Fostering Inclusion And Innovation Through Anti-Violence HR Practices Among Female Employees: Is Despotic Leadership a Blessing In Disguise?

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(2024)

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A thesis submitted to the National University of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad,

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in
Human Resource Management

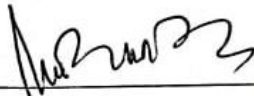Supervisor: Dr. Mumtaz Ali Memon

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This is to certify that the research work presented in this thesis, **"Fostering inclusion and innovation through anti-violence HR practices among female employees: Is despotic leadership a blessing in disguise?"** was conducted by **Ms. Eisha Razia** under the supervision of **Dr. Mumtaz Ali Memon**. No part of this thesis has been submitted anywhere else for any other degree. This thesis is submitted to the **Department of Management & HR, NUST Business School, National University of Sciences & Technology, Islamabad, Pakistan** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Human Resources & Management, Department of Management & HR, NUST Business School, National University of Sciences & Technology, Islamabad, Pakistan.**

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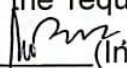Name of Dean/HoD: Dr. Naukhez Sarwar   Signature _____

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

The study's objectives are fourfold. Firstly, it examines the impact of Anti-Violence Human Resource Practices (AVHRPs) on perceived workplace inclusion. Secondly, it investigates whether perceived workplace inclusion can enhance frugal innovation. Thirdly, it examines the mediating role of perceived workplace inclusion in connecting AVHRPs and frugal innovation. Lastly, it investigates the moderating role of despotic leadership between AVHRPS and perceived workplace inclusion. Using a purposive sampling technique, data were collected from female employees working in service sector companies (hospitality, IT, and Telecom). A total of 181 samples were utilized for the final data analysis. Both procedural and statistical techniques were employed to minimize common method bias. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), using Smart PLS 4.0, was employed for hypothesis testing. MOVI and environmental security were found to have a strong influence on workplace inclusion, whereas AVT does not have a positive influence on workplace inclusion. Moreover, despotic leadership was also found to have a positive impact on workplace inclusion, further leading to innovative outcomes. This study is among the first to link AVHRPs, workplace inclusion, and frugal innovation among female service sector employees, which is absent in the existing literature. Furthermore, it extends beyond the current depiction of despotic leadership and demonstrates its positive efficacy in specific contexts. The study's findings offer valuable recommendations for policymakers in the service sector to thoughtfully employ HR functions that enhance workplace inclusion and frugal innovation among female employees.

Keywords: Anti-violence HR practices, despotic leadership, frugal innovation, purposive sampling, training, workplace inclusion

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LIST OF SYMBOLS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND ACRONYMS

AET	Affective Events Theory
AVHRP	Anti-Violence Human Resource Practices
AVT	Anti-Violence Training
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CIUL	Confidence Interval Upper Level
CILL	Confidence Interval Lower Level
CR	Composite Reliability
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IT	Information Technology
MOVI	Management Of Violent Incidents
NAVTTC	National Vocational and Technical Training Commission
P@SHA	Pakistan Software Houses Association for IT and ITeS
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Square Structural Equational Modeling
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
R^2	Coeffecient of Determination
f^2	Effect Size
p	Statistical Significance

CHAPTER 01 : INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of Study

With globalization and technological breakthroughs on the rise, organizations are becoming more heterogeneous than ever. However, having a heterogeneous workplace is one thing; making it work is another. The process of inclusion, by integrating diverse perspectives of individuals into one unique blend, is how an organization embraces innovation and growth. Workplace inclusion is experienced when "employees feel part of a group or an organization and have access to information, resources, networks, and security that gives them the capacity to influence decision-making" (Jerónimo et al., 2022, p. 133). Workplace inclusion leads to a greater likelihood of outperformance on profitability (Fyle et al., 2020) and increases employee health and well-being (Pal et al., 2022). A positive perception of workplace inclusion also boosts employees' organizational commitment (Mousa & Puhakka, 2019), and job satisfaction (Brimhall & Mor Barak, 2018), and reduces employees' turnover rate (Panicker & Sharma, 2020).

The business rationale for including diversity and inclusion (D&I) in strategic visions is something that organizations are realizing more and more (Grosser et al., 2022). In a report by McKinsey, it has been highlighted that businesses with greater diversity are now far more inclined than ever to outperform non-diverse businesses in terms of profitability (Fyle et al., 2020). The same report also signifies that organizations with executive teams consisting of over 30 percent women substantially have more chances to outperform the ones with women between 10-30 percent. These businesses then in turn are more likely to perform better than those with fewer to no female executives. Furthermore, a report by Forbes highlighted that companies that emphasize equality are more likely to draw and keep top talent, which results in a more skilled and competent workforce (Foutty, 2023). However, in the race for inclusion and equality, no organization can thrive unless its leadership truly exemplifies these values by walking the talk. As Foutty, (2023) emphasizes in a report by Forbes, the leaders advocating gender equality empower women to thrive leading to higher engagement, higher levels of well-being, and job satisfaction among women. Moreover, research has found that inclusion can enhance creativity in the team (Li et al., 2017); employees feel easy and safe to contribute their diverse perspectives in an inclusive climate. Therefore, workplace inclusion is typically characterized as one of the most important goals of the 2030 agenda.

Workplace inclusion entails a broad notion encompassing organizations' continuous and deliberate efforts to foster a climate where each employee, irrespective of their identity, background, or skill level, has a strong sense of respect, empowerment, and belonging (Ganesh, 2023). There is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to creating an inclusive workplace. Developing an inclusive outlook calls for a tailored approach because every organization is unique (Boatman, 2021). Organizations can put in place strategies incorporating inclusion, thus reflecting commitment at the most fundamental level. Companies such as Google, for example, are providing allyship training to its workforce, inspiring them to actively assist and support their colleagues from groups that are underrepresented (Ganesh, 2023), such as women. Furthermore, as highlighted by Forbes, when organizations gives priority to improving experiences of women in the workplace, they can unlock new possibilities for organizational prosperity and societal advancements, further stimulating the path to gender equality (Foutty, 2023). Besides this, through the implementation of best practices for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), organizations can create a more inclusive and equitable work environment (Usanmaz, 2023). The contemporary workplaces are shifting their focus more and more towards promoting diversity, by hiring females. Thus, armed with the right HR practices, organizations can unleash the potential of inclusivity, and undertake an innovative journey towards building an equitable work environment for women.

The factors such as employees' experiences at the workplace also play a part in creating an inclusive culture. Per the report by Express Tribune, the experiences of violence and psychological harassment are the most common worldwide (Agency, 2022), especially among women. According to a report by International Rescue Committee (2023), all types of gender-based violence disproportionately affects women and girls. Such experiences negatively impact the notion of inclusivity. Measures such as social support and work breaks, etc. provide insights into the steps to combat violence, but their effectiveness is limited to individual and interpersonal level. An important step that the organizations can take to deal with this issue is to assess the Anti-Violence HR Practices (AVHRPs). The presence of AVHRPs can influence the way employees feel about their work environment. Thus, these employees are more likely to assess that the organizational environment is aligned to their needs (Shao et al., 2023), promoting an inclusive workplace.

When workers feel valued, included, and appreciated, they are more likely to give full attention to work, contributing their best efforts, and cooperate successfully (Usanmaz, 2023). When an organization promotes a safe an inclusive workplace environment for the employees

irrespective of their gender, it nurtures their ability to contribute to their full potential. Employees who feel the sense of belongingness can freely voice their thoughts and concerns without worrying about being overlooked or victimized (Boatman, 2021). Furthermore, when employees from different backgrounds work together, they contribute a variety of perspectives, ideas, and methods to problem-solving, which encourages creativity and can lead to organizational innovation. As per the report by Boatman (2021), organization with the inclusive climate has a 6 times more probability to be agile and innovative. The presence of diverse perspectives can spur innovative solutions that are cost-efficient and adapted to local requirements, eventually raising the standard of living.

This phenomenon, which is called as frugal innovation, is especially important for developing countries like Pakistan. Pakistan is one of the countries with poor economic conditions, and the lesser contribution and involvement of women in the organizations is one of the reasons for that. This aligns with the need for the organizations to harness the inclusiveness for frugal innovation. This further creates the need to focus on the inclusion of women to play a part in bringing innovation and economic growth. The report by Mumtaz (2023) published on Express Tribune also supports this stance by highlighting that the involvement of women in the labor force can significantly impact the economy. Furthermore, the performance excellence is not contingent on gender; as a result, increased involvement can eventually generate innovative outcomes.

Besides this, leadership receives a great deal of attention in the conversation around creating inclusivity. As per a report by Forbes, leaders should embrace a fresh perspective – one that has the potential to make an influence (Foutty, 2023). Furthermore, they ought to regard themselves as ambassadors for gender equality and act in a way that encourages their organizations and employees to do likewise. However, in societies like Pakistan, high-power distance culture prevails. This implies that people tend to follow their leaders when they impose strict obedience to rules and regulations. For example, despotic leadership exerts strict control over the followers and seeks utter compliance without considering any recommendations or ideas from them (Zhou et al., 2021). This sort of leadership behavior dictates the tone of the company. Thus, in such leadership environments where employees are obligated to show strict compliance, it can act as an impetus for promoting gender equality in the organization, eventually contributing to a more inclusive workplace.

Workplace inclusion benefits all organization members from top to bottom. Additionally, we assert that in high-power distance and collectivist societies like Pakistan, people exhibit

heightened vigilance when leaders enforce strict compliance. Workplace inclusion is a top priority for all leaders, including despotic ones. Therefore, it is believed that if leaders consider workplace inclusion a top priority, they will take all necessary measures to ensure it, whether through coercion or incentives. Particularly, this will create a synergistic impact with AVHRPS to further enhance inclusiveness at work. Overall, the findings of the present study will provide valuable insights for both academics and practitioners to create a workplace that fosters frugal innovation while being inclusive.

1.1 Service Sector of Pakistan

According to the Global Gender Gap Report (2023) by World Economic Forum (WEF), taking in to account the continuous data from 2006-2023, 68.6% of gender gap has been closed till now. However, according to the report, the rate at which the gender gap is closing is going to take another 131 years to close the gap. As far as Pakistan is concerned, it ranks at 142 out of 146 countries included in the Global Gender Gap Report, doing only better than Afghanistan and Iran (Ahmed, 2023). In a report by Mumtaz (2023), on Express Tribune, the labor force participation of females has been highlighted to have a positive impact on the economic growth of the country. Pakistan currently stands at the worst stage of economic condition, with the GDP growth of only 0.29% for the fiscal year ending in June, 2023. Among all other sectors of Pakistan, service sector is the biggest contributor to GDP. However, in case of Pakistan, 48.5% population of the country is female whereas only 23.31% is a part of labor force.

Notably, service sector has (17-18) % of females (Trading Economics, 2023). Moreover, Asian Development Bank (2022) highlights lack of basic facilities/services for female employees in the sector. P@SHA (2022) shows that the industry has only 16% of diversity ratio when it comes to women. This shows that women are seriously underrepresented. Thus, less female participation in labor force is not surprising as many factors like unpleasant work environment, harassment, bullying lead to low female participation (Asadullah et al., 2021). Reports have also highlighted workplace bullying in the sector (Malik & Sattar, 2022). Cheema & Jamal (2022) highlights that formation of poor HR polices also increases problems for women in the sector, which results in lesser pay, workplace sexual harassment, fewer benefits and privileges, etc. for the females in the service sector (Moss, 2002). Cheema & Jamal (2022) signifies that workplace discrimination on the basis of gender is a major issue in service sector of Pakistan. The same report also emphasizes that discrimination and unfair treatment against women are

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posing a threat to the growth and development, having substantial negative impact on country's economy. Thus, the present study is timely as it not only addresses these issues and recommends whether implementation of certain HR functions can increase female employees' perception of inclusion at workplace.

1.2 Research Gaps

1.2.1 AVHRPs and Workplace Inclusion

It remains unclear whether and how AVHRPS can foster workplace inclusion. These practices encompass strategies to address workplace violence, including incident management, Anti-Violence Training (AVT), and environmental security (Shao et al., 2023). Such practices have demonstrated a reduction in workplace violence, improvement in emotional well-being, and enhancement of organizational and career commitment (Shao et al., 2023). Previous research has explored different HR practice sets that contribute to enhanced workplace inclusion. For instance, diversity recruitment and education practices foster inclusivity (Atkinson et al., 2022). Similarly, age-inclusive HR practices facilitate knowledge sharing among older employees (Fasbender & Gerpott, 2022). Despite all the studies on the role of HR practices in creating a perception of workplace inclusion at the individual level, the literature lacks the importance of a few. To the best of the author's knowledge, there's a dearth of research on the importance of AVHRPs in determining workplace inclusion. Henceforth, the preceding gap has been addressed in the present study.

1.2.2 Workplace Inclusion and Frugal Innovation

Frugal innovation has been a center of attention for researchers for quite a few years now. Literature has identified various antecedents and consequences for frugal innovation and how it plays a role in economic growth whilst the availability of fewer resources. Nassani et al. (2022) have studied the role of the Internet of Things (IoT) and digital platforms in bringing frugal innovation. Another study by Cai et al. (2019) studied the impact of institutional leverage capability, bricolage capability, and perceived dysfunctional capability on frugal innovation. Moreover, Hossain et al. (2022) conducted an in-depth study to develop a comprehensive framework and determined various antecedents of frugal innovation including personal drive,

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business drive, and social drive. In addition, many other management related constructs have also been discussed with regard to frugal innovation, including organizational knowledge management capability, organizational collaborative capability, organizational learning capability, and entrepreneurial innovation (Berndt et al., 2023; Chatterjee et al., 2021). However, the literature still lacks an investigation into the role of workplace inclusion in fostering frugal innovation among female employees. Hence, the present study addresses this gap and responds to the call for research (Gu, 2022) by investigating the relationship between workplace inclusion and frugal innovation.

1.2.3 Mediating Role of Workplace Inclusion

There is a vast amount of literature available in the context of workplace inclusion, at both individual and organizational levels. Workplace inclusion has been studied with various antecedents and outcome variables. For example, Innstrand & Grødal (2022) illuminated the various antecedents including social support leader, empowering leadership and fairness of the leader, and consequences of workplace inclusion including organizational commitment, work engagement, work-home conflict, and work-home facilitation. Furthermore, Sharma & Panicker (2022) studied workplace inclusion in a mediated relationship between workforce diversity and intention to quit. Perceived inclusion has also been studied as a mediator between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior (Bagorogoza et al., 2022). However, the literature lacks the mediating role of workplace inclusion in relationship with a few variables such as AVHRPs and frugal innovation. Thus, the present study addresses the mediating role of workplace inclusion in relationship with the preceding variables.

1.2.4 Moderating Role of Despotic Leadership

The moderating role of despotic leadership between AVHRPS and workplace inclusion is another gap being addressed in the present study. Despotic leaders exert control over followers and build a high-power distance relationship (Naseer et al., 2016). Simply put, a despotic leader prioritizes and prefers their own interests over those of employees through autocratic behavior. Despite extensive literature on leadership styles, the importance of despotic leadership in employees' behavioral and attitudinal outcomes, particularly among female employees, has received little attention to date. Despotic leadership has been studied as a negatively considered

moderator between various variables, such as supervisor stress and subordinates' unethical behavior (Shah et al., 2023), as well as coworker support and job stress (De Clercq et al., 2020). Moreover, it has been studied as an antecedent of followers' emotional exhaustion (Saeed et al., 2022), job satisfaction (Tufail et al., 2023), and project efficiency (Khan et al., 2022). All these studies have demonstrated the negative impact of despotic leadership. The present study is unique as it conceptualizes the positive impact of despotic leadership. Mukarram et al. (2021) explained that "A despotic ruler can be compassionate if he rules for the benefit of the subjects" (p. 40). Hence, the current study addresses this gap by focusing on the positive role of despotic leadership.

1.3 Problem Statement

The aspiration for an inclusive workplace remains a global challenge. A recent report published by Forbes highlights that women continue to deal with the repercussions of the pandemic and its growing difficulties, having a harder time in the labor market than their male counterparts (Green, 2022). Similarly, a recent report by Deloitte (2023) on the *global outlook for women at work* reveals that more females have exited organizations in the past 12 months compared to the combined total for the years 2020 and 2021, resulting in serious consequences for these organizations. Consequently, organizations continue to grapple with progressing beyond mere diversity initiatives. This, compounded by multifaceted and interconnected crises like rising living expenses and the global pandemic, has further impeded or postponed progress towards gender parity.

According to the Global Gender Gap Report (2022), the gender gap in 2022 has narrowed to 68.1%. At this rate, it will take 132 years for organizations globally to achieve gender parity. This is due to organizations failing to put sufficient effort into managing diversity and inclusiveness at work. As a result, numerous reports of non-inclusive behaviors in the workplace have emerged. Deloitte (2023), for instance, reveals that 44% of women have reported experiencing non-inclusive workplace behaviors. Of this 44%, 88% of the behaviors included micro aggressions. Similarly, "Women in the Workplace 2022" report by McKinsey highlights that for every 100 men who are promoted from entry-level roles to management positions, only 87 women are provided with such opportunities, leading to inequality (Krivkovich, 2022). Furthermore, an analysis conducted jointly by Gallup and the International Labor Organization (ILO) found that over 1 in 5 employees (approximately 23%) have reported

experiencing harassment and violence in the workplace. These reports unmistakably demonstrate a lack of inclusiveness at work, particularly among female employees. These statistics also depict that merely having diversity is not enough.

The service sector is no exception in this regard. Although Pakistan's service sector is significantly contributing to the country's GDP, several issues hinder its full progress. According to the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, a gender gap is a prominent concern where Pakistan's performance falls short (Amin, 2022). Reports of workplace violence have emerged in the Telecom sector (Malik & Sattar, 2022). Furthermore, women are underrepresented in service sector organizations (Tahir et al., 2021; P@SHA, 2022; NAVTTC, 2018). It is due to an unfavorable work environment, harassment, bullying, leading to low female participation (Asadullah et al., 2021). Formation of poor HR policies also creates problems for women in the service sector (Cheema & Jamal, 2022), resulting in lower pay, sexual harassment, fewer benefits, and other disadvantages for females (Moss, 2002).

Nonetheless, as a global community, we must strive for impactful progress instead of settling for gradual improvements. As highlighted by Forbes, in an age characterized by rapid technological developments, pioneering discoveries, and instantaneous communications on a global level, the astounding prediction that gender equality is not just slow and unequal but that it will still take 132 years to close the gap, should spur global leaders to immediate action (Foutty, 2023). Moreover, considering the intricacy of the issues being faced by women including bullying and violence, there is a dire need for the organizations in the service sector to establish AVHRPs aiming at managing the incidents of violence, providing training and safe spaces to work. This will also solve the issue of low female participation, thus resulting in their increased involvement leading to innovative outcomes. Hence, the present study is timely as these issues, as mentioned earlier, call for a prompt response.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To investigate the impact of anti-violence HR practices (management of violent incidents, anti-violence training and environmental security) on perceived workplace inclusion among female employees in the service sector of Pakistan.
2. To examine the impact of perceived workplace inclusion on frugal innovation among female employees in the service sector of Pakistan.

3. To investigate the mediating role of perceived workplace inclusion between anit-violence HR practices and frugal innovation among female employees in the service sector of Pakistan.

4. To investigate the moderating effect of despotic leadership between anti-violence HR practices and perceived workplace inclusion among female employees in the service sector of Pakistan.

1.5 Research Questions

1. Do anti-violence HR practices (management of violent incidents, antiviolence training and environmental security) have an influence on perceived workplace inclusion among female employees in the service sector of Pakistan?

2. Does perceived workplace inclusion have an influence on frugal innovation among female employees in the service sector of Pakistan?

3. Does perceived workplace inclusion mediate the relationship between anti-violence HR practices and frugal innovation among female employees in the service sector of Pakistan?

4. Does despotic leadership moderate the relationship between anit-violence HR practices and perceived workplace inclusion among female employees in the service sector of Pakistan?

1.6 Operational Definitions

1.6.1 Anti-Violence HR Practices (AVHRPs)

AVHRPs are stated in terms of those practices that help deal with workplace violence. As defined by Shao et al. (2023), AVHRPs are "those HRM practices that organizations implement to combat workplace violence" (p. 189) . It includes, Management of Violent Incidents (MOVI), Anti-Violence Training (AVT), and environmental security.

1.6.1a Management of Violent Incidents (MOVI)

MOVI encompass various policies and procedures to address workplace violence. As per Shao et al. (2023), "management of violent incidents includes prevention, investigation, reporting, consultation and follow-up practices" (p. 195).

1.6.1b Anti-Violence Trainings (AVT)

AVT include the practices of training implemented by the organizations (Shao et al., 2023). These practices aim at educating employees to deal with the violent incidents.

1.6.1c Environmental security

Environmental security in the organizations aims at establishing strategies to create a safe workplace environment. It "refers to the actions to improve security through adequate security personnel, closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras and safe zones for staff" (Shao et al., 2023, p. 195).

1.6.2 Perceived Workplace Inclusion

Perceived inclusion refers to "employees' perception that they are accepted and recognized in the workplace" (Chen & Tang, 2018, p. 43). The present study describes perceived workplace inclusion as a positive reaction of the employees including the overall perception of being valued and accepted in the workplace.

1.6.3 Frugal Innovation

Frugal innovation as defined by Hindocha et al. (2021) ,involves "developing quality solutions in a resource constrained environment that are affordable to low-income consumers" (p. 647). It stresses on the innovation that utilizes less resources. It requires organizations to emphasize on enhancing value and reducing the use of resources simultaneously (Prabhu, 2017).

1.6.4 Despotic Leadership

Despotic leadership refers to "leader behaviors that focus on gaining supremacy and dominance, and are motivated by a leader's self-interests" (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2018, p. 151). A despotic leader would prioritize and prefer his best interests over the interest of the employees through his autocratic behavior.

1.7 Significance of Study

1.7.1 Theoretical Significance

This research study draws on Affective Events Theory (AET), mainly to provide empirical data that adds noteworthy theoretical significance to the literature on workplace inclusion. First, consistent with AET, this study determines the impact of the presence of contextual factors or events in the organization on the reactions of the employees. For this, the present study analyzes the relationship between AVHRPs and workplace inclusion. There have been discussions in the literature regarding anti-violence prevention policies and systems (Taneja, 2014). Moreover, workplace inclusion has also been discussed with various concepts (Atkinson et al., 2022; Schloemer-Jarvis *et al*., 2022). But, to the best of author's knowledge, both AVHRPs and workplace inclusion have not been studied in a relationship in the previous literature. Thus, this study holds notable significance in reporting the impact of AVHRPs on the workplace inclusion among the female employees.

Second, by determining the influence of workplace inclusion in brining frugal innovation, this study extends the theoretical knowledge on innovation. Considering the current economic situation of the country, increasing inclusion can bring better innovative outcomes (Mumtaz, 2023). Hence, this research is of noteworthy importance in the academic literature as it reflects on workplace inclusion as one of the important constructs to be studied in relationship with innovation outcomes.

 Literature has discussed the concept of workplace inclusion in a mediating role with various relationships (Bagorogoza *et al.*, 2022), however it still lacks a few relationships. Therefore, this research provides significant theoretical insights to the academic literature by studying the mediating role of workplace inclusion between AVHRPs and frugal innovation. Furthermore, this study also provides a theoretical insight through the lens of AET on the impact of

contextual factors; presence of AVHRPs at the workplace on innovative behavioral outcomes achieved through workplace inclusion.

Fourth, the present study adds significance to the leadership literature by looking at the role of despotic leadership from a positive perspective, which previously studies haven't acknowledged so far. The present study does so by determining the moderating role of despotic leadership style between AVHRPs and workplace inclusion. This research provides empirical evidence by demonstrating the role that an autocratic leadership style could play in encouraging workplace inclusiveness among female employees in the service sector of Pakistan.

1.7.2 Practical Significance

Findings of the present study provides important practical significance for the organizations. The findings of this study help in building and nurturing an inclusive work environment for the females in the organization. The inclusive workplaces can help the organizations in attracting more female talent. Moreover, this study provides a roadmap to the managers in service sector to foster inclusiveness. Considering the pivotal role of AVHRPs, manager can use the findings of this study in making the female employees feel safe and empowered, thus bringing workplace inclusion. Managers can put practices into place to foster a workplace where diverse perspectives are not only acknowledged but also valued. When the females will sense that their opinions are acknowledged and appreciated, they will feel secure enough to share their perspectives, thus fostering innovative outcomes. The findings of this study also help the managers in building a strong sense of purpose by incorporating inclusivity as a core value. Purpose driven organizations can encourage their employees to contribute to a greater good, fostering a sense of belongingness among women.

The present study holds notable significance for the policymakers in fostering inclusive workplaces in alignment with a critical societal objective behind Sustainable Development Goal 5, which calls for ensuring the empowerment of all women. By fostering inclusiveness in the workplaces and empowering females, policy makers can play a part in promoting an essential social objective alongside the organizational success. Moreover, the findings can also help organizations in establishing a respectful and inclusive environment where women feel empowered while confronting actions that are non-inclusive. These insights can direct the policymakers in devising policies that encourage the organizations in the service sector to emphasize workplace inclusivity as a core value. Such policies also provide organizations in

the service sector an insight on how to care for their female staff, enabling them to perform better. As a result, the organization will generate innovative outcomes.

1.8 Scope of Study

This study is designed to thoroughly examine the role of AVHRPs in bringing workplace inclusion in service sector of Pakistan with a particular emphasis on female employees with a bachelor's degree and at least one year of experience, in IT, telecom, and hospitality sectors. The study extends further in exploring the complex dynamics by investigating the possible relationships between AVHRPs and frugal innovation through workplace inclusion. Moreover, the study also examines the moderating role of despotic leadership in bringing workplace inclusion. The present study encapsulates an empirical approach to understand experiences of female employees regarding workplace inclusion and how they can be improved by employing HR practices. By narrowing down the focus to IT, telecom and hospitality industries in the service sector of Pakistan, the research seeks to contribute not only to the workplace inclusion literature, but also provides practical implications to the organizations striving to make the workplaces safe and inclusive for females to ultimately achieve their goals.

1.9 Organization of Thesis

This thesis is sub-divided into 5 chapters, structured to present the progression of concepts and findings of the research in a logical manner. The first chapter of this study highlighted the background in the context of AVHRPs, workplace inclusion, frugal innovation and despotic leadership. It then highlighted the problem statement along with research gaps, research questions and objectives, and significance of the study.

Chapter 2 delves into the concepts from the previous literature regarding AVHRPs, workplace inclusion, frugal innovation and despotic leadership. This chapter lays the ground to establish the framework with the underlying theory to explain the relationships between the variables.

The next chapter, methodology, provides a thorough insight on the research design, survey instrument, sampling technique and sample size. It also discusses the data collection procedure and ethical considerations to keep in mind while conducting the research study.

Chapter 4 encompasses the data analysis and results using PLS-SEM and explaining the results via measurement and structural model. The chapter then presents the empirical findings by analyzing the relationships between variables including AVHRPs, workplace inclusion, frugal innovation and despotic leadership.

Finally, the last chapter explains the main findings and summarizes the results along with managerial and theoretical implications. Furthermore, this chapter concludes the thesis with the limitations of the research study along with recommendations for the future research.

CHAPTER 02: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter Introduction

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the state of workplace inclusion among female employees in IT, telecom and hospitality sector of Pakistan. The objective of this chapter is to present an in-depth review and systemization of the previous literature that contributes to our knowledge of workplace inclusion and how HR practices and leadership plays a part in fostering workplace inclusion to bring innovative outcomes. The thorough review of the past researches in this chapter makes the foundation for the development of the hypothesis.

2.2 Conceptualization

2.2.1 Anti-Violence HR Practices (AVHRPs)

Per Shao et al. (2023), AVHRPs refer to "those HRM practices that organizations implement to combat workplace violence". Introduction of anti-violence interventions, i.e., AVHRPs, is a crucial step that an organization can take to deal with the issues of violence. The research by Shao et al. (2023) also signifies that AVHRPs can act as a job resource which reduces violence faced by the employees. For the present study, AVHRPs involves three sub practices; MOVI, AVT and environmental security.

2.2.1a Management of Violent Incidents (MOVI)

As per Shao et al. (2023), "management of violent incidents includes prevention, investigation, reporting, consultation and follow-up practices" (p. 195). This means that presence of AVHRPs suggest the organizational resources have been or will be allocated to provide immediate protection to employees against violence. These resources aimed at anti-violence will positively impact employee's perception of their workplace. Due to the presence of AVHRPs, employees most likely evaluate that their workplace environment is in accordance with their needs to be secured from violence. In such secure settings, employees are more likely to achieve their objectives (e.g., personal growth [Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, Shao et al., 2023]).

2.2.1b Anti-Violence Training (AVT)

AVT includes the practices of training implemented by the organizations (Shao et al., 2023). These AVHRPs aim at minimizing violence by providing workers enough knowledge to prevent violence. Training is a crucial component of HRM practices (Boon et al., 2019; Shao et al., 2023).Therefore, by implementing AVHRPs, organization is inclined to invest resources to give trainings to the employees on how to deal with violence thus resulting in less experienced violence.

2.2.1c Environmental Security

According to Shao et al. (2023), environmental security "refers to the actions to improve security through adequate security personnel, closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras and safe zones for staff" (p. 195). The same study also underscores the organization that employs AVHRPs are going to commit resources to ensuring a safe workplace, including safeguarded workspaces where employees may seek refuge if they sense potential risks of violence. These safe workspaces possibly can prevent violent incidents from happening.

2.2.2 Workplace Inclusion

As defined by Shore et al. (2011), "inclusion is the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness" (p. 4). Per the review of the literature on diversity and inclusion, it was signified that when employees sense that their distinctive characteristics are being acknowledged and appreciated (uniqueness), and that they are the crucial part of the company (belongingness), it results in the improvement of work outcomes such as employee retention, organizational committment and job satisfaction (Brimhall et al., 2017; Shore et al., 2011). Furthermore, workplace inclusion holds individual as well as strategic significance. There are several reasons to why inclusion bears a strategic importance for the organizaions. Inclusion in the workplace allows employees with unique viewpoints to involve in making decisions and problem solving processes, have an active participation in moulding culture, and promoting innovation and creativity (Pless & Maak, 2004).

In essence, inclusion is about assisting employees who struggle to feel that they do not fit into the organization's mainstream to find their place, while simultaneously supporting those employees who already have a sense of belongingness (Davidson & Ferdman, 2001; O'Donovan, 2018). An ongoing effort on part of the organization is neccassary to build an inclusive workplace. A prception of inclusion occurs when employees have a sense of belonging to a group or a company, while also having access to knowledge, security, networks and resources that enables them to have an impact on decison making (Jerónimo et al., 2022). Such perception of inclusiveness is driven by the sense of respect and justice, belongingness and value (Nair & Vohra, 2015).

Inclusion occurs at both individual as well as oorganizational level. They both might or might not exist simultaneously. For example, an employee who feel included among the members in their team may not feel so in the overall department (O'Donovan, 2018). A truly inclusive workplace makes the individual feel that they can freely express themselves and also bringing value to the company, while feeling safe and empowered. These concepts lays the ground for the conceptualizaton of workplace inclusion in the present study.

2.2.3 Frugal Innovation

As defined by Tiwari et al. (2016), frugal innovation entails "developing a value proposition that appeals to the target market, while focusing on the core capabilities and performance, thus minimizing the use of human, financial, and material resources throughout the value chain. It provides a significant reduction in cost, without compromising the quality standards and ultimate objective of building a Frugal Ecosystem (p. 17)." Frugal innovation has emerged as a key area of innovation that is largely emphasized on developing countries (Hossain, 2018). The concept of frugal innovation unfolded from the concept of "frugal engineering", devised in 2006 by the CEO and chairman of Renault-Nissan Alliance, Carlos Ghosn (Hossain, 2018).

In contrast to frugal innovation, literature has pointed out various kinds of innovation (constraint-based innovation, jugaad, Gandhian innovation, grassroot innovation, indigenous innovation). Conversely, Weyrauch & Herstatt (2017), in their study aimed at distinguishing frugal innovation from various other types of innovation by pinpointing three important criteria of categorization; focus on core functionality, optimized level of performance and substantial cost reduction. On the other hand, Soni and Krishnan (2014) comprehensively reviewed the literature on frugal innovation and with the focus on the typology of frugal innovation rather

than pointing out its differences from other types of innovation. They introduced three types of frugal innovation; frugal innovation as a process, as an outcome in the form of products and services and as a mindset. They also emphasized that the innovation is to be called as frugal only if the three aforementioned criteria are met.

Because frugal innovation is a response to scarce resources and not the limitless availability of resources (Rossetto et al., 2023), it is aimed at reducing the cost by significant reduction in utilization of resources (Barnikol & Liefner, 2022). The low-cost aspect of this type of innovation has made the frugal innovation literature more focused on emerging economies. As highlighted by Hossain (2018), frugal innovation has become a main subject matter of innovation and is significantly focused on developing nations. By incorporating local market demands into innovative business models for cost-effective products, frugal innovation turns the drawback of resource limits in emerging countries into an advantage (Mourtzis et al., 2016), thus adressing the underlying aspects of frugal innovation combining both frugality and innovation.

2.2.4 Despotic Leadership

"Despotic leadership refers to leader behaviors that focus on gaining supremacy and dominance, and are motivated by a leader's self-interests" (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2018, p. 151). The notion of despotic leadership has evolved as novel paradigm, drawing the interest and attention of researchers from diverse disciplines (Khizar et al., 2023). Despotic leadership refers to the actions of leaders that are motivated by personal interest, intended at achieving superiority, dominance and power (Khizar et al., 2023). As indicated by Mukarram et al. (2021), the term despotism originates from the Greek word despot, which means "master", or "the one with definitive power". Despotic leadership refers to a status-oriented and dictatorial leadership and have highly explicit demands of obedience and compliance in their detrimental character (Schilling, 2009). Such leaders tend to exert control and superiority over others and promote their own objectives (Ahtisham et al., 2023). As Mukarram et al. (2021) signifies that despots prioritize their personal benefits, which is they not only behave exploitatively and in a manner that is harmful for the society, but also nullify the interest of their followers by engaging in deceptive and unethical self-serving activities.

Anand et al. (2004) emphasized that when individuals are compelled into compromising situations the rewards linked with acting unethically may persuade them to opt for it over the

other one. As Rasool et al. (2018) stated that most of the studies in the prior literature have primarily focused on the adverse impacts of despotic leadership, however, there is a dire need to address the role of the employees who willingly support the coercive policies and destructive vision of despotic leaders out of personal gains. The primary goal of despotic leadership as indicated by Schilling (2009), is focused on maintaining control over the subordinates and developing high power-distance relationships. This is especially important in countries where high-power distance culture prevails. These concepts lays the ground for the conceptualizaton of despotic leadership in the present study.

2.3 Theory

2.3.1 Affective Events Theory

Affective Events Theory (AET, Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) utilizes an approach based on events to analyze emotions and proposes a framework which indicates that how features of the work environment can ultimately impact the job behaviors of the individual that are spurred by the emotional experiences (Wang et al., 2020). Employees' behaviors and outcomes are a result of organizational factors. As emphasized by Wang et al. (2020), "The "context-emotions-attitude-behaviors" framework suggests that job behavior or job performance is a function of employees' discrete emotions toward their organizations, which are determined by organizational factors" (p. 2). It considers the role of different work events in determining employee reactions and behaviors (Nadim & Zafar, 2021). According to AET, the characteristics of the workplace have an impact on attitudes both directly via a cognitive pathway and indirectly via an affective one, the latter by accessing the occurrence of desirable or undesirable emotional work events (Glasø et al., 2011). It is based on the notion that employees react emotionally to certain events or contextual factors and those reactions result in the performance or the behavioral outcomes. The contextual factors or events can be in the form of uplifts (positive) or hassles (negative). If the contextual factors or events are positive, for example, organizational support, trainings, etc., they will develop positive reactions, such as satisfaction. On the other hand, in case of negative environmental exigencies, such as no organizational support, it will lead to negative reactions and behavioral outcomes (Khan *et al*., 2022).

AET provides the theoretical lens for the present study. Drawing on AET, AVHRPS act as contextual factors that may lead to positive reactions among female employees, such as a positive perception of workplace inclusion. The presence of AVHRPS indicates organizational support (a positive contextual factor) toward employees. This, in turn, fosters a sense of involvement and value among employees, contributing to the perception of inclusivity. Furthermore, the positive perception among employees regarding workplace inclusion leads to improved performance or behavioral outcomes (e.g., frugal Innovation). Additionally, behavior of the leaders is known to influence affective reactions in the followers (Gooty et al., 2010). If a leader exhibit controlling behavior that is ultimately in the best interests of their followers (female employees), the followers will feel included, thus influencing their perception of inclusion. Therefore, the core principle of AET, as described by Weiss & Cropanzano (1996), posits that aspects of the workplace environment that facilitate or impede an organizational member's progress toward professional goals result in transiently favorable or unfavorable emotional reactions.

2.4 Hypothesis Development

2.4.1 AVHRPs and Workplace Inclusion

Organizations in developed countries have started developing practices to combat workplace violence. For example, Workplace *Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Services Act* in the United States (Petrino, 2022). The need for AVHRPS arose because of prevailing workplace violence and because it has an effects on individuals' mental and physical health (Kitaneh & Hamdan, 2012; Talas et al., 2011), as well as low self-esteem and demoralization (Baig et al., 2018). Jang et al. (2022) highlighted that the presence of anti-bullying interventions can reduce the workplace bullying and intention to leave, improve the communication, trust, and empowerment level. Recently, Shao et al. (2023) explained that HR practices acts as a resource in providing support to the employees to deal with the violence at workplace, hence supporting them in achieving positive results, improved emotional well-being and commitment, which is essential for igniting perception of inclusion. Furthermore, the HR practices that particularly focuses on the female well-being, when interpreted through organizational support, have been found to result in positive behavioral outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Deng & Wu, 2023). Furthermore, given the evidence that disadvantaged

employees have lower levels of commitment, it is suggested that organizations should consider how to best structure their HR practices, systems and environment to satisfy employee expectations and foster commitment among diverse workforce (Chaudhry et al., 2021; Moon & Sandage, 2019). Through the perspective of AET, the AVHRPS is a contextual factor that influence the emotions of the employees. As highlighted by Aldaihani (2020) that the prevailing organizational environment can effect level of empowerment among the employees enabling them to share their opinions. This leads to the positive reactions on part of the employees through the development of the perception of inclusivity.

2..4.1a MOVI and Workplace Inclusion

MOVI includes organization's practices and policies for managing violence at work, including preventive measures, inquiries, reporting, discussions, and follow-up procedures. Literature has addressed several management strategies to handle violent incidents in the workplace. When an organization manages violent incidents by implementing AVHRPS, it indicates the organization's seriousness and communicates clear intentions to provide a safe and secure workplace. This shows that organizational resources are dedicated to protect employees from violence (Shao et al., 2023). This, in turn, creates positive perceptions among female workers, making them more likely to view the organization as supportive. In their systematic literature review, Somani et al. (2021) highlighted various interventions that help in managing violence. For example, structured policies for managing and preventing workplace violence. According to AET, the measures an organization takes to manage violent incidents can act as events that evoke positive and negative emotions among employees. For instance, managing violent incidents through effective interventions induces a positive emotional climate and psychological safety among employees. Psychological safety in turn positively influences the perception of inclusion among female employees (Workman-Stark, 2021). Hence, the present study hypothesizes that:

H1: MOVI influences female employees' perceptions of workplace inclusion.

2.4.1b AVT and Workplace Inclusion

AVT include the trainings that implemented by the organization with specific intention to prevent violence at work. Shao et al. (2023) expressed AVT as a job resource, indicating that

job resources have motivational potential as they promote the growth, learning, and development of employees. Merrill et al. (2020) provided participants with AVT, and the results before and after the training were measured. The results showed fewer reports of violent incidents after the AVT was provided. It also resulted in increased awareness of consequences of violence among the employees. Khan et al. (2021) found out that trainings should incorporate real-life examples and the sessions should be more interactive. AVT is a way to clarify the policies and procedures of the organization. Through the lens of AET, providing AVT to the employees can evoke emotional experiences among the employees, increase their awareness, and provide strategies and skills to female employees on how to manage violent events at work. By providing necessary skills and knowledge as an intervention to combat workplace violence, organizations can boost the confidence of employees and empower them. Empowerment is known to be one of the aspects of inclusion (Prasad, 2001), therefore results in fostering female employees' positive perception of an inclusive workplace Thus, the study hypothesizes that:

H2: AVT influences female employees' perceptions of workplace inclusion.

2.4.1c Environmental Security and Workplace Inclusion

Environmental security includes the actions taken by the organization to employ adequate security staff, creating a safe zone for the employees, and the use of CCTV cameras in the workplace (Shao et al., 2023). Such measures aimed at allocating resources towards building safe and secure environment for the employees, and protecting them from any form of workplace violence. Shao et al. (2023) supports this stance by suggesting that organization that implement HR practices should have its resources dedicated to providing the employees with safe workplace. This includes secure facilities where workers could seek refuge if they foresee violence. In the light of AET, contextual factors such as presence of safe environment with proper security and CCTVs would induce a sense of security among the employees. Employee feeling of psychological safety result in the positive reaction on their part, for example, the perception of workplace inclusion (Yousaf et al., 2022). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H3: Environmental security influences female employees' perceptions of workplace inclusion.

2.4.2 Workplace Inclusion and Frugal Innovation

Employees who develop a sense of being valued for their contributions to the organization, beyond just their roles, experience an increased perception of inclusiveness. Workplace inclusion then yields improved organizational outcomes such as increased performance and innovation (Chordiya, 2019). Diversity and inclusion in the top management has also proven to be effective in contributing different perspectives for efficient organizational decisions. Directors belonging to the minority group (women) have the potential contribute uniquely valuable insights to the decision making by offering unique viewpoints (Westphal & Milton, 2000) resulting in effective performance (Terjesen et al., 2009). Owing to this point of view, female directors can influence decisions of the organizations by supporting innovative initiatives (LAKHAL et al., 2023). Moreover, organizations with more gender diverse members might have extensive ties and connections with external environment which brings multiple opportunities to foster innovation.

The high-levels of inclusion are associated with greater opportunities for contact and interaction with coworkers , thus increasing trust (Downey et al., 2015), which is then linked to the formation of virtuous circle of knowledge sharing, creativity and innovation (Sankowska, 2013). Furthermore, creativity and innovation are higher in multicultural teams with high climate of inclusion, indicating that when employees from various backgrounds feel that they are appreciated for their unique perspectives (feature of inclusive workplace), they may be more inclined to sharing their ideas and collaborate (feature of innovative climate)(Brimhall & Mor Barak, 2018).

Within the framework of AET, the perception of inclusion among employees triggers positive emotions or reactions that translate into favorable behavioral outcomes. Workplace inclusion brings together diverse perspectives, facilitating the sharing of heterogeneous knowledge. Lei et al. (2021) found that certain aspects organizational innovation heavily relies on the exchange of knowledge among members. The perception of inclusion fosters a sense of community, reducing inhibitions among organizational members in sharing their ideas, knowledge, and expertise with colleagues for collective performance improvement. Hence, employees' positive perceptions of inclusion are associated with nurturing innovation (Brimhall & Mor Barak, 2018). Moreover, operating in completely inclusive environment is necessary to maximize innovative advantages (Jones et al., 2021), by maximizing the efficiency of existing resources. Thus, the present study hypothesizes that:

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H4: Perceived workplace inclusion has a positive relationship with frugal innovation

2.4.3 Mediating Role of Workplace Inclusion

Given that AVHRPs increase female employees' positive perceptions of workplace inclusion, and workplace inclusion can also serve as a resource that encourages innovation even in unfavorable conditions with limited resources, we propose that workplace inclusion mediates the relationship between AVHRPs and frugal innovation. The implementation of AVHRPs can be interpreted as a clear indication of an organization's concern and initiative for the safety and security of its employees (Shao et al., 2023). For instance, AVT equips female employees with the necessary skills, awareness, and courage to address workplace violence. Similarly, MOVI reflects the organization's inclusive practices, ensuring timely responses and thorough resolution of violence related issues. Additionally, the presence of technological devices and other security measures (such as guards and CCTV cameras) contributes to a physically and psychologically secure workplace.

It is therefore assumed that the effective implementation of AVHRPs can foster a sense of community among female employees, making them feel like important stakeholders in the organization. This positive feeling of inclusion may motivate employees to engage in extra-role behavior, such as frugal innovation, beyond their regular tasks. When leaders foster an inclusive workplace, the participation and engagement of employees in quality improvement efforts increase (Brimhall & Mor Barak, 2018; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Inclusion has been associated with an increase in level of trust among the member of an organization (Downey et al., 2015; Shore et al., 2011), which in turn is linked to creativity, collaboration and learning, idea realization and sharing, the fundamental features of innovation (Dovey, 2009). Moreover, Chung et al. (2020) established a direct correlation between inclusiveness and increased helping behavior, employee creativity, and performance. When employees perceive a sense of inclusiveness in the workplace, they tend to exhibit higher dedication, consequently enhancing their commitment to the organization (Liggans et al., 2019). Furthermore, during times of crisis, an environment built on trust and inclusion is more likely to increase commitment (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2021), thereby fostering innovation through greater contributions. Thus, we hypothesize that:

H5: Perceived workplace inclusion mediates the relationship between AVHRPS and frugal innovation.

2.4.4 Moderating Role of Despotic Leadership

Despotic leadership has been emphasized for its control over employees and subordinates (Zhou et al., 2021), reflecting a preference for a high-power distance culture within the organization. One typical assumption of this leadership style is a preference for organizational control and obedience. Previous research has predominantly portrayed despotic leadership as a contributing factor to negative outcomes, such as low job satisfaction (Zhou et al., 2021), reduced job performance (Nauman et al., 2021), limited organizational career growth, and decreased job creativity (Rasool et al., 2018). However, this leadership style can also exhibit compassion towards employees when it aligns with the organization's best interests (Mukarram et al., 2021).

Considering workplace inclusion's significance for organizational sustainability, despotic leadership holds potential to generate positive outcomes, including the positive influence on employees' perceptions of workplace inclusiveness. In the context of Pakistan, employees tend to perform better when leaders provide clear directives and enforce authority, which is consistent with the country's high power-distance societal norms. Strict rules and forceful implementation are commonplace as leaders retain authority and aim to promote what they perceive as beneficial for the organization. Thus, a despotic leader's influence may differ (positively) from past studies' (negative) perspectives.

Given Pakistan's service sector struggles with inadequate HR policies and inequitable treatment of employees (Cheema & Jamal, 2022), despotic leadership might yield positive outcomes for both the organization and its employees. Despotic leaders could rigorously enforce HR practices and control negative behaviors by ensuring employee compliance under all circumstances. Drawing from the AET, a despotic leader could ensure strict adherence to AVHRPS, fostering a sense of care among female employees and leading to positive emotional experiences that enhance the perception of inclusion. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H6: Despotic leadership positively moderates the relationship between AVHRPS and perceived workplace inclusion, such that it strengthens the relationship.

2.5 Theoretical Framework
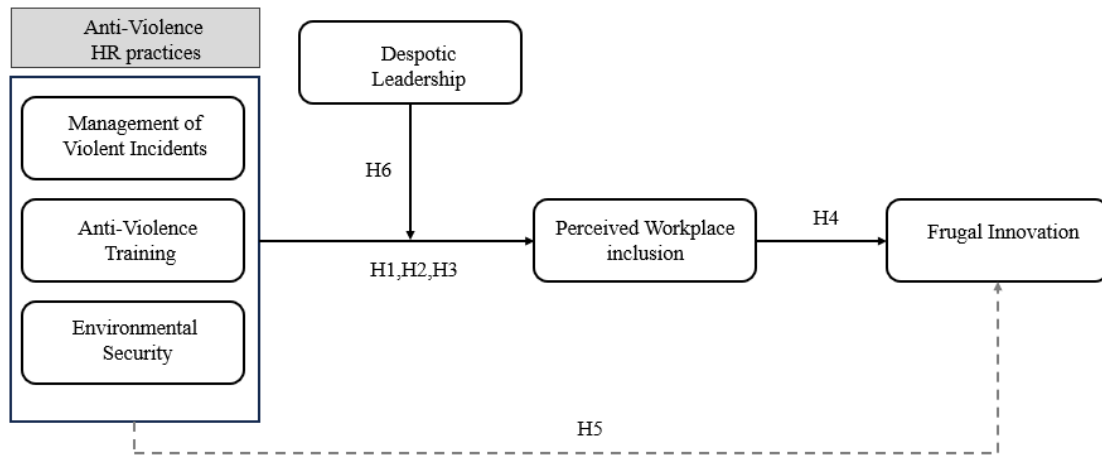
Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed literature extensively and proposed the hypotheses to be tested in the later chapters of this study. Via the lens of affective events theory, the chapter highlighted when an organization shows seriousness in managing the violent incidents by taking different measures, it develops a perception of inclusion in the minds of the female employees. Moreover, providing trainings to the employees to combat the incidents of violence and providing them safety and security also helps build perception of inclusion among the female employees. When employees feel included, they feel secure to share their ideas and perspectives, thus enhancing the possibility of innovative outcomes. This chapter also emphasized that in a country like Pakistan where there is a culture of collectivism and high-power distance, people exhibit heightened vigilance when leaders enforce strict compliance. Therefore, the presence of an autocratic leadership style; despotic leadership, would strengthen the relationship between AVHRPs and workplace inclusion. The chapter concludes with a theoretical framework that, based on an in-depth examination of the literature, illustrates the complex interactions between the variables under investigation.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter serves as a methodological guide for the present study. This chapter outlines the design of this research study particularly focusing on the philosophy undertaken by this research, time frame, sampling technique and sample size and the data collection process. It also explores the quantitative technique applied to conduct this study with a special focus on survey research. This chapter thoroughly explains the data collection process with the use of a particular sampling technique for data collection. Furthermore, this chapter also explains the importance of pretesting and pilot testing and how they were employed for the current study. Lastly, research ethics to keep in mind throughout the study are also addressed in this chapter.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Research Philosophy

The philosophical paradigm adopted by this study lies in positivism. Positivism as explained by Saunders et al. (2007), "relates to the philosophical stance of the natural scientist and entails working with an observable social reality to produce law-like generalizations". The positivist philosophy relies on the premise that there is only one objective reality that can be identified, understood and analyzed (Park et al., 2020). A positivist research would use an existing theory for the development of the research hypothesis, providing hypothetical statements that can later be tested and confirmed (Saunders et al., 2007). The developed hypothesis would initiate the data collection process (instead of mere impressions) which would serve as the foundation for subsequent testing of the hypothesis. Per Saunders et al. (2007), the emphasis, under the positivist approach would be on the observations that are quantifiable, leading to the statistical analysis of the data.

Positivism employs a hypothetico-deductive technique to test an a priori hypothesis that are frequently expressed quantitatively, allowing for the derivation of functional relationships between causal and explanatory factors (independent variables) and outcomes (dependent variables) (Ponterotto, 2005; Park et al., 2020). Using a positivist approach means the researcher would try to remain objective and stay detached from data or research in order to

prevent biasness in the conclusion. This implies undertaking research in a value-free manner, as far as possible (Saunders et al., 2007). Furthermore Saunders et al. (2007) also stressed that researchers under a positivist approach would assert that they are external to the data collection process as there is little that can be done to change the content of the collected data.

Thus, the aim of the research under this phenomenon is to figure out whether the relationship exists between the variables or not, and if they do, whether the nature of relationship is strong or weak (Primecz, 2020). Per Primecz (2020), the study including hypothesis' depicting the causal relationships are a strong indication of a positivist approach.

3.2.2 Quantitative Research

The present study employed quantitative research design to collect and analyze the data. Per Sukamolson (2007), "quantitative research is the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect"(p. 2). It is concerned with gathering and examining structured data that can be expressed numerically (Goertzen, 2017). As indicated by Watson (2015), the objective of the quantitative research is to collect the data via measurements, assessing it to look for trends and relationships and validate the measurements been made. It involves a variety of methods which employ statistical or numerical data to analyze a social phenomena in a systematic manner. Measurement, therefore, is an element of quantitative research which presume that the phenomena being studied can be measured (Watson, 2015).

Since quantitative research emphasize on the measurable form of data, it is highly effective at addressing the "what" or "how" of a given situation (Goertzen, 2017), and not the "why"'. As for the present study, the quantitative research approach adressesed if one variable have an influence over the other in their respective relationships within the framework constituting of AVHRPs, workplace inclusion, frugal innovation and despotic leadership. Per Gunter (2002), quantitative scientific research aims to either confirm or disprove hypotheses, and outcomes are regarded as contributions to the advances in knowledge. A body of knowledge is developed by repeatedly testing hypotheses and developing and verifying new ones, which essentially entails several legitimate explanations for a variety of dependent variables.

Under the quantitative appproach, the present study collected the quantifiable and measureable data in order to test the proposed hypotheses. The collected data was analyzed through statstical

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techniqe and hypothesis were tested. The quantitative research design for this study uncovered explainations regarding the influence that AVHRPs have on workplace inclusion and workplace inclusion has on frugal innovaton with the moderating influence of depsotic leadership in bringing workplace inclusion.

3.2.3 Survey Research

Surveys are often used in quantitative research. They mostly involve distributioon of the questionairres, but they also include conduting interviews and observations (Watson, 2015). Survey research is used to outline specific characteristics of a given population in a quantitative manner (Glasow, 2005). These characteristics often include the examination of relationships among the variables of the study. The present study has used survey research to examine the relationship between AVHRPs, workplace inclusion, frugal innovation and despotic leadership. Moreover, survey research uses a chosen portion of the population so the findings can later be generalized to that population (Glasow, 2005), as females in the service sector in case of the present study.

For the present study, self administered questionairres were used to conduct survey reseach. By using questionnaires, the researcher can gather comprehensive data from the respondents who may not be approachable otherwise (Sukamolson, 2007). The present study used self adminstered questionairre designed after looking for already established scales in the literature. The items of the scales were focused and selected on the "need to know basis" in order for the survey questionairre to be simple , short and easy to understand.

3.3 Population and Sampling

3.3.1 Target Population

Target population as defined by Barnsbee et al. (2018), " is the group of individuals that the intervention intends to conduct research in and draw conclusions from" (p. 751). It is an entire population or a group that a researcher wants to investigate and analyze on a specific issue. Target population is different from the general population which constitues group of individuals who possess at least a single characteristic in common (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016), for example, a group of individuals confined to a same geographic region, the same industry or

institution etc. Whereas, target population would be a specified portion of a population, as stated by Alvi (2016), it refers to any individual who fulfils the criteria stated for a research study.

The population for the present study constituted of female employees working in the service sector of Pakistan. The target population comprised of female employees working in IT, telecom and hospitaltiy sector of Pakistan. The criteria for the target population included the participants to have atleast one year of experience in the current organization. Furthermore, the participant must have a bachelors degree and must be able to understand english. Therefore, all the female employees working in the service sector, specifically IT, telecom and hospitality, sharing the aforementioned criteria made the target population for the present study.

3.3.2 Unit of Analysis

Unit of analysis has been defined in the literature as the entity that is taken under consideration for the analysis in a research study (Dolma, 2010). It is the object or an individual from which the researcher is collecting the data. It responds to the query of "what" and "who" is being investigated in the business research (Kumar, 2018). Determining the appropriate unit of analysis is an important aspect of any research. Without it, it is not possible for the researcher to choose the right measuring instrument, right sampling technique or develop correct hypothesis (Kumar, 2018). Furthermore, in business research, the most common unit of analysis includes individuals and are considered as the first level of unit of analysis (Kumar, 2018).

The present study is dedicated to getting a better understanding of the perceptions, and experiences of female employees within a workplace context. The issue under study, workplace inclusion, has been clearly defined and the objectives and hypothesis were mapped out with respect to a particular unit of analysis; females. Each individual female respondent represents a distinct unit of analysis that contributes significant value to the objectives of the study. The present study aimed at determining the emotions and perception of female employees towards workplace inclusion, and its influence in promoting frugal innovation. Therefore, the unit of analysis for this research study is at the individual level. i.e., females.

3.3.3 Sampling Technique

The present study is based on a purposive sampling approach that is a non-probability sampling technique. This sort of sampling technique involves decisions regarding inclusion of the participants to be taken by the researcher, based on a range of factors such as their competence and willingness to engage in the study or their specialized knowledge of the topic under the study (Rai & Thapa, 2015). In other words, purposive sampling depends on the researcher's judgment in choosing the units (individuals, cases/organizations, events, or data points) that are to be examined (Rai & Thapa, 2015). Etikan et al. (2016) signified it as the purposeful selection of participants on the basis of the qualities that they possess.

In the present study, a purposive sampling approach was used to guide the selection of the respondents, specifically tailored to the study objectives. Per Robinson (2014), purposive sampling is adopted on the basis of the assumption that, given the study objectives, specific kind of audience hold varying and important views regarding the issue in question, and therefore required to be a part of the sample. Many of the studies in the literature (Walton et al., 2018; Masdupi et al., 2018; Saddhono et al., 2018) have also employed purposive sampling to obtain the complete data owing to study objectives. Furthermore, the availability of the sampling frame was an issue in the present study. As stated by Memon et al. (2020), most of the business and management researchers face the problem regarding the unavailability of the sampling frame. This is because the organizations are hesitant to provide detailed or up to date information regarding their stakeholders (Memon et al., 2020). Henceforth, given the issue of female workplace inclusion under focus, our objective was to ensure that the sampling technique would help devise a sample that proves to be relevant to the aim of the research. Therefore, according to the objectives of the present study, the target population, i.e., the female employees working in the service sector of Pakistan fulfilled the demands of the study (Bhardwaj, 2019), hence, purposive sampling was used.

3.3.4 Sample Size

Sample size as described by Kumar et al. (2013) "total number of subjects in the sample" (p. 122). It is the smaller unit of a population needed to ensure that there is adequate amount of data to draw inferences (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). In simple terms, sample size refers to the number of observations or responses to be included in the research study (Memon et al., 2020).

Moreover, when deciding for the sample size, there are various factors that affect the decision. For example, research desgin, unit of analysis, selection of analysis programs, decision of the research supervisor or examiner etc (Memon et al., 2020). Recent findings indicate that power analysis should be used by researchers when determining sample size (Hair et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2017; Hairet al., 2019; Kline, 2016; Ringle et al., 2018; Uttley, 2019). Moreover, assuming all other situational factors remain equal, the more heterogenous population would require a larger sample size in order to obtain a sampling error that is acceptable (Cochran, 1977) and vice versa.

The present study has a homogenous population under study.i.e., females. Since the present study has employed multivariate statistical analysis, the sample size of 160-300 valid observations have been selected in order to collect the data, as a suggested by (Memon et al., 2020). Such level of sample size is also helpful in multivariate analysis. As suggested by Hair et al. (2019), Partial Least Square Structural Equational Modeling (PLS-SEM) cannot turn a poor sample (non-representative) into an appropriate one in order to produce reliable model estimations. This entails that, the sample size ranging from 160-300 which is neither very smalll and nor very large has less chances of Type 1 or Type 2 errors and impacting the conclusion of the research (Memon et al., 2020). Therfore, considering the aforementioned critera, the final sample size (N=181) was deemed sufficient for the present study. Furthermore, A priori power analysis using *G* Power* software (Faul et al., 2007) was also performed to identiy the minimum sample size for the proposed model. The findings of the power analysis suggests a minimum of 85 sample size to reach 80% statistical power for a medium effect (0.15) at a significance level of 0.05 for the model in the present study. The sample used in this study (N=181) is well above the minimum sample size and is consistent with the other rules of thumb in general (Barclay et al., 1995; Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2005; Roscoe, 1975).

3.4 Questionnaire Design

3.4.1 Instrument

Survey questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect the data from the participants of the present study. As stated by Roopa & Rani (2012), "A questionnaire is simply a list of mimeographed or printed questions that is completed by or for a respondent to give his opinion" (p. 273). A questionairre instrument is the main technique to collect the primary data in a

quantitative study. Moreover, it is utterly crucial for a researcher to be well aware of the significance of a well-designed questionnaire and whether or not it assess the aspects it is supposed to assess (Song et al., 2015).

For the present study, the instrument was based on 32-items in total. The questionnaire was developed after carefully reviewing the literature to look for the shorter and relevant versions of the scales available for the all the variables including AVHRPs (MOVI, AVT, enviornemntal security), workplace inclusion, frugal innovation and despotic leadership. The exisitng scales were minorly modified in order to adjust them as per the objectives of the present study. The formatting of the questionairre with respect to layout, clarity of the content and readability was taken into consideration while designing the instrument.

3.4.1a Anti-Violence HR Practices (AVHRPs)

AVHRPs were measured using a 14-item scale, which was adopted from Shao et al. (2023). It has three dimensions, MOVI, AVT and environmental security. 8-items were used to measure *MOVI* to assess female employees' perceptions on the preventive measures, inquiries, reporting, discussion, and follow-up procedures to manage the incidents of violence at the workplace. A sample item includes, "My organization encourages its employees to report workplace violence incidents". *AVT* was measured on a 3-item scale, assessing the practices of training implemented by the organization to prevent violence. A sample item includes, "My organization provides middle management with training on dealing with incidents of violence". *Environmental security* was measured with 3-items to assess the actions taken by the organization to employ adequate security staff, create a safe zone for the employees, and the use of CCTV cameras in the workplace. A sample item includes, "My organization has adequate security staff". The reliability of the overall measure was 0.93 (Shao et al., 2023).

3.4.1b Perceived Workplace Inclusion

Perceived workplace inclusion was measured using a 3-item scale adapted from Grosser et al. (2022), originally developed by Pearce & Randel (2004). It measures the extent to which employees in an organization perceive that they are a part of the crucial processes in the organization. A sample item includes, "I feel like an accepted part of my orgaization". The internal validity of the scale was 0.73 (Grosser et al., 2022).

3.4.1c Frugal Innovation

Frugal innovation was measured using a 9-item scale adapted from Khattak et al. (2022), which was originally developed by Rossetto et al. (2017). Frugal innovation is defined as the means to do more with lesser resources for a greater number of people (Bhatti & Ventresca, 2013). A sample item includes, "My organization significantly reduces costs in the operational process". The reliability values for the scale was 0.86 (Khattak et al., 2022).

3.4.1d Despotic Leadership

Despotic leadership was measured using a 6-item scale adapted from De Hoogh & Den Hartog (2008), originally developed by Hanges & Dickson (2004). It assess the role of leadership style that focuses on exerting control over subordinates and building a relationship with them where high-power distance prevails (Naseer et al., 2016). A sample item includes, "My manager acts like an authoritarian". The reliability of the scale was 0.82 (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008).

3.5 Instrument Validation

The instrument used in the present study was deemed valid once the content validity was ensured. As stated by Yaghmaie (2003), content validity measures the extent to which the contents of the scale are comprehensive and representative. Per Burns (1993), there are three sources to obtain content validity; experts, literature and representatives of the relevant population.

For the present study, in order to obtain content validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was sent to the two international scholars, serving as associate professors at the University of East Anglia and Heriot-Watt University. Moreover, the instrument was also validated by a local scholar at the National University of Sciences and Technology. The questionnaire was sent via an email along with a document containing the research objectives, research hypothesis and framework of the study. The response to the email was received in a day or two from the experts. The experts offered feedback, recommending minor revisions such as rewording a sentence and adjusting the format of the questionnaire. The review of the instrument from the experts made sure that the questionnaire was representative of the content it was intended to measure. Therefore, the instrument validity was ensured.

3.6 Instrument Language

The instrument was designed using English language. Since, the present study involved collecting data from the female employees in the service sector. As per the criteria of the study, the data was only collected from the employees with minimum 14 years of education and 1 year of experience in the relevant organization. Therefore, participants had no difficulty in reading or understanding the content of the questionnaire, which ruled out the possibility of facing language barrier during the data collection process. Moreover, choosing English language to design the questionnaire saved the time and resources required to translate the instrument into a local language.

3.7 Pretesting

As stated by Esposito & Rothgeb (1997), pretesting is carried out in order to identify and rectify problems prior to the finalization of a standard set of procedures and therefore differs from the following quality assessment in the fielded survey environment. The primary purpose of the pre-testing is to validate that the targeted audience comprehends the questions and the suggested response options as desired by the researcher, and is capable of providing meaningful response (Perneger et al., 2015). Seemingly, the pre-testing process "rectifies any inadequacies, in time, before administering the instrument orally or through a questionnaire to respondents, and thus reduce biases" (Memon et al., 2017; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 249). Misunderstanding regarding pre-testing will probably lead to low-quality data which will result in the items to be deleted or cases while assessing the measurement model (Memon et al., 2017).

For the present study, the questionnairre was pretested using debriefing method. It involves the respondents talking about the questionnairre once its completed (Reynolds et al., 1993). Debriefing questions serves the following purposes: (1) to figure out terms, phrases or concepts that participants either misunderstand or interpret inconsistently, or do not understand as intended by the researcher; (2) to determine the questions that respondents are unable to answer properly; (3) to evaluate close-ended response options; (4) to evaluate the questions sensitivity; and (4) to get recommendations for modifying the questions/ questionnairre (Belson, 1981; Esposito et al., 1991; Hess & Singer, 1995; Hughes, 2004).

Furthermore, as per the recommendation by Willis (2005), a sample size between 5 and 15 respondents is enough for pretesting. Hence, following the aforementioned recommendation, a total of 10 responses were collected from the target population (female employees) for pre-testing of the survey using debriefing method. The results of the pre-testing showed that items of the questionnaire were easy to understand. Furthermore, the results ensured that the wording that was used in the questionnaire was correct. The respondents clearly understood the questions as intended by the researcher and were able to answer them properly. Therefore, there was no apparent need to revise the questionairre or the scale items.

3.8 Pilot Testing

As stated by Roopa & Rani (2012), "a preliminary part of research conducted before a complete survey to test the effectiveness of the research methodology" (p. 275). It is kind of a trial run before the main study. One of the benefits of carrying out a pilot study is that it could offer preliminary warnings about the areas where the actual research project could falter, where research protocols could be violated or whether proposed techniques or instruments are not suitable or too complex (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Moreover, a pilot study has various purposes, including generating and assessing the adequacy of the instrument being used, determining the feasibility of the complete study, examining the protocols for the broader study, assessing and testing the strategies for recruitment and sampling, gathering preliminary data, and obtaining data on the effect size (Connelly, 2008).

Cooper and Schindler (2011) recommended a sample size between 25 to 100 individuals for the pilot study. It is also recommended that 10 to 30 individuals are sufficient for a pilot study (Hill, 1998; Isaac & Michael, 1995). Therefore, following the recommendations of the previous researchers, the present study used the sample size of 30 individuals (female employees) to run pilot testing. The data collected for pilot testing was analyzed via PLS-SEM to check for the feasibility of the instrument and the overall study. The results of the pilot test indicated a satisfactory reliability value (>0.7) as per the rule of thumb by Hair et al. (2011), which entails the consistency of the items in evaluating the underlying construct. Therefore, we initially concluded that the instrument has a good reliability and would most likely yield consistent results when employed to the main study. Overall, the pretesting results showed that the preliminary analysis was satisfactory.

3.9 Time Horizon

Time horizon refers to the overall duration or time period during which the research study is conducted, including data collection and data analysis. It determines the overall duration of the study (Melnikovas, 2018) in which a researcher carries out his research. It depends on the objectives of the research study. There are two types of time horizons to undertake a research study- cross sectional, or a short-term research study, aimed at colllecting the data at a single point in time; longitudinal, or a long-term research study, aimed at collecting the data periodically over a prolonged period of time so that data can be compared.

As for the present study, we employed a cross-sectional survey which is aimed at collecting the data at one point in time (Kesmodel, 2018). The study was conducted in a specific time duration and the data was collected in a period of two months. The organizations were contacted via emails and linkedIn in order to get permissions for the data collection procedure. Once the permission and specifc time slots were granted, we visited the organization in order to distribute the questionairre among the employees and collect them either on the same day or two days later, as per the availability of the respondents. Once the data collection was over, in a period of two months, we proceeded with the data analysis to find the results of the study. The data for this study was therefore gathered all at once and analysis was performed, thus providing researchers with the insight into the perspectives of the participants within a specified time frame. Moreover, cross-sectional data is appropriate for investigations with a strong theoretical foundation (Rindfleisch et al., 2008), which is why this research design was chosen.

3.10 Data Collection

The criteria established for data collection included females working in the service sector with at least 1-year of experience in the current organization. The respondents must be willing to participate in the survey. As the study were focusing on female professionals in the service sector, she must be a bachelor's degree holder. As far as the mode of data collection is concerned, both online and face-to-face approaches were utilized to enhance the number of responses.

 For the *face-to-face approach*, we personally visited the targeted organizations. We contacted the managers of these organizations through LinkedIn and phone calls to arrange meetings with the HR managers and schedule the visits. During these visits, we provided the managers with

information about the research topic and the potential respondents. This included details such as the minimum level of education required for respondents and the number of years of experience they should have in their current organization. Some organizations allowed us to administer the survey on the spot, while others requested that we pick up the completed questionnaires later. The questionnaires were distributed and then collected two days later. In total, these efforts resulted in 30 responses.

For the *online* data collection method, the questionnaire was transformed into an electronic mail survey using Google Form. Per Lefever et al. (2007), online surveys save time and cost by guaranteeing a relatively short data collection period. Furthermore, previous researchers have also successfully utilized LinkedIn for the online mode of data collection (Hafeez et al., 2023); Qazi et al., 2022). Hence, for the present study, female respondents who met the inclusion criteria were contacted through LinkedIn. We sent them a personal message explaining the research topic, emphasizing the study's importance, and providing information about the respondents. We included a link to the Google Form in the message. In certain cases, reminders were sent to the targeted respondents two days after the initial contact. The online approach yielded 171 responses.

3.11 Initial Screening

A total of 201 samples were collected. For the initial screening, a filter question was added in the instrument to further make sure that the respondents are females and belong to the targeted industry. Several invalid responses (*n*=20) were excluded, including those with less than 1 year of experience, males, and individuals working in other sectors (e.g., manufacturing) and those with qualification less than undergrad. One hundred eighty-one samples were ultimately included for the final data analysis. The current sample size was deemed sufficient for two reasons. Firstly, the study focused primarily on a specific segment within a specific sector: female employees in the service sector. Consequently, it was challenging to approach female employees and inquire about their perceptions on workplace inclusion, as this topic is often treated as an internal organizational matter. Therefore, having a substantial sample size (N=181) is justifiable given the sensitivity of the subject and associated accessibility issues. Secondly, prior research suggests that for multivariate studies employing structural equation modeling, a sample size exceeding 160 is generally considered reasonable (Memon et al., 2020).

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research is the guide to the right or wrong doings while conducting a research study. As stated by Aguinis & Henle (2004), the focus of the ethics is to layout guidelines for researchers, assessing and reviewing research, and setting up enforcement procedures for ensuring an ethical study. Research ethics, therefore, relates with the question regarding the formulation and clarification of the topic of our research, designing it and gaining access, data collection, processing and storing of our data, analyzing the data and writing the findings of our research in an upright and responsible manner (Saunders et al., 2003). Moreover, as emphasized by Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2010), ethics should be the prime consideration instead of an afterthought, and it should be the vanguard of the researcher's agenda. Among all the steps in the process of research, ethics tend to be closely related to data collecting, data reporting and report distribution than any of the other stages in the research (Creswell, 2012). A number of ethical considerations were kept in mind while conducting this research study.

Gatekeeping

As suggested by Creswell (2012), to ensure minimal level of disruption while visiting the research site, access should be gained through the officials also known as gatekeepers. As for the present study, we made sure to seek permissions from the officals of the targeted organization. The process of data collection was only inititated once we were granted permission from the managers. This ensured a smooth and disruption free data collection.

Informed Consent

Prior to the distribution of the questionairre, each participant was informed regarding the purpose of the study, the procedure and potential benefits. The participants were also provided with a brief description regarding the research study along with the question paper so they may participate or withdraw as per their will, without facing any consequences. The idea underlying the implementation of informed consent is that offering people the liberty to make informed choices will safeguard their rights and welfare (Corrigan, 2003).

Objectivity

During the stage of data collection, it was made sure that the data was not prone to any subjective judgement . This was done to make sure that the data was collected and reported accurately. Furthermore, the data was reported with a neutral stance without any biasness or

perosnal judgement. Therefore ensuring that the conclusion is drawn entirely on the basis of the real data.

Confidentiality and Anonimity

As emphasized by Saunders et al. (2003) , confidentiality and anonymity is crucial in order to gain access to the organization or the individual participant. For the present study, the data collected for the research was handled with utmost confidentialtiy. It was ensured that any sort of personal information as well the responses were kept confidential and the information regarding the responses was only accessible to the research supervisor to prevent unauthorized access. Furthermore, the responses were kept anonymous so that it wouldn't be possible to trace them back to the original respondents. These considerations were to ensure that particpants' trust remain intact.

Data Accessibiltiy

It was made sure throughout the research study that the data being used is with proper referencing. This ethical practice encompasses proper documentation of the data allowing for it to be built upon by the future researches. Moreover, the transparency was also maintained by providng complete information regardng the procedures of data collecion and analysis throughout the study.

Deception

As stated by Tai (2012), deception constitutes of any conduct intended to mislead other by fabricating, falsifying or misinforming people so that they are influenced to act in a certain way. It also refers to the intentional falsification of information concerning the objectives, approaches and outcomes of the research. In the context of the present study, we made sure that there was no omission or fabrication of information while interacting with the respondents. All the important aspects of the study were made clear to the participants before starting the survey. The actual purpose of the study was clarified so that there is no misleading or deception of the information regarding the actual objectives of research.

3.13 Chapter Summary

The philosophical paradigm for the present study lies in positivism emphasizing that there is one true reality. Under this, the quantitative survey techniques to determine whether relationships exist between the variables and the nature of those relationships. The survey

instrument used for data collection constituted of 32 items in total. Before moving towards data collection, the validity of the instrument was ensured by getting it reviewed by the experts in the relevant field. Furthermore, pre-testing and pilot testing was also conducted to ensure the feasibility of the overall study. Wth the use of purposive sampling, the data was collected from the female employees working in IT, telecom and hospitality sector of Paksitan, via both face to face and online modes. After the initial screening, the total sample constituted of 181 valid responses to be analyzed in the following chapter. This chapter gave a detailed explaination of the methods and the data collection procedure to set the stage for a thourough analysis in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Chapter Introduction

Data analysis is one of the most crucial stages in this research study where the raw information collected in the previous stage is subjected to analysis using statistical techniques. This chapter first states the demographic information of the respondents and then further discusses whether or not there exist any issue of multicollinearity or common method bias in the collected data. Emphasizing on structural equational modeling, the chapter further discusses the results of measurement and structural model to check for validity of the model and significance of the hypotheses. This chapter, therefore, addresses the research questions by revealing the empirical findings.

4.2 Demographic Information

All of the respondents (100%) were females working in service sector, working for at least a year in the current organization. Most of the respondents were unmarried (59.7%). The respondents had a bachelor's degree as their minimum qualification, thus the final sample included 63.5% of the respondents with a bachelor's degree and 34.8% of the respondents with a Master's degree, 1.1% with a PhD degree and 0.6% with a certification. Respondents of the present study had different level of experience ranging from 1-3 years (57.5%), 4-6 years (23.8%) and with 7 years or more (18.8%).

Table 1: Demographic Information (N=181)

Demographics	Categories	Frequency	%
Gender	Female	181	100.0%
	Male	0	0.0%
Marital Status	Married	71	39.2%
	Unmarried	108	59.7%
	Other	2	1.1%
Qualification	Matric	0	0.0%
	Intermediate	0	0.0%
	Bachelors	115	63.5%
	Masters	63	34.8%
	PhD	2	1.1%
	Certification	1	0.6%
Experience in the current organization	Less than 1 year	0	0.0%
	1-3 years	104	57.5%
	4-6 years	43	23.8%
	7 years or more	34	18.8%

4.3 Multicollinearity

When using multivariate statistical techniques, one of the many problems that the researchers face while analyzing the data is the existence of linear dependencies between the variables, or multicollinearity. Multicollinearity is the "extent to which a variable can be explained by the other variables in the analysis" (Hair et al., 2006, p. 2). The term "multicollinearity" in multiple regression analysis refers to the linear relationships between the independent variables. Per Shrestha (2020), two variables are said to be collinear if they exhibit a close to perfect linear combination with one another. Selecting the regression model primarily depends on the diagnostic results, and multicollinearity is one indication that can pose harm to the model (Kutner et al., 2005; Olivia & Ilie, 2013). As stated by Schroeder et al. (1990), when

multicollinearity occurs, little confidence can be placed in the model generated from the research. It is noteworthy that multicollinearity is not related to the breach in the fundamental statistical presumption, but only with the confidence that researcher put in the model (Schroeder et al., 1990), thus affecting generalizability of the model.

When analyzing structural models, it is crucial to evaluate that there are no collinearity concerns in the structural model (or inner model) (Cheah et al., 2018). The present study used the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to detect the multicollinearity. Different authors in the literature have stated different criteria to measure the value of variance inflation factor. As per the rule of thumb by, if the value of VIF exceeds 5, it indicates the presence of multicollinearity. Researchers can additionally opt to use a stricter standard in which the VIF must be less than 3.3 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006). The multicollinearity results for the present study shows that all the independent variables have VIF values less than the threshold of 3.3 (AVT= 1.52, environmental security= 1.415, MOVI= 1.687), indicating the absence of any multicollinearity issue.

4.4 Common Method Bias

There have been many approaches used to reduce the effect of common method bias (Memon et al., 2023; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Reio Jr, 2010; Schwarz et al., 2017). From the strategies aimed at pre-data collection, a detailed cover letter was used in which confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents was explicitly mentioned. Moreover, it was also mentioned in the cover letter that the participation of the respondents is on a voluntary basis and can be withdrawn anytime. The study used different variables for the criterion and predictor variables. To ensure clarity in the questionnaire items, pretesting was also conducted. Furthermore, the initial permission from the management was taken and after that it was made sure that no intermediate actor, including manager or supervisor, was there during the process of data collection to prevent social desirability bias.

After the collection of data, Harman's Single factor (Harman, 1976) was applied. As a result of exploratory factor analysis, it was highlighted that 34% of the variance has been explained by the first factor, which is below the threshold value of 40% (Fuller et al., 2016). Thus, there was no effect of common method bias on the present study. Apart from that, a Common Latent Factor (CLF) was also conducted to ensure that there is no presence of common method

variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The results indicated that there was no presence of common method bias.

4.5 Structural Equational Modeling

A group of statistical methods known as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) facilitates the examination of a variety of relationships between one or more continuous or discrete independent variables (IVs) and one or more continuous or discrete dependent variables (DVs) (Ullman & Bentler, 2012). According to Hair et al. (2021), "structural equational modeling (SEM), enable researchers to simultaneously model and estimate complex relationships among multiple dependent and independent variables" (p. 4). The question involving multiple regression analysis of the variable can be measured through SEM. As stated by Savalei & Bentler (2006), it goes beyond simple regression analysis encompassing many dependent and independent variables along with hypothetical latent constructs that groups of measured variables could represent. In practice, SEM is dominated by two prevalent techniques: Covariance-Based SEM (CBSEM) and Partial Least Square SEM (PLS-SEM, also called PLS path modeling) (Hair et al., 2021). The present study has used PLS-SEM for the statistical analysis.

PLS-SEM is used as a popular tool in the studies related to Human Resource and social sciences for the purpose of analysis (Ringle et al., 2020). Cegarra et al. (2019) suggests that PLS-SEM is an appropriate approach when the models involving complex structural relationships are to be examined. Moreover, PLS-SEM proves to be a valuable statistical approach to study the objectives of the research based on making predictions explaining the variation in the targeted variables (Hair et al., 2012). Another reason to use PLS-SEM for the statistical analysis in the present study is the sufficient sample size that is required to achieve the acceptable level of statistical power using PLS-SEM technique (Reinartz et al., 2009). For the correct application of PLS-SEM, it must be focused on two stages. The first stage includes measurement model, including internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. The second stage, which is the structural model, includes f^2 and R^2 (Hair et al., 2017; Ramayah et al., 2018).

4.6 Measurement Model assessment

4.6.1 Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability is "a measures of the degree to which the items reflect the latent constructs" (Memon et al., 2020, p. 11). It is measured through Composite Reliability (CR) (Richter et al., 2016). According to the rule of thumb, a CR value that is greater than 0.7 is considered as an acceptable value (Ringle et al., 2020; Nunnally, 1978). According to the results of the measurement model for the present study, all the constructs show a satisfactory value for composite reliability – AVT (0.941), MOVI (0.922), environmental security (0.905), despotic leadership (0.938), frugal innovation (0.894), and workplace inclusion (0.806), showing high values of internal consistency reliability.

4.6.2 Convergent Validity

Cconvergent validity is "the extent to which a measure correlates positively with an alternative measure of the same construct" (Hair et al., 2014, p. 102). It can be assessed by looking at the factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of the factor loadings of the indicators (Hair et al., 2017). The higher value of the factor loading indicates that the item is representative of the construct to a higher degree. As a rule of thumb, the value for the factor loading should be more than the threshold of 0.708, since the squared value (0.708) equals 50% AVE (0.50). The item with a low outer loading (0.4-0.7) can be maintained only if the AVE of the other items is 0.5 or above. The results of the convergent validity indicate that all the items except FI1 have satisfactory factor loadings, hence FI1 was removed. Although the outer loadings for FI5 (0.515), FI6 (0.537), FI7 (0.69), and FI8 (0.69) were also below the threshold value of 0.708. But they were kept because the other items of the same construct showed satisfactory scores (factor loadings > 0.708, AVE > 0.5). Moreover, WI3 also showed low value of loading (0.416), but it was maintained since the other items of the same construct showed satisfactory scores for AVE (>0.5) and factor loadings (>0.708). The values for AVE – AVT (0.841), MOVI (0.597), environmental security (0.705), despotic leadership (0.717), frugal innovation (0.52), and workplace inclusion (0.603), shows the satisfactory levels of convergent validity.

Table 2: Measurement Model results

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CR rho_c	AVE	VIF
Anti Violence Training	AVT1	0.901	0.941	0.841	1.52
	AVT2	0.932			
	AVT3	0.918			
Despotic Leadership	DL1	0.855	0.938	0.717	
	DL2	0.904			
	DL3	0.8			
	DL4	0.81			
	DL5	0.784			
	DL6	0.832			
Environmental Security	ES1	0.869	0.905	0.705	1.415
	ES2	0.787			
	ES3	0.862			
	ES4	0.836			
Frugal Innovation	FI2	0.847	0.894	0.52	
	FI3	0.822			
	FI4	0.787			
	FI5	0.515			
	FI6	0.537			
	FI7	0.69			
	FI8	0.69			
	FI9	0.803			
Management of Violence	MOVI1	0.722	0.922	0.597	1.687
	MOVI2	0.74			
	MOVI3	0.76			
	MOVI4	0.804			
	MOVI5	0.81			
	MOVI6	0.757			
	MOVI7	0.872			
	MOVI8	0.705			
Workplace Inclusion	WI1	0.893	0.806	0.603	

WI2	0.915	
WI3	0.416	

4.6.3 Discriminant Validity

Ddiscriminant validity is "the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs by empirical standards" (Hair et al., 2014, p. 104). Hetrotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) criterion was used to measure the discriminant validity in the present study. As compared to the other methods of measuring discriminant validity, HTMT is considered to be the most conservative method (Henseler et al., 2015). Hair et al. (2017) defines it as "ratio of the between-trait correlations to the within-trait correlation" (p. 118). According to the guidelines by (Kline, 2011), the value for HTMT should not be more than 0.85 in order to achieve discriminant validity. The results of the measurement model shows that each of construct has value for HTMT less than 0.85, thus achieving the discriminant validity.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. AVT						
2. DL	0.138					
3. ES	0.469	0.274				
4. FI	0.493	0.402	0.523			
5. MOVI	0.585	0.419	0.565	0.581		
6. WI	0.326	0.456	0.457	0.656	0.545	

Note: Criteria: DV is established at HTMT 0.85 (Kline, 2011)

Note: Anti-Violence Training (AVT), Environmental Security (ES), Management of Violent Incidents (MOVI), Despotic Leadership (DL), Frugal Innovation (FI), , Workplace Inclusion (WI)

4.7 Structural Model

4.7.1 Hypothesis Testing (direct)

The assessment of the structural model is based on testing the cause-and-effect relationships between the variables. Several criteria were used in order to assess the structural model, including path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2) and the effect size (f^2). The value for coefficient of determination tells the overall predictive accuracy of the research model (Hair et al., 2014). Cohen (1988) suggested values of R^2 as 0.26, 0.13 and 0.02 to be considered large, medium and small, respectively. The coefficient of determination for frugal innovation (0.263) shows large and workplace inclusion (0.205) shows medium to large value.

Effect size (f^2) refers to "the change in the R^2 when a specified exogenous construct was omitted from the model which could be used to evaluate whether the omitted construct had a substantive impact on the endogenous variable" (Hair et al., 2014, p. 177). In order to examine the Effect size (f^2), the values should of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 shows weak, medium and substantial effect size respectively (Cohen, 1988). The results for the (f^2) for the present study show that AVT has no effect on workplace inclusion (0.000), while MOVI (0.082) and environmental security (0.024) have small effect on workplace inclusion. Furthermore, workplace inclusion has a substantial effect (0.356) on workplace inclusion.

The significance of all the 6 hypotheses in the present study was tested through a technique named bootstrapping (5000 subsamples, one-tailed significance). The results showed that MOVI (H1, β=0.332, p= 0.000, t=3.756, (CI LL) =0.175, (CI UL) = 0.467) and environmental security (H3, β=0.163, p= 0.012, t=2.268, (CI LL) =0.046, (CI UL) = 0.280) has a significant positive relationship with workplace inclusion. However, contrary to the researcher's expectations, AVT (H2, β=0.022, p= 0.318, t=0.296, (CI LL) =-0.098, (CI UL) =0.150) has no significant relationship with workplace inclusion. Furthermore, the results showed that workplace inclusion (H4, β=0.512, p= 0.000, t=8.018, (CI LL) =0.387, (CI UL) = 0.602) has a significant positive relationship with frugal innovation. Therefore, H1 and H3 and H4 were supported whereas H2 was not supported.

4.*7.2 Hypothesis Testing (mediation and moderation)*

Mediation analysis was performed to test H5, whereas moderation analysis was performed to test H6. The results showed that workplace inclusion mediates the relationship between AVHRPs (MOVI, AVT, environmental security) and frugal innovation (H5, β=0.172, p= 0.002, t=3.152, (CI LL) = 0.069, (CI UL) = 0.277), hence the hypothesis was supported. The results for moderation analysis showed that despotic leadership moderates the relationship between AVHRPs and workplace inclusion (H6, β=0.139, p= 0.025, t=1.965, (CI LL) =0.024, (CI UL) = 0.258), hence the hypothesis 5 and 6 were supported.

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Beta	STDEV	*t*	*p*	CI LL	CI UL	Decision
MOVI -> WI	0.332	0.088	3.756	0.000	0.175	0.467	Supported
AVT -> WI	0.022	0.075	0.296	0.383	-0.098	0.150	Not Supported
ES -> WI	0.163	0.072	2.268	0.012	0.046	0.280	Supported
WI -> FI	0.512	0.064	8.018	0.000	0.387	0.602	Supported
AVHRPs -> WI -> FI	0.172	0.055	3.152	0.002	0.069	0.277	Supported
DL x AVHRPs -> WI	0.139	0.071	1.965	0.025	0.024	0.258	Supported

Note: Anti-Violence HR Practices(AVHRPs), Anti-Violence Training (AVT), Environmental Security (ES), Management of Violent Incidents (MOVI), Despotic Leadership (DL), Frugal Innovation (FI), , Workplace Inclusion (WI)
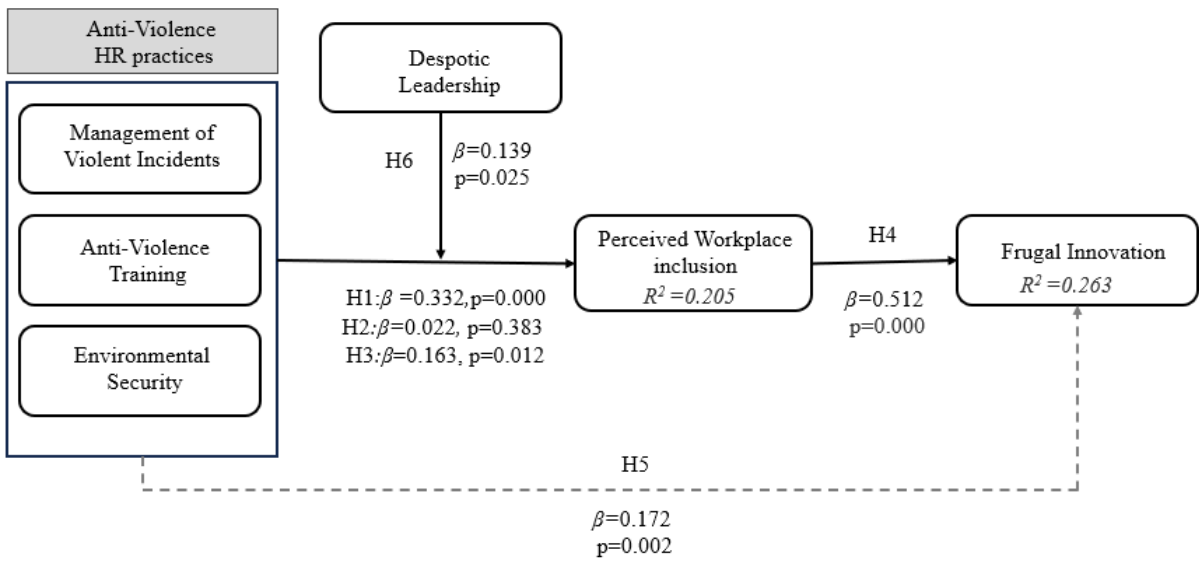
Figure 2. Structural Model
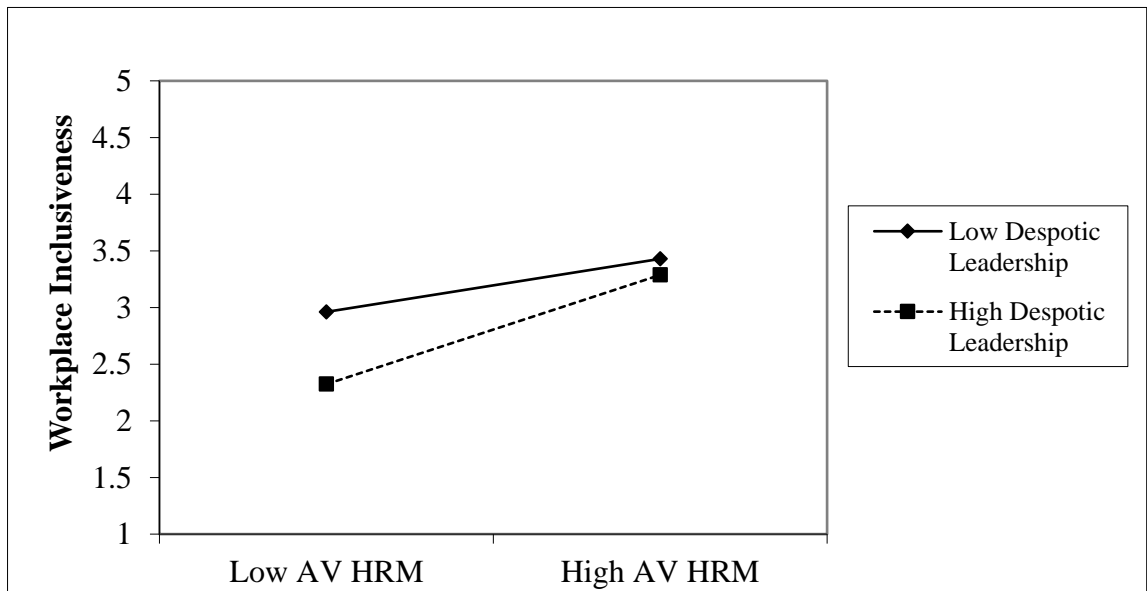
Figure 3. Moderation Plot

4.8 Chapter Summary

After the data collection from the female employees as per the study objectives, this chapter aimed at the empirical investigation of the data. For this, the chapter initiated by stating the demographic information of the respondents. The data collected from the respondents was statistically analyzed via partial least square structural equational modeling. The findings from the measurement model showed that all the results for internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity were as per the specified criteria. Furthermore, the results from the structural model revealed that the hypothesis proposing the influence of AVT on workplace inclusion was rejected, whereas all the other hypothesis were confirmed.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Chapter Introduction

We commence this chapter with a brief summary of the results providing an overview of the results describing an interplay between the variables with respect to the underlying problem and the objectives of the present study. The core of this section focuses on a detailed discussion of the results and findings revealed in the previous chapter via statistical analysis. Moving on, the chapter also underscores the implications of the findings of the current study to the academic literature and their practical application in the organizations. Lastly, the chapter concludes with the limitations faced by the researchers throughout the study and a few recommendations for the future researches.

5.2 Summary of Results

The statistical analysis through partial least square structural equational modeling showed that the results of measurement model are quite satisfactory. Furthermore, the results for structural analysis showed that all the hypotheses except hypothesis 2, emphasizing the influence of AVT on workplace inclusion was rejected. Notably, the results suggested that when an organization effectively manages the incidents of violence by addressing discriminations and micro aggressions proactively, it fosters the feeling of inclusion. The results of the study underscore that taking measures to enhance security and providing safe zones for the employees to cope with both physical as well as psychological violence, also has a positive influence on workplace inclusion. Furthermore, contrary to the expectations, AVT did not have an influence on workplace inclusion indicating that trainings do not always prove to be effective in achieving a collective goal, such as workplace inclusion.

As demonstrated by the results, there exists a positive relationship between workplace inclusion and frugal innovation. A workplace attributed to equality and freedom to share diverse perspectives fosters innovative contributions even in the face of resource constraints. Moreover, this study also emphasized the indirect role of AVHRPs in fostering workplace inclusion. Lastly, the results of the present study provide compelling evidence demonstrating the role of despotic leadership in strengthening the relationship between AVHRPs and workplace inclusion. This indicates that, in a country like Pakistan, the presence of an

autocratic leadership is an important factor in ensuring that HR practices are being followed in the organizations to attain the desired goal.

5.3 Discussion

Hypothesis 1: Influence of MOVI on workplace inclusion

The present study has revealed that AVHRPs (MOVI and environmental security) have a positive influence on female employees' perceptions of workplace inclusiveness. Notably, MOVI emerges as a robust predictor in this context. This suggests that when organizations establish and support initiatives aimed at addressing incidents involving discrimination and micro aggressions (Sue, 2010), they convey a positive message to all members, particularly female employees. Moreover, vigorous involvement helps the managers identify the behavioral problems as well as assist in identifying solutions when problems are noticed and reported (Coursey et al., 2013). When managers focus on enhancing the quality of the working environment, it conveys a message to the employees that they are dedicated to upholding certain standard at the workplace (Coursey et al., 2013; Stanley et al., 2007). Moreover, the organization's commitment to managing and formally addressing workplace violence events sends a clear signal that each individual is equally valued. Through well-crafted policies and procedures designed to handle violence incidents in the workplace, organizations can provide reassurance to their employees that their well-being is a priority. Krivkovich (2022) found that women place greater importance on organizations that prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion initiatives, and employee well-being, resulting in an enhanced perception of inclusion among female employees.

Hypothesis 2: Influence of AVT on workplace inclusion

Contrary to expectations, AVT does not influence female employees' perceptions of inclusion (H2). Traditionally, training has been associated with positive impacts on employees. Explaining this finding is challenging; however, one plausible explanation is that training might be more effective in certain contexts. For instance, if an organization seeks to enhance individual task performance, training could be a suitable approach to equip employees with the necessary skills for improvement. Yet, when the goal is collective and pertains to more serious

matters like workplace violence, training initiatives may be less effective, potentially offering mere awareness or procedural exercises. Particularly in countries like Pakistan, training interventions are often viewed as expenditures rather than investments (Khilji, 2003; Mangi, 2012), potentially affecting employees' commitment to such sessions. Therefore, while the findings are complex, it provides valuable insights into this multifaceted phenomenon.

Hypothesis 3: Influence of environmental security on workplace inclusion

The results further suggest that environmental security influences female employees' workplace inclusion (H3). A secure workplace is a key component of a thriving work environment that ensures employee well-being (Igboanugo et al., 2022). As stated by Workman-Stark (2021), people speak freely only when they feel that doing so would be valuable and they are not overly concerned about facing criticism from the others or the potential harmful personal consequences. This entails that when an organization prioritizes the welfare of its workers by providing a safe and secure environment, employees can contribute their best without fear. Yousaf et al. (2022) emphasize that the feeling of psychological safety among the employees results in positive perception of workplace inclusiveness. Moreover, employees, when feel that they are safe to voice their opinions, they feel an included part of the organization. This is what in return enhances workplace inclusion among the employees, as mentioned by Smith (2020), that communication is one of the main drivers of the workplace inclusion. Thus, the finding is consistent with existing explanations and logical sound.

Hypothesis 4: Influence of workplace inclusion on frugal innovation

The results indicate that workplace inclusion fosters frugal innovation among female employees. An inclusive workplace ensures equality and equal growth opportunities, encouraging employees to share diverse perspectives. This sense of community and ownership leads female employees to contribute creatively and innovate even with limited resources and amid uncertainties. Diverse viewpoints foster the development of novel ideas, yielding innovative outcomes despite resource constraints. The Accountability Lab (2022) highlights that diversity and inclusion-focused organizations promote innovation and competitiveness by bringing varied perspectives to the forefront, positively impacting the economy.

Hypothesis 5: Workplace inclusion as a mediator

The results suggest that female employees' positive perception of workplace inclusion mediates the relationship between AVHRPs and frugal innovation, supporting H5. Given the positive associations between AVHRPs and workplace inclusion, and between workplace inclusion and frugal innovation, the mediating role of workplace inclusion is logically justified. HR functions aimed at safeguarding employees, both physically and psychologically, empower them. Empowered employees feel valued and included in the workplace (prasad, 2001). Given the evidence that disadvantaged employees have lower levels of commitment, it is suggested that organizations should consider how to best structure their HR practices, systems and environment to satisfy employee expectations and foster commitment among diverse workforce. Moreover, presence of AVHRPs encourage workplace inclusion by promoting a safe work environment. Fostering a feeling of safety has also been highlighted as one of the important behavioral element for creating inclusivity (Ferdman, 2013; Katz & Miller, 2011). Chung et al. (2020) found a positive link between workplace inclusivity and increased helping behavior, creativity, and performance. AVHRPs create a foundation for employees to feel safe, fostering an environment where they fearlessly share ideas, exhibit creative behaviors, and innovate in the services they provide.

Hypothesis 6: Despotic leadership as a moderator

The findings notably suggest that despotic leadership strengthens the relationship between AVHRPs and workplace inclusion (H6). This perspective is novel, as the despotic leadership style is typically associated with negative outcomes. The finding confirms our assumption that context plays a crucial role in leadership styles. Unlike Western cultures, Asian countries, particularly those with high power distance, often exhibit authoritative leadership. While despotic leadership may be perceived negatively in certain instances, it can also be seen as a leadership approach that prioritizes the inclusion of all members of the organization, irrespective of their gender roles. Mukarram et al. (2021) propose that a despotic leader can display compassion, and their controlling behavior may be viewed positively when it aligns with the organization's best interests. Therefore, this finding is logically substantiated and enriches our comprehension of despotic leadership within diverse contexts.

5.4 Implications

5.4.1 Theoretical Implications

The study offers several theoretical implications. Firstly, it establishes the significance of AVHRPs in developing female employees' positive perceptions of workplace inclusion. Previous studies primarily focused on HR diversity practices (Buengeler et al., 2018), High Performance Work Systems (Harrison et al., 2018) to enhance employees' workplace inclusion. However, studies that investigate the role of AVHRPs in this regard are completely absent. Thus, this study not only fills a gap but also opens fresh avenues for future research. For instance, the study found that AVT does not influence female employees' perceptions of workplace inclusion. Since training is one of the most essential HRM functions, future research could explore how different aspects of training individually contribute to workplace inclusion. These aspects could include training quality, training needs analysis, training satisfaction, among others. This approach would further strengthen the phenomenon and shed light on the specific issues that can be further theoretically discussed and practically implemented.

Secondly, workplace inclusion is found to be the mechanism that links AVHRPs and frugal innovation among female employees. Several mechanisms have been previously examined, such as organizational commitment (Juhdi et al., 2013), work engagement (Kataria et al., 2019), job satisfaction (Kundu & Gahlawat, 2015), and organizational citizenship behavior (Shah et al., 2020), between different sets of HRM practices and individual outcomes. However, limited research has been conducted to investigate the mediating role of workplace inclusion between AVHRPs and frugal innovation. Thus, the study provides valuable insights into how AVHRPs impact frugal innovation and responds to the call for research (Gu, 2022).

Thirdly, the present study contributes to leadership literature by conceptualizing and empirically confirming the positive side of the despotic leadership style. Previous studies (e.g., Shah et al., 2023; Saeed et al., 2022; Jabeen & Rahim, 2021; Khan et al., 2022) primarily concentrated on the negative attributes of despotic leaders. However, this is not the prevailing scenario in the context of the current study. Consequently, the findings offer a distinctive viewpoint that future research can explore, highlighting the significance of considering contextual and cultural factors when studying various leadership styles. Therefore, this study remains at the forefront of proposing a positive connotation for despotic leadership.

Lastly, the present study focuses on a niche area, namely female service sector employees, which has rarely been studied for HRM practices, inclusiveness, and frugal innovation. Previous studies have mainly focused on these issues in a general context (Brimhall et al., 2017; Kulkarni et al., 2016). Considering the importance of female participation for both organizational and overall economic prosperity, the findings of the present study contribute to the literature on gender-related aspects. The study suggests what can be done to achieve female employees' workplace inclusion and frugal innovation even in countries with high uncertainties and limited resources.

5.4.2 Practical Implications

The study also offers several recommendations for managers in the service sector to enhance female employees' perceptions of inclusion and innovation outcomes. Firstly, the study found that MOVI is a strong predictor of female employees' positive perceptions of workplace inclusiveness. Actions speak louder than words. Thus, managers should introduce strict and comprehensive policies for all employees in the organization without any exceptions. This should include a zero-tolerance approach towards any negative behaviors that could harm the workplace environment. Incidents of harassment or violence should be addressed promptly, with follow-up sessions organized to ensure consistent implementation at all levels. Furthermore, proper documentation should cover all aspects of employee roles, participation, and performance, with a particular focus on female employees. This is crucial to ensure that no employees are left out, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Secondly, environmental security has been proven to be the second most important factor contributing to female employees' perceptions of workplace inclusion. Electronic surveillance, the presence of security guards, and other security measures will ensure the safety of all female employees. A perception of a safe workplace will lead to a positive perception of workplace inclusion. Sometimes, it's not enough to wait for a female employee to report an issue before acting. A proactive approach would foster a sense of inclusion among female employees by promptly demonstrating the organization's commitment to their safety and security. Thus, managers should actively monitor surveillance recordings to ensure a safe environment.

Lastly, despotic leadership can be effective in maximizing the impact of AVHRPs on workplace inclusion. Thus, unlike other HRM functions, the function focused on workplace inclusion and a safe workplace should be strongly implemented, ensuring full compliance. Those who fail to

comply must be identified and excluded. Workplace inclusion is a collective objective; it is essential for organizational image and branding. Therefore, to some extent, leaders need to exercise their powers in the best interest of the organization. Formal meetings, reminders, and continuous communication on the implementation of AVHRPs would be useful for employees to stay focused and ensure that female employees feel safe and have a positive experience.

5.5 Limitations and Future Directions

The current study possesses certain limitations. Firstly, the study was cross-sectional in nature. Although we have applied multiple techniques (e.g., procedural and statistical) to minimize common method variance, we cannot eliminate its presence. Future studies could consider using longitudinal or time-lagged approaches for more robust conclusions. This will also enable a detailed analysis of how inclusivity in the workplace evolves over time. Moreover, whether or not the relationships observed in the current study hold up over the longer time period can also be discovered through a longitudinal study.

Secondly, the present study focused on female workplace inclusion. However, workplace inclusion issues also exist based on factors such as ethnicity, educational background, disabilities, and race. For example, in some organizations, employees are often discriminated against based on their educational background. Hence, future researchers could investigate whether the educational background of employees and other demographic characteristics are significant factors affecting workplace inclusiveness. This also opens the door for comparative research including both male and female respondents.

Thirdly, the present study has only focused on the service sector, which may not provide a comprehensive perception of female employees in Pakistan. Other sectors (e.g., manufacturing) should be considered to validate this model and determine whether female employees' perceptions deviate from the current findings. Fourthly, the future researchers can also go for a qualitative analysis such as interviews to get an in-depth revelation of experiences of the female employees and explore the factors that enhances inclusivity at the workplace.

Lastly, the present study has found despotic leadership to have positive impacts on enhancing workplace inclusion in the short term. For future studies, researchers should opt for longitudinal research design to determine the role of despotic leadership in enhancing workplace inclusion in the long term. Moreover, future researchers can also study the positive influence of despotic leadership on workplace inclusion in comparison with other leadership styles (e.g., laissez-

faire, transformational) to gain a comprehensive understanding of its role relative to other types of leaderships.

5.6 Conclusion

When it comes to inclusivity, the experiences of women in the workplace have only gotten worse. This has led to devastating outcomes for the organizations. Therefore, it has become important for the organizations to respond to the inclusivity crises and make it a part of their core values. Therefore, the present study holds noteworthy significance as it provides insights to the managers in taking a proactive approach to implement HR practices and providing consistent support that foster an inclusive workplace environment for females. The study also provides significant insights to create an inclusive workplace in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 5, focused on empowering women. In recognizing the dire need for the organization to shift towards inclusivity, the present study is a timely call for action for academics and practitioners to propel the organizations to achieve the global objective encapsulated in the 2030 agenda. By promoting an inclusive workplace as a part of the core values, organizations can contribute to laying the foundation for a more equitable future empowering woman.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: Demographic Information

1.	Gender	Female (*only*)
2.	Marital Status	□ Married □ Unmarried □ Other
3.	Qualification	□ Matric □ Intermediate □ Bachelors □ Masters □ PhD □ Certification
4.	Experience in the current organization (in years)	□ Less than 1 year □ 1-3 years □ 4-6 years □ 7 years or more
5.	Are you a female working in IT, Telecom or Hopsitality industry?	□ Yes □ No

Section 2: For each statement below please circle the appropriate responses:

1 = Strongly Disagree (SDA), 2 = Disagree (DA), 3 = Somewhat Disagree (SWD), 4 = Neutral (N), 5 = Somewhat Agree (SWA), 6 = Agree (A), 7 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Workplace Inclusion	SDA (1)	DA (2)	SWD (3)	N (4)	SWA (5)	A (6)	SA (7)
1. I feel like an accepted part of my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I feel included in most activities at my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Sometimes, I feel like an outsider at my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Frugal Innovation	SDA (1)	DA (2)	SWD (3)	N (4)	SWA (5)	A (6)	SA (7)
1. My organization provides services that focus on the main purpose of the service rather than the additional purposes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. My organization consistently looks for innovative solutions that offer ease of use of services provided to the guests/ customers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My organization consistently improves the durability of the services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. My organization consistently introduces new solutions that offer good and cheap services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My organization significantly reduces costs in the operational process	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My organization significantly reduces the final price of the service provided to the guests/customers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My organization always cares for environmental sustainability in the operational process (waste management, energy, water conservation, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. My organization frequently improves partnerships with other local organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. My organization always searches for efficient and effective solutions to guests'/customers' social/ environmental needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

For each statement below please circle the appropriate responses:

1 = Strongly Disagree (SDA), 2 = Disagree (DA), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A),

5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Despotic Leadership	SDA (1)	DA (2)	N (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
1. My manager is harsh and has no pity or compassion	1	2	3	4	5
2. My manager gives orders and does not tolerate disagreement or questioning	1	2	3	4	5
3. My manager acts like an authoritarian	1	2	3	4	5
4. My manager tends to be unwilling to give up his control of projects or tasks	1	2	3	4	5
5. My manager expects strict obedience from those reporting to him/her	1	2	3	4	5
6. My manager seeks revenge when harmed	1	2	3	4	5

Anti-Violence HR practices **(Management of violent incidents)**	SDA (1)	DA (2)	N (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
1. My organization identifies preventive actions to implement in the future after the incidents of violence at the workplace	1	2	3	4	5
2. My organization investigates incidents of workplace violence in a timely manner	1	2	3	4	5
3. My organization considers all employees' reports about violent behaviors from a guest/customer when making decisions about the guest'/customer's care	1	2	3	4	5
4. My organization encourages its employees to report workplace violence incidents	1	2	3	4	5

	SDA (1)	DA (2)	N (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
5. My organization communicates to employees the actions taken as a result of the reporting of violent incidents	1	2	3	4	5
6. My organization makes clear that employees should not tolerate violence from anyone at the workplace	1	2	3	4	5
7. My organization provides employees with appropriate follow-up, support, or care after an incident of violence at the workplace	1	2	3	4	5
8. My organization consults its employees in developing action plans for violence prevention	1	2	3	4	5
Management practices (Anti-Violence Training)	**SDA (1)**	**DA (2)**	**N (3)**	**A (4)**	**SA (5)**
1. My organization provides its employees with regular training in responding to incidents of violence	1	2	3	4	5
2. My organization provides middle management with training on dealing with incidents of violence	1	2	3	4	5
3. My organization provides new employees with training on responding to incidents of violence, at the start of their placement	1	2	3	4	5
Anti-Violence HR practices (Environmental Security)	**SDA (1)**	**DA (2)**	**N (3)**	**A (4)**	**SA (5)**
1. My organization has adequate security staff	1	2	3	4	5
2. My organization has sufficient CCTV cameras	1	2	3	4	5
3. My organization has safe zones for staff	1	2	3	4	5

| 4. My organization has implemented all environmental security-related initiatives. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |