders' use of LML. Thirdly, the researchers may utilize experimental or longitudinal designs to understand the causality among study variables. Next, the sample size may be increased so as to achieve higher generalizability of the findings. The sample may even be subjected to interviews or focus groups to further supplement the research findings. Finally, we recommend future studies to replicate the model in other sectors/ industries to test and expand its applicability. In the future, scholars may even carry out a cross-comparison between various sectors to check if the nature of the job/ industry causes a variation in how leaders use LML or how employees perceive their leader's use of LML.

### **Conclusion**

The study aims to test the direct effects of leader-motivating language on counterproductive work behavior and perceived interactional justice. The mediation role of perceived interactional justice is also tested for its indirect effect between the two. In addition to these, the study also assessed whether perceived interactional justice is related to counterproductive work behavior or not. Four hypotheses were developed and tested with a sample drawn from the healthcare sector of Pakistan. 440 nurses, doctors, and other staff from hospitals in the Multan district were selected as the samples. The data collected was empirically tested with SPSS latest version. The data analysis comprised sample demographics, sample statistics, reliability, correlation, regression, and PROCESS macro techniques. The four study hypotheses were accepted as the results so obtained were significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that a leader's use of motivating language enhances the perceptions of interactional justice among workers, which, in turn, reduces the chances of counterproductive work behavior. Negative behaviors are also discouraged when leaders carefully use their verbal language in a way that is motivating for the employees, and as a result, they engage in more positive work attitudes and behaviors.

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