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# The Relation between Despotic Leadership and Psychological Well-Being in Project Based Organization

by

Adeel Ahmed Kalyar

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degree of Master of Science

in the

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*This work is dedicated to people I love and admire. . . My Parents*



## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

### The Relation between Despotic Leadership and Psychological Well-Being in Project Based Organization

by

Adeel Ahmed Kalyar

(MPM183015)

### THESIS EXAMINING COMMITTEE

S. No.	Examiner	Name	Organization
(a)	External Examiner	Dr. Khurram Shehzad	RU, Rawalpindi
(b)	Internal Examiner	Dr. Samiya Safdar	CUST, Islamabad
(c)	Supervisor	Dr. S.M.M. Raza Naqvi	CUST, Islamabad

---

Dr. S.M.M. Raza Naqvi

Thesis Supervisor

August, 2020

---

Dr. Mueen Aizaz Zafar  
Head  
Dept. of Management Sciences  
August, 2020

---

Dr. Arshad Hassan  
Dean  
Faculty of Management & Social Sciences  
August, 2020

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**Adeel Ahmed Kalyar**

(MPM183015)

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**Adeel Ahmed Kalyar**

(MPM183015)

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**Adeel Ahmed Kalyar**

(MPM183015)

## *Abstract*

This study aims at the relation between despotic leadership and psychological well-being in a project based organization. This research study makes a significant and an important contribution in the literature of project management as well as to the leadership and the findings of this study can help IT/Software project based organizations and software houses of Pakistan to find out the potential reasons of their employee's disturbed or negative psychological well-being and a possible solution to improve it through the discouragement of despotic leadership style of negative management. The current research study is conducted on the private sector of IT/Software project based organization(s) and software house(s). Respondents (only employees) working in different IT/Software project based organizations and software houses of Pakistan who responded to the questionnaires distributed in respect of this research study collectively made the total number of 240 responses on which the different test and analysis were run using IBM SPSS Statistics. Results obtained after the analysis revealed that the despotic leadership has a significant and a negative impact on psychological well-being of an employee. Emotional exhaustion was the mediator between despotic leadership and psychological well-being for the current study and the mediation result was also found to be the significant but it was a partial mediation. Organizational justice was an important variable for this study acting as the moderating variable, result of the moderation was also found to be significant and it helped to achieve the aim of the current study of discouraging despotic leadership negative style of management, as in the presence of organizational justice between the link of emotional exhaustion and psychological well-being it reduced the effect of emotional exhaustion which helped to achieve an increase and improvement in the psychological well-being of an employee working under despotic leadership.

**Keywords: Despotic Leadership, Emotional Exhaustion, Organizational Justice, Psychological Well-Being.**



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# Abbreviations

<b>DL</b>	Despotic Leadership
<b>EE</b>	Emotional Exhaustion
<b>OJ</b>	Organizational Justice
<b>PWB</b>	Psychological Well-being
<b>SET</b>	Social Exchange Theory
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Theoretical Background

Before going to start mentioning all of our concerned concepts and discussions. Let us have some discussion about the basic terms in start. Which will help us to develop a platform and understanding while going forward. Project can be explained through three main pillars, time, cost and specification (scope), while to achieve all these and to be considered as an ultimate success, project needs to follow a unique, interlinked and complex sequence of activities to fulfill preset goal (Reenu, Rajeev, & Babu, 2017). As we have defined what is a project and now as we have clear view of it, we are now able to link it with management concept and will see how we can understand both concepts collectively. Project management is the achievement of goals and objectives set for the specific project within limited time, cost and resources, while keeping in mind the outcomes must meet the quality level defined by the customer (PMI, 2008).

Manager and employees are the important part of the project(s) Because all the work on a project is performed by the employees and managers combined. Just to support this statement we consider a very simple example; if a manager is on average in technical skills and employees are at top of the technicalities but the employees are on average in communication but the manager is at top of it, here we can see one is covering the back of other and how a gap is being filled, so this is

important for the project based organizations to get their managers and employees on same track while supporting each other sharing their strengths and weaknesses. All around the world and even in our country (Pakistan) organizations do spend a lot in term of money and time on their employee's development to keep the discovered and polished talent to their organization and software house. No one wants to lose such employee on which a huge sum (money and time) has been spent, as they are the ones who knows the values and rules of the organization and have worked on many projects through their development time, whereas managers or leaders mostly keeps changing from project to project and time to time. Organizations even hire managers or leaders for specific project or for specific problem for the time of need and after that they both say good bye and may never see each other. We can take a real life example to understand this concept more clearly, as every season in football league welcomes new project of winning league title (scope) with limited games (time) and with the limited players (employees). Now that football club also hires a coach (project manager) for specific time period to help their club (organization) win the league title (scope). After winning title that club may part their way with the coach they hired for the specific title but what remains with them are the players (employees). As employees are the ones who are the main resources and carry out the tasks of any project. So keeping them happy and stay with your organization is the best option.

Leadership is a process in which a leader knows how to develop relationships to make his/her ideas accepted by applying intentional influence (Balwant, 2016). While defining leadership in general, we can state that it is an influential attempt to change the behavior and thoughts of a person or group to make them realize the goals leader wants those to be achieved (Parry, & Bryman, 2006). Leadership is a way through which a leader motivates and boost the morale of others to put in extra work efforts for the achievement of goals (Asrar, & Peter, 2016).

Despotic leadership is a negative leadership style as it is the opposite of ethical leadership, as a result of negatively handling of employees, employees also respond in a negative way, which results in a bad job performance, decrease in creativity and leaves a negative impact on organization (Zafer, 2019). As there



are many styles and ways of management but despotic leadership is a negative style of management in which, despotic leaders, managers or supervisors act in totally unaccepted ways, as they are always selfish and they do not care about the feelings and problems of their employees or followers, above all they just want them to do as leader say without any questions in return and disallow any suggestions and feedbacks from his followers (Schilling, 2009). Despotic leadership creates and develops fear among employees as such leader is not concerned about their future, due to such reason, employees always feel unsafe about their position in the organization they are working, as leader is doing everything for his own benefits and employees feels just like a tool at the despoil of leader, creates and develops a desire to leave such organization (De Hoogh, & Den Hartog, 2008). Despotic leader uses the assets of the organization for his own benefits and doing so he rejects the vision and targets of the organization in which such negative manager is working (Aronson, 2009).

In Pakistan the power culture is a well-known fact, as it has been observed through majority that whoever is in the power and assigned control of any resource (money, human, machines), he/she wants to tighten their grip on the resources so that they can practice the power that has been given to them through their position and designation. In Pakistan it is also absorbed through the behavior of majority leader, managers and supervisors that they put their selves first and want to achieve their targets before anything goes to the benefit and development of their employees. Despotic leader can be known as a leader or manager who puts his own will and wishes first and after his/her wills being fulfilled he/she may consider the will of his/her employees (Baldwin, & Haugaard, 2015). Despotic leadership highlights such managerial behavior with the clear indicators (selfish, insulting in public as well as in private, demotivating, discouraging, not allowing suggestions, not allowing questioning, taking revenge when called wrong and never forgiving) to call someone the practitioner of such negative style of management. Consequences of this bad, unethical and negative managerial styles are many, you can make a list of these but for our research and concern, we limit the results just to the emotional

exhaustion of employees in a project and employee's psychological well-being working in a project to be highly effected. Which in doubt shapes the behavior of the person who is under such environment and style of management.

Emotional exhaustion is a state where an individual (employee) feel that he/she is not anymore able or allowed to share his/her thoughts, have no say about the work, not able to develop any kind of relationship with others and workplace to make work more productive, which in end results with a desire of not working, tension and fear with their job of being called wrong or not following what is asserted on them (Hu et al., 2019). Emotional exhaustion also leads to very serious problem such as individual's personal accomplishments not being accomplished with loss of physical and mental resources (Buys, 2016). Emotional exhaustion can also lead to employee's decrease in level of influence a leader has created through time (Dust et al., 2018).

As we have shortly defined what emotional exhaustion looks like and what are the shades of it. It alone shows that these are the things no project based organization will want to see and develop in their employees. How can a project based organization and software house can meet its success criteria when its employee is not able to communicate with other employee and project manager. Employees being not able to share their thoughts that can limit their development as well as can increase the rate of issues a project can face. This emotional exhaustion in employees can cause performance drop (Aryee et al., 2008), which is the result of continuous development of tension and pressure throughout the life of the project. We can see that in a software development teams, employees working on a same project when communicates more, there is very low chance of bugs to appear as compared to the employees who speak very rare to each other while they are working on a same project. We can say that emotional exhaustion is negatively linked with the performance of employees (Moon, & Hur, 2011) and the health of a project itself too. Despotic leadership is which limits the communication and sharing of ideas and employees facing issues or confusion when not able to discuss with the leader, manager or other employees gets emotionally exhausted. Leaders and managers are the ones with the highest interpersonal skills while employees

are the ones with the highest technical skills and when an employee is assigned some task of the project and he/she knows its technicalities and on the bases of it that employees wants to share his/her opinion but despotic leaders, manager or supervisor does not allow, creates mental exhaustion which directly contributes to the emotional exhaustion of employee.

Organizational justice is a sense of feel that weather an employee is treated fairly by his/her organization in response to his contribution towards the organization (Civelek, Cemberci, Ince, & Gunel, 2016). Organizational justice can increase the commitment of an employee towards the work place and organization as justice is the fairness with the employee as per his/her work and can also lead to negative emotions if there is lack of justice from organization (Lambert, Liu, & Jiang, 2018). It is also mapped on the salary structure, decisions and policies for promotion of employees, are they being treated in a polite and respectful way from their manager, supervisor or leader, above all the main thing associated with organizational justice is, is there is fairness in the procedures inside the organization and not effected by any biasness (Nix, & Wolfe, 2016). Organizational justice is the thing that keeps employees somehow motivated even they are emotionally exhausted through the despotic leadership or management. As with the presence of it, employees perceive that there will be justice with them for their work and a despotic leader will also be questioned for his actions. This perception alone can help employee's emotional exhaustion in a project based organization to be reduced to some extent. Perception about the justice in the organization can become very helpful and can aid in a positive way to the employees being stressed in a project, organizational justice can increase the commitment of employees towards the task, project and organization while creating a trust relationship with the organization (Colquitt, Scott, Judge, & Shaw, 2006). At the other end if there is not even the concept of organizational justice and every employee is told to not even imagine of it for their rescue, a chaos will develop and employees will leave the organization at the very first chance. Despotic leadership style of management is not known for his justice, as such unethical manager not even allow questioning of his/her decision, so how can such a rude manager, leader or supervisor will support justice.

To counter this destructive behavior, organizational justice plays its part in the project environment to provide a peace of mind to the employees and to make the equation even. So that employees do not feel rejected and abandoned. Which in doubt helps in recovering the disturbed emotional exhaustion of employees in a project.

Psychological well-being of an employee is related to his/her own personal growth off and on the work place, the meaningful achievements of goals set in mind, purpose in life, one's realization of self-ability and capabilities, what makes him stand out from the rest of the employees, and the commitment with higher self-motivation to fight with challenges on the work place and daily life (Uzaina, 2019). Studies have discovered that psychological well-being is linked with the engagement and involvement of one's with work and can results in the higher level of job performance (Cankir, & Sahin, 2018). Despotism leadership way of management is not in the favor of employee's personal growth and does not care if they are taking next step in their career or not. As such manager only focuses on his/her orders and achievements. Such employees when joined the organization have joined due to some purpose in their life that they want to fulfill through their job and when they came to know that in their present organization and due to such despotism leader it does not seem to be happening, they start looking for it outside of the organization, they leave the organization as soon as they find it somewhere else (Reynolds, 1997).

In Pakistan this is normal that majority of the organizations and leaders, managers or supervisor wants an employee who is "Jack of all trades, master of none". It is being observed that in IT/Software sector of Pakistan a person who has been hired as a back end developer, will also be doing front end development and if that employee have a little bit know how of graphics designing, organization and project manager will love him to do that too along with front end and back end development. So a single employee who is expert on back end development is given job of two different employees. Now it is clear that such employee will have to manager between these three different tasks and in projects when there are tight deadlines and work pressure from despotism leader, it creates physical exhaustion

which contributes to emotional exhaustion of an employee. In very simple way we can quote psychological well-being of employees as the “feeling of happiness” (Schmutte, & Ryff, 1997). As mentioned earlier a single employee will not be happy when doing the task of three men, he/she does not love beside the organization is paying him/her the extra. As with time such employee will not have time to relax and work on relationship with other and above all the line in which he/she wanted to develop himself for personal growth. So organizational justice plays an important role in employee’s psychological well-being.

With all these knowing we can say that a negative management style “despotic leadership” can create emotional exhaustion in employee at the work place through mental exhaustion (i.e. higher expectations) as well as through physical exhaustion (i.e. single employee performing the tasks of three different employees) that can leave a negative impact on employee’s psychological well-being stopping or limiting the development of employees and giving no room to relax (mentally and physically) which in results does not make such exhausted employee to work on building relationships at work place as well as with the family, while organization justice can reduce negative impact of employee’s psychological well-being’s created through emotional exhaustion and can end up having positive impact on psychological well-being of an employee who is being treated unfairly by despotic leader “unethical, harsh and selfish manager”.

## 1.2 Gap Analysis

While reviewing existing literature and studies. It came to be known that despotic leadership is a hot topic now in research but still it is not studied in many dimensions and researches are still finding different relationships for studying despotic leadership, as it is one of the negative and unethical style of leading and managing employees. Despotic leadership was studied with relationship to psychological well-being along with job performance and job satisfaction (Raja, Haq, Clercq, & Azeem, 2019) but emotional exhaustion and organizational justice was not under

consideration for their study, they concluded in their study that despotic leadership has a negative impact on the psychological well-being of an employee and they suggested to find and establish such work environment that discourages this negative style of management “despotic leadership”. Through this paper we started looking for the development of such a research model which is still not discovered and studied and can lead us to a solution that will in practical reduce the impact of despotic leadership and will discourage this style of management. Emotional exhaustion has been studied with despotic leadership earlier (Malik, & Sattar, 2019), but in their study emotional exhaustion is taken as the output (dependent variable) and despotic leadership as a (independent variable).

(Nisar, Othman, & Kamil, 2018) have conducted a study where they have studied the psychological well-being of a leader and suggested to try their study on employees while considering emotional exhaustion as the mediator to check how it results for the psychological well-being of employee(s). Research on organizational justice is still limited with despotic leadership (Kayani, Zafar, Aksar, & Hassan, 2019) while not moderating the link between emotional exhaustion and psychological well-being. (Nauman Fatima, & Haq, 2018) have suggested to study different moderators like organizational justice, emotional intelligence, social support and faith in replacement of trait anxiety. In their study emotional exhaustion was taken as the mediator between despotic leadership and psychological well-being. Even though a lot of studies has been done but there is no work found on the relation between despotic leadership and employee’s psychological well-being in a project based organization where emotional exhaustion is mediating the effect between despotic leadership and employee’s psychological well-being and organizational justice acting as a moderator between employee’s emotional exhaustion and employee’s psychological well-being. The main gap that has been identified is that, this relation is also not touched in terms of projects in Pakistan.

As in Pakistan there is no study in past has been done with such relation and settings. We know in Pakistan the justice is a very serious issue which in no doubt has serious impacts on employee’s psychological well-being. Leaders and managers in Pakistan are mostly demanding their followers to blindly follow them with no

questions and say in return, this style of leadership is what we are studying and it is what we call “despotic leadership: a negative style of management”, which develops emotional exhaustion in employees. So definitely there is a need of carrying out such studies in Pakistani context for the organizations which are based on IT/Software projects where deadlines are tough and competition is hard, so that it will add towards the literature and towards the research study in Pakistan for project based companies, software houses and organizations. Our current study is focused to expand this line of research by proposing emotional exhaustion acting as a mediator, organizational justice as a moderator between the impact of employee’s emotional exhaustion and psychological well-being of employees in projects.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Any project in the world cannot be completed or cannot progress without the combined afford of both, managers/supervisors and employees. Past studies and findings have focused on despotic leadership and psychological well-being along with emotional exhaustion in different settings and dimensions, but there is still a lot to be explored in this relationship of despotic leadership and psychological well-being of employees in a project settings and environment. Most importantly emotional exhaustion being mediator between despotic leadership and psychological well-being is never discussed where organizational justice is acting as a moderator between emotional exhaustion and employee’s psychological well-being.

In Pakistan we see this a lot that an employee is performing tasks that normally two to three men would do while working together, you may have the say that they are not complaining as they are getting additional money and so on. But this is a question that will need an explanation if a person who is not Pakistani raise the question mark, while on the other end a person who lives in Pakistan knows best about how things go around here and how hard it is becoming to find a good job or even just a job, no matter if it is good or not. So when you get the job after competing with thousands of applications and you have many other circumstances

surrounding you, it feels quite impossible or we can say very hard to quit the job like. So this is one of the many reasons employees do accept doing front end and graphics designing with their core responsibility of back end development. Above all when your manager knows that how important this job is to you and how hard it was for you to get here, now things can go both ways. If you are lucky to have a good manager, you will be taken care of your struggle to make here but unfortunately with the presence of despotic leader or manager, such negative manager will use this information for his/her own benefit, as he/she is selfish and knows they you will not leave this organization so easily, such manager will put pressure (mental and physical) on you.

Now in this way a person who was already exhausted due to lack of jobs and after getting job that employee is being treated unfairly, his development is not getting along with his expectations and what he thought that joining this particular organization will help him learn new skills but he found himself trapped in the cage of despotic leader who only cares about himself and does not want to favor anything to his employees. So this creates emotional exhaustion in employees under such manager in a project environment, where you do good in a project, you may have the better chance to be the part of upcoming projects. This further develops into the disturbed or negative psychological well-being of employees. This study will focus to counter such situations due to bad management style “despotic leadership” and will try to contribute and educate so that the despotic leadership style should be discouraged and avoided, also focuses to find out the more of the reasons of negative psychological well-being of employees in the situation explained earlier along with the possible solutions that can help out for the recovery of employee’s psychological well-being with the involvement of organizational justice.

## 1.4 Research Question

As our study is based in the context of Pakistan. Where we have high rate of employees being emotionally exhausted and having negative psychological well-being while their supervisor is not being concerned about their future and growth,



as they are only focused about their own benefits.

Keeping this in mind, our focus will be on the following questions;

**Question 1:** What is the relationship between despotic leadership and employee's psychological well-being in projects?

**Question 2:** Does emotional exhaustion mediates between the relationship of despotic leadership and employee's psychological well-being?

**Question 3:** Does organizational justice play moderating role between employee's emotional exhaustion and employee's psychological well-being?

## 1.5 Objective of the Study

Through this study we are going to measure and create a relationship between despotic leadership, emotional exhaustion, organizational justice and employee's psychological well-being.

Followings are the objectives of this study;

**Objective 1:** To investigate the association between despotic leadership and employee's psychological well-being.

**Objective 2:** To examine mediating role of emotional exhaustion between despotic leadership and employee's psychological well-being.

**Objective 3:** To examine moderating effect of organizational justice on emotional exhaustion and psychological well-being of an employee.

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance and importance of this study is mainly for Pakistan where employees face a lot of problems, due to lesser number of jobs available and after getting a job, job insecurity is always there. This is one glimpse of so many reasons that can lead to negative psychological well-being of an employee in Pakistan. As this study is focused on despotic leadership style of management and how such a manager can lead to effect the psychological well-being of an employee in a project. Along with it we will study emotional exhaustion of employee acting as a

mediating variable in the model and organizational justice as a moderator. This study will help and assist project based organizations to identify what is causing their employees not to be able to stay happy at their work and workplace, why the decrease in performance is rising and why their will to leave the organization is triggered. This study will also help and contribute to identify one of the possible solutions to bring that disturbed psychological well-being of an employee back to normal or we can say back to the track of recovery through providing him/her the organizational justice to reduce his/her emotional exhaustion so that he can again find a purposeful outcome from his job and can live a happy and a confident life on and off the workplace.

This study will also help to deal with the emotional exhaustion of employees which is developed by the behavior and harsh dealing of despotic leader. As through literature it has been found that emotional exhaustion has a direct impact on psychological well-being of employees, so this study will aim to deal with the emotional exhaustion of employees through the help of organizational justice acting as a moderator between emotional exhaustion (mediator) and psychological well-being (dependent variable) of employees. Another significance of this study will be to analyze the impact of despotic leadership on employee's psychological well-being in a project environment with moderating role of organizational justice and mediating effect of emotional exhaustion on psychological well-being of employees. This research is also significant in terms of its theoretical and practical contribution to the existing body of knowledge and more importantly for the IT/-Software organization and software houses in Pakistan which are based on project. In future this study will help the organizations and researchers to use its results and conclusion that how a despotic leader can create emotional exhaustion which directly affect the psychological well-being of their employees (main asset of the organization).

Significance of this study will be that where it will help to identify the reasons for the emotional exhaustion and negative psychological well-being, it will propose the possible ways of dealing with them but what it offers more is to convince project based organizations to discourage despotic leaders, so that projects can

be finished on time and can meet the success criteria of the project. Employees remain healthy (mentally as well as physically), will be able to build confidence through their suggestions and creativity being appreciated, these are the things that can increase the engagement of an employee and can aid into the happiness of employee too. At the end organizations will notice that the employee's psychological well-being with despotic leader is producing bad results overall as compared to employees in organizations who are not under the command of despotic leader, so such style of management is not the way of success.

As reviewing literature there is no such study found with such setting of despotic leadership effecting employee's psychological well-being, emotional exhaustion acting as a mediator between the direct link of despotic leadership (independent variable) and psychological well-being of employee (dependent variable), where organizational justice acts as a moderator between the link of mediating variable (emotional exhaustion) and dependent variable (psychological well-being). Above all the most significant part of the study is especially the progress it is making to encounter the psychological well-being of employees being disturbed by a despotic leader, manager or supervisor in projects and how organizations which are based on project can deal with this problem so that the main and core asset (employees) of the organization can be protected, will have the chance to grow and can contribute to the overall success of organization.

## **1.7 Supporting Theory**

### **1.7.1 Social Exchange Theory**

One of the most used theory between two parties performing any kind of transaction is social exchange theory (SET) where the behavior of one influences the behavior of other and a change process starts, it can result into a good change or relationship and it can be labeled as a bad result depending upon the nature of transaction. This process is consisting of three stages, the first ever action is from any side of the parties (leader/manager/supervisor & employee) but it is mostly

from the manager end, on second comes the reaction from the receiver (employee) it can be both physical and mental and at the very end of this whole process is the formation of the relationship due to the nature of first two stages (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels, & Hall, 2017). As describing social exchange theory (SET) employees expect something good (rewards) as a return of their hard work and employees measure and evaluate the rewards they receive with others who have put in the same amount of affords (Redmond, 2015). While explaining social exchange theory, Blau (1964) mentioned a very important thing that sharing and exchange of things between two parties depends upon the type of relationship two parties develop, as if the first person develops a good and positive relationship with other person, the other person can show dedication to the first person.

Social exchange can get stronger and positive when the managers take care of the employees, as in social exchange six resources are mentioned by (Cropanzano, & Mitchell, 2005) that are mostly being exchanged between two parties in the transection, these are information, love, money, status, services and goods. We know that despotic leader also holds information to himself to keep his power maintained and in return employees also pretend to be sharing information which is being asked but in real the actual information is not shared (i.e. reporting of bugs) due to the nature of transection. In support of this for the better understanding, in a project when the manager does not share the need and reason of any new changes which needs to be implement, employees will not share the reasons of bugs or even they will try to avoid the report the bugs so that more changes will not follow without proper information.

As social exchange theory works on the relationships developed through time with the process of transection between two parties and if the transection from one party stops, the relationship will also terminate (Homans, 1958). So to keep the exchange alive both parties have to stay active and keep sharing what is due on their end, it can be reward or just an appreciation.

In short we can quote social exchange theory (SET) as a “Give and take relationship” and it will not be wrong to mention social exchange theory as a preacher of “Do good, have good” and “What goes around comes around”. So when a

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manager shows care and concern about his/her employees, employees do the same in return (Lawler, 2001), that is why the employees develop love for their manager and they work hard for the reputation of their manager because of the care and concern that has been shown by the manager to his/her employees. As we have mentioned earlier within the light of literature that a despotic leadership style of management is morally bad and is involved in unfair activities, there is huge possibility of such leader to reward employees who have done less with great things as compared to the one who has put all his energy and expertise on the job and that employee who just went through emotional exhaustion in hope of salary rise or promotion is just handled unfairly. Such employee will definitely be a victim of such actions and will have a negative psychological well-being. Which in return will try to create problems and stress for the manager, supervisor to pay him back as of his wrong actions and biasness for being selfish and only concerned about his future which will ultimately impact the project and the organization.

# Chapter 2

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Despotic Leadership and Psychological Well-Being

Despotic leadership is one of the negative leadership styles and making it even worst because of his not forgiving on mistakes and being very harsh towards the employees, as such leader focuses on his own interests and benefits so he does not care about others conditions (physical and mental) and accept no reasons from his followers (employees), which makes him arrogant and bossy (Naseer et al., 2016). Despotic leadership can be defined as a selfish behavior towards followers (employees), to fulfill their own needs and interests, for such reasons they are highly involved in unethical and dishonest activities, while they are mostly lying and pretending to be concerned about others (Rasool et al., 2018). Due to such kind of attitude and behavior from the leader employees starts trying to find their way to survive which in many cases push them to violate the organizational values, rules and policies (Erkutlu, & Chafra, 2018), and they push their way to leave such an organization or in return create a very hard and stressful situation for despotic leader and organization too. In their paper where they studied different styles of leadership and through different methods they conducted tests for the integration of the style of leadership, with many other leadership styles, they also studied and worked on the despotic leadership style of management and they checked either

despotic leadership style can be integrated into the system (organization, company or any work place), their findings about the integration of despotic leadership was found to be the difficult as this type of management behavior lacks the communication factor with its followers and employees (Redeker et al., 2012).

As working on any project, information is the key player in any project, if an employee does not know what is required from him/her, he/she will never be able to direct their hard work and knowledge on the right tracks and in result the outputs will not be the ones that are needed from the success and progress of the project. It has also been observed that as the despotic leadership is negative way of managing and in doing so it leaves negative and bad impact on its victims (employees) but there is one more thing to add here that employees also do something in return in the reaction of such negative management and harsh behavior. If the employee is highly skilled one he/she will go for the drop in performance but (Clercq, Fatima, & Jahanzeb, 2019) have mentioned one interesting reaction from employees for dealing with despotic leadership, it is the projection and presenting of false and wrong impression towards the despotic leadership, this is a very serious and dangerous response from employees as with no doubt it will have impact on despotic leader but its main and real victim in longer term will be the organization and their impression will be the one that will be hurt more. Despotic leadership is considered bad for the interpersonal skills and does not care about the employee's condition (mental condition as well as physical condition), so for despotic leader reserve energy levels are nothing serious or important, such negative leader does not care about the reserve levels of the employees and for the fulfillment of his desire(s) despotic leader has been observed holding his employees beyond the working hours against their will (Hou et al. 2018) and without any reason to convince them or sharing the reason of doing so, such leader's order is the final word and no one is allowed the question that decision.

Despotic leadership in doubt affects the psychological well-being of employees and in return employees develop new behaviors to deal with the such bad and unethical management style. In their study (Stern, & Westphal, 2010) revealed an important thing through their findings that how a despotic leadership through

disturbing psychological well-being of an employee can turn him/her to another addition to the despotic family, an employee being exposed to despotic leadership can be influenced by such negative style and can develop selfishness in his/her behavior to just focus on his/her benefits while ignoring every other team member. That is one the reasons why our study's main aim is to discourage such negative leadership style as it can kill the team work, knowledge sharing, development through working together. On projects all these things are main pillars. Such selfish behaviors lead to drop in organizational profits and more importantly their main resource (employee) starts leaving the organization (Detert, Trevino, Burris, & Andiappan, 2007). All this is because the employees are emotionally exhausted due to such behavior and it creates a mental tension (Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2007).

Despotic leadership is being defined as the action that a leader, manager or supervisor who is labeled as despotic perform in his/her own will but not due to the circumstances or the requirement of the situation (Thoroughgood et al., 2012), which leads him/her to the selfish nature and hurting the mental and physical state of employees on the way. Despotic leadership tends to be called selfish due to another reason too because of caring for himself only as he /she does not provide the security for the job of his/her employees, which is one the big reasons of confidence in his employees, as he makes it clear that if you (employee) are not able to complete the task, I (despotic leadership) will find and hire someone else (Padilla et al. 2007), due to this reasons employees' psychological well-being is always on stake. Despotic leadership is not just limited to the stress of single employee but it is a social tension creator which can transmit and spread its negative effects to the social network of the employee who is being affected by such negative style of management (Schyns, & Schilling, 2013). In their study while discussing the destructive, bad and negative (despotic) leadership, they have mentioned of the impact of negativity over the positivity, as negative things have higher impact because of their fast spread and outcomes being observed very early as compared to positive ones (Schmid, Verdorfer, & Peus, 2018). That is also a reason why such a leader can create emotional exhaustion in employees at workplace so easily



and how easily such negative leader can disturb the psychological well-being of employees too.

It is clear that such negative things result in lower commitment to work (Tepper, 2000), as despotic leadership creates negative psychological well-being in employees and employees being disturbed mentally and physical will not be able to commit to the work as they will be committed when they are happy, mentally and physically not exhausted and will allow to grow in the organization through their personal growth. Despotic leadership is therefore negatively linked with the positive emotions of the employees and can disturb them and can turn the good emotions into bad (Simoës, 2016), from helping, contributing to revenge and selfishness as mentioned earlier how an employee can become despotic due under the influence of despotic leadership (also mentioned as the negative style of dealing and managing the resources (employees)). Despotic leader or leadership does not allow criticism of his/her orders and decisions from his followers (employees) (Martinko et al. 2013), which creates an environment of silence and fear. Despotic leadership style is not known for motivating and increasing their commitment to work (Radwan, 2020) as the ethical does. Such management style also increases the fear of failure in employees (Trivisonno, 2020), which creates stress and employees never easily develop creativity and work on relationships. If such fear can be removed or reduced and employees are allowed to experience failure for future learning and lessons, it can be helpful. Doing so can build trust between employees, organization and manager (De Leon, & Tubay, 2020). Which is very much important in presence of despotic leadership style of management. Despotic leadership can reduce the self-acceptance or self-efficacy. While discouraging such style self-efficacy can be increased in employees (Naeem, Weng, Hameed, & Rasheed, 2019), so that their psychological well-being can grow.

In which if a project is on the track of failure, employees will not share with the manager due to the fear of getting abuse. At the end of the project when it will be a total failure, such leader will try to cover his/her faults by saying that, “employees did not share the information”. Which is also the nature of such negative leadership style of management that he/she blames others to keep his/her hands

safe and clean. Such actions in doubt directly contributes to the relationships of employees with such bad despotic leader, manager or supervisor and hence disturbs the psychological well-being of the employees working under such leader, manager or supervisor in a project based environment and organization. They have added to the definition of the despotic leadership as a corrupt leader (Prooijen, & Vries, 2015), where others have already identified him/her as a selfish, rude, vengeful, not allowing suggestion and questioning and does not communicate clearly or complete information to his employees. As such leader is only focused on his/her goals, he/she ignores the goals and purpose of his/her employee's life that the employee is trying to achieve through work (Balwant, Birdi, & Stephan, 2019). Employees needs psychological safety (Lee, 2019) like they are allowed to grow, their goals are also under consideration in the organization. Being corrupt a manager is considered as the person working and using all the resources of organization for his/her own good and objectives. A concept every Pakistani is well familiar and aware of. Psychological well-being of an employee in a project is not just limited to single person, as its negative effects leave a very noticeable impact on others (employees) to whom a person (employee) with negative psychological well-being interacts. Through time many have contributed to this topic and have formulated some indicators that can help us to identify the psychological well-being of an employee in a project. Starting from self-acceptance which states one (employee's) being happy and satisfied with his self while accepting his strength(s) and weakness(es) and knowing his own potential while dealing with any situation. On second we have placed that person's (employee's) relations with others, where a person's ability to love and trust others is being focused. On third comes autonomy, where a person's (employee's) own will matters, how he develops himself through individual decision and self-learning helps him become more experienced to deal with situations in project based environment. On fourth is environmental mastery, it relates with individual's (employee's) ability to adjust in the environment, when environment or situation is not in his favor or to his plan, how can he change such situation to his favor through making psychical changes on workplace or through his mental abilities. On fifth we have purpose in life, where an individual (employee) sets

goals and beliefs in his life which makes his life more meaningful and puts him on direction to achieve things in life to making that purpose fulfilled and at the very end we have personal growth. Personal growth is related to employee's learnings and gaining experience through that time, it allows employee to counter challenges in his life and at work place which are considered good things to making him learn new things and developing maturity about the situations later on in his life and at his work place (Ryff, 1989; Ryff, & Singer, 1996).

Psychological well-being can predict an employee's behavior and attitude towards upcoming tasks and events (Alvi, 2017). Psychological well-being deals with many aspects and covers a lot of areas which collectively formulate a package, it includes either an employee is living a purposeful life or not and his work in the organization is leading him to fulfill his life's purpose, do employee have their own will and say, are the employees allowed to exhibit their talents and skills to make their own identity which can help them to grow as an individual, are the employees able to manage situations in their daily life and how confident they are to do so, are they good at making relationships with others in their life who are important like family and how happy or satisfied an employee is with his life while knowing his own strengths and weaknesses (Ryff, 2014).

(Ryan, & Deci, 2000) who formulated self-determination theory also mentioned about three of the indicators; autonomy (a person's or employee's tendency or ability of taking decisions on his own according to his will, situation and conditions that better suits his interest and how his very own decision help him shape his future and aid him for his own development), competence (how well an employee can compete in tasks while meeting all the constraints of money, time and resources and also being compared with his team mates) and at third relatedness (how an employee can relate and connect his hard work and job outcomes to his life targets and purpose of his life), according to Ryan and Deci if these three conditions are fulfilled, employee's psychological well-being will grow in a positive way. So employees must be managed in such a way so that they will be assisted for their psychological well-being. An employee being able to build relationships with others at work place has more chance of staying happy at work place as

compared to the employee who is pushed to the isolation from the team, positive emotions can aid employees in the process of relation building with others, so the relationships are connected to the happiness of the employees and helps in the improvement of psychological well-being (Ryff, & Keyes, 1995). Despotism is not the person in charge who helps his/her employees to grow positive emotions that is why it is very difficult to develop happiness in the presence of such leader, manager or supervisor.

Employees being able to see hope for their personal growth and development in the organization they are working can develop a positive psychological well-being (Kun, & Gadanez, 2019), so project manager and organization must create hope for its employee through the involvement of employees in the alignment of goals and must include employee's personal goals to some extent and must create and generate a path that enables employees to grow. Project manager must work to know and learn the strengths of his employees as well as the weaknesses of his employees (Brooks et al., 2019), as it will enable the project manager to know the potential of his employees and will avoid to plan things that will result in the employee's emotional exhaustion and psychological well-being. Project managers must find time to know their employees, either they are happy or not and being able to spend time with them project manager should extract about the mental health of his employees (Mitchell, & Bates, 2011), as an employee being ill or in mental stress is not allowed to have a day off can result in low productivity as well as can grow more in stress and become sadder resulting again into bad psychological well-being.

As many have defined psychological well-being of employees differently according to the settings of their research and while targeting specific objectives. Defining growth in the reflection of psychological well-being of the employees (Bartels, Peterson, & Reina, 2019) have described growth differently and linked it with the ability of an employee at work place to be able to develop relationship and connection with his/her team member as well as to himself too, himself refers to the achievements of goals of an employee in a project based organization as planned with the purpose of his life, so that his progress is aligned with goals of his life

enabling him fulfill his life's purpose. Beside the importance of employee's self-acceptance (Keyes, 1998) have also mentioned about the social acceptance of employee as an important factor of positive psychological well-being. But despotic leadership style of management is not known for motivating and boosting the morale of his employees while showing them and helping them realize their potential with possible strength and weakness in themselves, so when an employee is able to know his strength and weakness becomes self-acceptance. Now just project this concept to the whole team working on a project that they are good at self-acceptance and this individual self-acceptance collectively produces social acceptance, where one employees appreciate the strength of other employees and respect the weakness of other employee, which creates a happy environment and positive psychological well-being. Unfortunately, despotic leadership style is not in the support of such concept.

Psychological well-being of the employees is directly linked with the work performance in a project (Daniels, & Harris, 2000), so an employee with positive psychological well-being will find happiness at his/her work and will put all of his affords in the project, which will increase the performance of the project. To test the employee's psychological well-being in the organization (Diener, 1984) conducted a test based on the job satisfaction, as per their study if an employee is satisfied with his/her job, it means that his/her psychological well-being is healthy as the employee is happy at the work place and growth is in plan for the employee. As despotic leadership creates fear in his employees through job insecurity, insulting by leader in public, discouraging in front of others. Employees under such situation start developing inner fear in their mind and heart that they might always be criticize, face insult and shame, they quit creativity and findings new ways and easy way of doing tasks, hiding their full potential and just doing what is needed at minimum (Saleh, Hu, Hassan, & Khudaykulova, 2018). This also reduces the effectiveness of the employees in a project and in an organization. So for increasing the effectiveness of employee's work, employee's psychological well-being must be taken as seriously (Einarsen et al., 2007). Negative psychological well-being of an employee can stop him from building relationships from his peers (Loon, Ebede,

& Stewart, 2018).

The project manager must provide such environment in which resources are easily available to workers (employees), so that no distress can cause negative psychological well-being (Townsend, & Wilkinson, 2010). Adding to the discussion of resources (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007) mentioned about personal resources (hope, self-acceptance, optimism and resilience) are as important for the psychological well-being of employees as the other resources. These personal resources can very much add to the growth of employee's psychological well-being (Tims et al., 2013) and hope of being development is top of them. These are the things linked with the new employees are employees who are with the organization with just few years. Employees with much more experience and years must be dealt differently like putting less work load as compared to young energetic ones (Lee, 2018) can help maintain the psychological well-being of old and experienced workers too. Despotic leadership style is again not known for such things who cares about his employee's age, condition (mental and physical) and just concerned about his personal gains. Whereas ethical leaderships style of management is creating and works on the environment which is developed for the encouragement of employees for providing unique and valuable suggestions (Ahmad et al., 2015). Psychological well-being of employees can produce better results when employees are allowed to share personal thoughts (Luo, & Hancock, 2020).

Leader's, manager's or supervisor's behavior towards the employees impact their performance and behavior (Ahmad, Donia, Khan, & Waris, 2019), which further add to the psychological well-being of employees. So the psychological well-being of an employee provides benefits for both, employees and organization too, so giving employees hope, rest and mental comfort at work place can result in greater benefits (Aryan, & Kathuria, 2017). Decreasing employee's stress can easily enhance employee's psychological well-being (Hone et al., 2015). Keeping employees engage with each other at work also help psychological well-being (Bakker, 2015) Organizations after identifying the despotic leadership must develop and designs activities that can provide recovery for the employee's psychological well-being (Keeman, Naswall, Malinen & Kuntz, 2017). Employees with higher autonomy

can find their purpose of life more easily at the workplace (Chaika, 2020) which is healthy for the psychological well-being. Employees being able to grasp the opportunities of personal growth and allowing them time for to work on building relationships can also increase psychological well-being (Kinderen, & Khapova, 2020). Leader, manager or supervisor must show love to their employees and create such an environment in project based settings so that employees also love to work, which can make their life happier (Oravec et al., 2020). Having positive and psychological well-being at workplace will create a happy environment off the work (society & home) (Santiago, Vega, & Alvarado, 2020). Despotic leadership must be discouraged as it does not support employees, when every employee is not being supported by his/her manager at workplace, employees too slowly start developing unsupportive behavior in themselves. Having no supportive environment disturbs the psychological well-being of employees (Jahanshahi, Gholami, & Mendoza, 2020). Employees with better psychological well-being can easily develop relationships with their peers (Afridi et al., 2020).

Knowing all this we can say that a despotic leader which is a negative, bad, selfish and harsh style of management can negatively affect the employee's psychological well-being in a project based organization as such leader, manager or supervisor is totally selfish and have no interest in the growth and development of his followers (employees) which are very important for a positive psychological well-being of an employee in a project, does not allow support, trust and building of relationships of employees to his/her team mates.

***H<sub>1</sub> : Despotic Leadership is negatively associated with Psychological Well-being of an employee.***

## **2.2 Emotional Exhaustion as Mediator**

While explaining emotional exhaustion, we can say that an employee is continuously getting drained out by both means of physical and emotional state (Bolton, Harvey, Grawitch, & Barber, 2011) resulting in performance drop and lower commitment. Employees who are emotionally exhausted, they use other employees

to vent out their frustration (Wheeler, Halbesleben, & Whitman, 2013). Due to a greater work load on their shoulders and having no room for relaxing, their behavior starts turning into frustrated and that behavior impact others too in their surroundings. Emotional exhaustion is related to pressure that comes from excessive work with very little room to relax or rest, having no rest cause physical energy exhaustion and avoiding employee's issues and suggestions create mental exhaustion, when these both things gets combined they collectively define emotional exhaustion (Maslach, & Jackson, 1981). Through this view of emotional exhaustion, we can notice that an employee's both resources (energies) which enables him/her to work gets used and even employee's reserve energy levels are utilized to meet the demands of despotic leader, which no doubt cause emotional exhaustion in employees under such selfish and harsh leader. Thanacoody have described emotional exhaustion with a very different perspective, where he defines emotional exhaustion by expectations, an employee is ordered to perform work that is beyond his physical and mental abilities, there is very rare chance of him (employee) doing that work by meeting the required standards (Thanacoody et al., 2013). Emotional exhaustion can develop in employees when they work so hard and more (beyond working hours & beyond their responsibilities), they expect their manager or supervisor to show care about their employees, but in return when no care is shown employees end up being emotionally exhausted (Goodwin et al., 2017). This can also be considered as physical exhaustion but mostly it is referred as emotional (Galiatsatos et al., 2017). With all these higher expectations from the employees, when there is no relevant resource (providing access to all the resources that might be used in a project) or help (care, hope or reward) provided by the manager or the organization also cause emotional exhaustion in employees working on that project (Gerain, & Zech, 2019).

It was discovered with earlier study of (Maslach, 1978), that employees are found with emotionally exhausted when they face huge demands of work. In Pakistan as it is now becoming a trend of hiring a single employee to perform the job of many employees (e.g. earlier employees in IT/Software sector were hired as; Php



developer, Java developer or Html/Css developer, but now project based organizations and software houses in Pakistan hire their employees where a single employee will have to grip on, Php/Java/Html/Css along with the frameworks Meteor/Ionic/Angular/React and must be able to test his code by himself for the assurance). Employees with insufficient training and shortage of other employee(s) with same skill set increases the responsibility and less time to meet the standard and requirements of the organization, creates emotional exhaustion (Taormina, & Law, 2000). Despotic leadership can even make the situation worse, where an employee is hired on base of multiple skills such negative manager treats his/her employees like a machine. A healthy environment of supporting, satisfaction and being able to relax can help maintain the balance between the happiness and exhaustion (Tourigny, Baba, & Wang, 2010). As the aim of the study is to discourage the despotic leadership style of management because it creates the emotional exhaustion in his/her employees which disturbs the psychological well-being of the employees. The dangerous thing about such negative and harsh manager is that he/she do not think that his way of dealing employees is not bad or negative and his/her behavior is needed in society to get the work done from the employees (Maxwell, 2016).

Employees being handled by such negative management style feels worried all the time for their performance, they feel just a tool and not allowed to link his personal life purpose with work are emotionally exhausted and experience psychological well-being being disturbed (Barlow, & Durand, 2005). Through this emotional exhaustion employee seek ways for leaving the organization (Carlson et al., 2012). Which is also been observed that employees with negative psychological well-being intend to do so. Despotic leader, manager or supervisor creates emotional exhaustion in their employees by creating fear to failure, doubting their abilities and loosing self-confidence, nervous (mental exhaustion) and having no feel of importance at the workplace (Bhandarker, & Rai, 2019). Managers are found to be practicing despotic leadership style, to improve and increase the results of the organizations (Lee, 2018). With doing so manager and organization might get the favorable results for the time being but in overall such technique

results in emotional exhaustion of employee (Grandey, 2003). So this style of employee management under the title of “despotic leadership” must not be welcomed so that employees can stay happy, can find balance between life and work which is good for their mental and physical health, improving emotional exhaustion (Barbara, 2018), which in results helps psychological well-being of employees. Managers must be educated to create a trust relationship with their employees so that employee’s performance can increase and employees can develop positive behavior and attitude in their nature and work (Grobler, & Holtzhausen, 2018). Such positive behavior and attitude is so good for the negative psychological well-being of an employee as it helps an emotionally exhausted employee.

Despotic leadership creates emotional exhaustion and negative psychological well-being (Li, Qian, Han, & Jin, 2016). Leader, manager or supervisor can affect the emotional exhaustion of an employee which can further affect the performance and commitment of an employee (Setyadi, & Wartini, 2016). So work overload must be avoided as much as it can be (Septyaningsih, & Palupiningdyah, 2017). When the personal goals of the employees are not under consideration of manager and organization, it creates emotional exhaustion (Matziari, Montgomery, Georganta, & Doulougeri, 2017), that directly contributes to the psychological well-being of an employee under “personal growth”. In the study of Anna Alexandersson a very interesting thing was found that interne is more exposed to such bad and negative manager as compared to permanent employee of the organization, they experience higher emotional exhaustion and their psychological well-being is more disturbed (Alexandersson, 2018). It is true that in Pakistani software houses and IT project based organizations there is a culture of internship, so that huge amount of work can be completed with little amount of money. As higher the workload from manager and organization, higher will be chance of employee exposing to emotional exhaustion (Astuti, & Palupiningdyah, 2018).

The bad effects of emotional exhaustion are not just limited to employees but it has a very strong negative impact to the sustainable development of the organization (Park, Jacob, Wagner, & Baiden, 2014). Leader, manager or supervisor is also a kind of resource, for the cure of emotional exhaustion of employees, employees

must be given the right resource which can help their emotional exhaustion, that resource is “ethical leadership style of management” not the despotic leadership style of management (Zhou, Sheng, He, & Qian, 2020). In Pakistan IT/Software project based organizations and software houses in some situations do not respect the timing of job (working hours) and they keep their employees working from 9:00 am to 2:00 am where weekends are also on, when the work load or product delivery is due. This kind of time pressure and scheduling of work also affects the emotional exhaustion of employees (Schiffinger, & Braun, 2020), working on that project. So project manager must find the balance between the work and employees but a despotic leader does not care about these important things.

Emotional exhaustion is not just the problem for the employees of the organization but it is also very important for the organization (Kenworthy, Fay, Frame, & Petree, 2014), as if not taken serious employees will leave the organization, so organizations must find the find to deal with it. Keeping such situation in mind leader, manager or supervisor must adopt the good way of treating their employees, as mental, physical abuse and humiliation does not help employee and it creates emotional exhaustion in employees (Anasori, Bayighomog, & Tanova, 2019). Emotional exhaustion can push employee to the work which is harmful for the organization (Chen, Richard, Boncoeur, & Ford, 2020). So the support from project manager and co-workers (fellow employees) is important for the emotional exhaustion of employees (Ilies, Ju, Liu, & Goh, 2020). Employees mentally present at the work can physically perform well. For their mental calm and physical calm project manager must treat them with love and care and must involve their daily life goals with the work. As the rude behavior of the manager and pushing (isolating) a member from the team through lack of respect increase emotional exhaustion in employees (Anjum, Liang, Durrani, & Parvez, 2020).

Despotic leader is known for his rude behavior and showing no care about his/her employees. As he does not care about someone’s potential and abilities and his only focus is on the work no matter if an employee can perform such work or not. Which definitely is a cause for emotional exhaustion. So if the organization will not help or deal the employees who are emotionally exhausted, as in this study

“organizational justice” will help on the behalf of organization for the employee’s emotional exhaustion to counter the effect of despotic leadership style of management, employees will harm the project and organization in their reaction. In Pakistan we come across these issues on daily basis where a lot of work from a single person is expected to save money. It definitely creates emotional exhaustion which cause negative psychological well-being in employees, doing so much work with continuous pace without having proper rest, drains out all of his energy. Such routine slowly starts developing peevishness in employees, which ultimately effects employee’s family, creativity and growth.

A study under the title of “Leaders’ Emotional Labor Strategies and Wellbeing: Does Perceived Organizational Justice Mediates the Relationship” (Nisar, Othman, & Kamil, 2018) has been done where they have studied the impact of Leader’s Emotional Labor Strategies (Surface Acting & Deep Acting) as Independent Variables on Leader’s Well-being (Organizational Commitment & Emotional Exhaustion) as Dependent Variables while Perceived Organizational Justice (Distributive Justice, Interactional Justice & Procedural Justice) acting as mediators. In their study no moderator was used and also it was not employee oriented, it’s whole focus was on leader and no employee was taken under consideration for their study, they have concluded that leader’s emotional labor strategies has a significant role on leader’s well-being and the results will be different when accessing through deep & surface acting, both will have different significance on leader’s well-being and the presence of mediator (perceived organizational justice) can interrupt the relationship. As they have mentioned to study their settings on employees because their study was totally focused on leader and have also suggested to study leader’s well-being (organizational commitment & emotional exhaustion) in employee’s context and to check how organizational commitment and emotional exhaustion acting as mediators can affect the relationship for well-being of employees. Therefore, Emotional Exhaustion is being used as a mediator in our current settings of this study, as we have employee’s psychological well-being in a project as a dependent variable.

***H<sub>2</sub> : Emotional Exhaustion mediates the relation between Despotic***

*Leadership and Psychological Well-being of an employee in a project.*

## 2.3 Organizational Justice as Moderator

Justice is one of the core elements which enables any organization to raise performance levels in employees, which also pave path for better quality, innovation and employees being ready to take responsibility. Organizational justice is kind of a broad term as its evaluation depends upon the perception of justice from employee, it is not only limited to salary or promotion but it also covers the dealing of supervisor to employees from different cultural, nation and language (Ullah, Ahmad, & Ahmad, 2016). It deals with the procedures implemented by the organization of employee and how these procedures are helping employees to carry out activities (Chen et al., 2015). Procedures plays important role in an organizational justice and an employee can claim injustice if there is any biasness in the procedures of organization from employee to employee. Organizational justice is what makes an employee fulfill his goals and helps him to grow in many ways, polishing his skills, allowing him to build relationships and above all it contributes positively to psychological well-being of an employee. Organization justice can be defined with different dimensions, at first we can say organizational justice is related to distribution of rewards, employees have their own perceptions and expectations about the rewards as per their performance, some may seek pay raise and other may value promotion as a reward, we can also describe organizational justice as the fairness in the procedures for the evaluation and implementations of work, performance, rules and standards and another view about organizational justice is the sharing of information and dealing with employees on good and bad outcome (Krishnan, Loon, Ahmad, & Yunus, 2018).

Organizational justice is just not focused on current employee's satisfaction and happiness for current contract but it has greater outcome, it influences the attitude and behavior of employees in the organization (Jafari, & Bidarian, 2012). It can convert your employees into your free marketing agents, which can go in any way, employees being experiencing organizational justice will spread good works and

projects positive image of the organization and at the other, in case of injustice, employees will even explain good things as bad to hurt you back for your injustice and unfair treatment towards them.

As the despotic leadership is not known for doing or providing justice to his/her employees, employees become emotionally exhausted and that exhaustion leads them to negative psychological well-being but organizational justice can reduce the effect of that emotional exhaustion, which a despotic leadership style of management is not able to do. As such bad management is not known for helping employees, employees in such situation become independent of reaching higher authorities and they start reporting directly to the upper management for their rights (Cullen, Victor, & Bronson, 1993), which shifts more work load and pressure on the higher management. So again this action suggests to discourage such negative style of management by providing organizational justice. When employees in any project and organization are able to share their thoughts directly to the project manager and are able to express their feelings regarding the demand of work, they are found to be having a positive psychological well-being (Fritz, & Ellis, 2015).

This is what justice states of giving employees chance to express their feelings and providing them fairness, as they are the real workers so their say must be valued. Perception about organizational justice can reduce the emotional exhaustion and lack of such perception about organization justice can rise doubts for unequal pay or procedures for promotions and other rewards as compared to fellow employees (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Organizational justice can assist align employee's personal and individual's goals with the organizational. These personal goals are labeled as "values" an individual hold (Scherer, Allen, & Harp, 2016), so organizational justice can provide respect for the values of employees which can bring happiness and happiness can improve employee's psychological well-being in a project based organization. Biasness in the evaluation of performance, biasness in decision making or lack of providing necessary resources for doing work is organizational injustice (Shuck, Collins, Rocco, & Diaz, 2016).

Organizational justice deals with the equality between employees on the base of

needs of the employees (Mayer, 2007), but it is not possible to fulfill the need of every employee of the organization, so this need is better referred to the resources needed by every employee to perform tasks in a project (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007). Along with the resources needed for work, organizational justice also includes transparency and truthfulness in the information (Kurain, 2018) shared with the employees within a project and organization. As (Greenberg, 1987) was the first who used the word “organizational justice” and through time it has been categorized into (procedural, informational, interpersonal and distributive) which collectively define “organizational justice”. For procedural, it covers that the set of procedures, steps and way of anything flowing from one position to other is same for each employee (Thibaut, & Walker, 1978). For distribute, it covers the rewards one receives for his work and affords (Homans, 1961), in a project. So perception about the justice in reward giving can help employee’s psychological well-being. When there is unfairness in the justice from the organization, employees too act with the lack of justice and sincerity with their work, so it lowers their commitment and performance (Kilani, 2017). Knowing all this, leaders, managers or supervisors must develop and follow the guidelines on their end that ensures the organizational justice (Ebeh, & Nijoku, 2017). Because there is a possibility of employees who are highly experienced may not choose to complain about such negative leader, manager (despotic leadership) which silently increases their emotional exhaustion and they perceive that in their organization there is lack of organizational justice (Pangestu, & Wulansari, 2019).

Employee’s positive perception about the organizational justice that he/she believes that there is still justice in the organization, high management will take care of their matters when despotic leadership is dealing with them and organization will provide justice to the employees. Even the perception about organizational justice for fairness can improve employee’s engagement (Connor, & Henry, 2017). In case if the perception of employees about the organization is not good and they think that the programs are only designed to benefit organization and not for employees, the organizational perception will become negative (Malik, & Singh,

2014), so in such case employees may reject to accept the presence of organizational justice which will directly affect their psychological well-being. So we can define organizational justice as the positive perception of decisions taken by the manager for the employees as well as for the organization (Bayraktar, & Girgin, 2017). Organizational justice is a wide concept as it is an approach of multiple dimensions (Elamin, & Tlaiss, 2015), as mentioned of categories that collectively describes it but another way to approach this concept is the organization's way of dealing different employees with different situations and conditions differently. Like if an employee needs days off for his/her hard work and he/she perceives that organization has taken the notice about his/her work and will do the justice accordingly, for this employee allowing leaves will be the justice as per the definition. Organizational justice can be used as the tool for identifying the reason of variance in the employee's behaviors (Tastan, Unver, & Hatipoglu, 2013), employees' disturbed psychological well-being, curing the problem can ease the psychological well-being of an employee which is being affected by the emotional exhaustion created through despotic leadership. Organizational justice can help organization and employees to build a healthy, trustful and sincere relationship (Alzayed, Jauhar, & Mohaidin, 2017).

Organizational justice can increase the job satisfaction (Juan et al., 2020), which can increase the job performance and shows that the employee is happy as he/she is satisfied with the job which can heal the disturbed and negative psychological well-being of an employee in a project. Procedures for rewarding employees through organizational justice also affects the psychological well-being of employees (Uzochukwu, Ishaq, & Peter, 2020), as employees may need recognition too. Absence of organizational justice can increase the mental stress in employees (Lambert et al., 2019), that leads to the emotional exhaustion in employees which directly contributes to the negative psychological well-being of employees in a project based organization. Without organizational justice an employee will not be able to deal with work and family at the same time (Swandarujati, Nufitri, & Anggraeni, 2020), so there will be a conflict between both as despotic leader creates emotional



exhaustion and through exhaustion employee will not be able to decide better, either he/she has to focus on work or his/her family. So where the relationships are bad, psychological well-being of an employee is also considered as bad. Through organizational justice following benefits can be achieved; employee's commitment to the project and organization, employee's job satisfaction, employee's motivation and his/her loyalty towards the organization along with the well-being (Nair, & Sivakumar, 2020) and can reduce turnover rate (Mehmood, Rasheed, & Jaan, 2020). All these achievements mentioned above are the indicators of employee's psychological well-being being recovering from negative to positive and shows that the emotional exhaustion is also reducing with the presence of organizational justice. Organizational justice can help to develop a sense of duty and responsibility in employees (Kerdpitak, & Jermstittiparsert, 2020), which is only possible when justice is being provided and psychological well-being is improving.

Organizational justice directly and positively affects psychological well-being of the employees in a project based organization by providing him/her the opportunity for growth, recognizing him for his/her hard work, involving him in the process of decisions in the project, value his/her suggestions, taking care of his/her situation on and off the field, allowing him/her to choose the solution to deal with the problem he/she face during the project and providing fair treatment in term of rewarding, information sharing and accessing job performance of the employees in IT/Software project based organizations and software houses. In Pakistan the justice is one of the core and main cause in many IT/Software project based organizations and software houses where employees feel being treated unfairly. It is not just limited to the IT/Software sector of this country "Pakistan" but in Pakistan throughout from each type of business and organization, we can examine that where the justice is not given to the employee their daily life effects and with daily life of employees in Pakistan being disturbed psychological well-being of employees gets disturbed. As mentioned earlier the issue of job insecurity along with the low availability of job, employee's psychological well-being can easily be disturbed as they are already dealing with many issue. Despotic leadership style of management is not the ideal or suitable way of handling and managing employees

in a project based organizations and software houses in Pakistan, so through literature we can extract that this style of management must be discouraged as it has been identified the reason for the emotional exhaustion in employees which leads to disturb the psychological well-being of an employee, so organizational justice must be present to counter the effect. A study under the title of “Does Despotic Leadership Harm Employee Family Life: Exploring the Effects of Emotional Exhaustion and Anxiety” (Nauman, Fatima, & Haq, 2018) has been done where they have studied the impact of Despotic Leadership (Independent Variable) on Work family conflict & Life satisfaction (Dependent Variables) while Emotional Exhaustion acting as mediator and Anxiety as a moderator, they have concluded that despotic leadership leads to negative outcomes and is negatively linked with work-family conflict and life satisfaction with reason to emotional exhaustion and anxiety which is the moderator also negatively effects the outcomes (work-family conflict & life satisfaction). They have suggested to study a different moderator like organizational justice, emotional intelligence, social support and faith. Therefore, Organizational Justice is being used as a moderator in our current settings of this study.

***H<sub>3</sub> : Organizational Justice positively moderates the relationship between Emotional exhaustion and Psychological well-being.***

## 2.4 Theoretical Framework

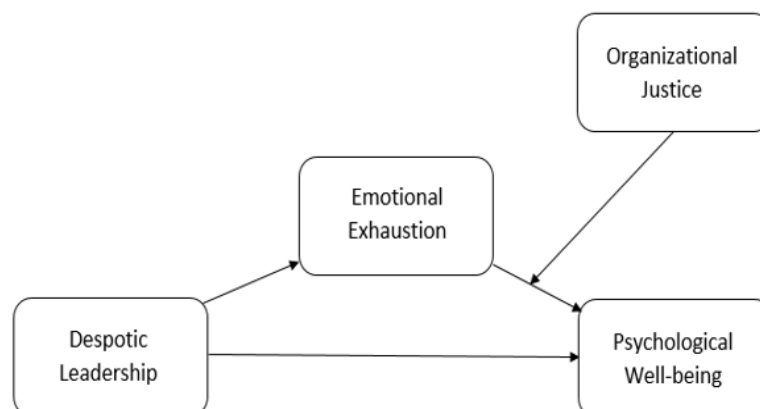


FIGURE 2.1: Theoretical Model

## **2.5 Hypotheses of the Study**

**H<sub>1</sub>** : Despotic leadership is negatively associated with Psychological well-being of an employee.

**H<sub>2</sub>** : Emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between Despotic leadership and Psychological well-being.

**H<sub>3</sub>** : Organizational justice positively moderates the relationship between Emotional exhaustion and Psychological well-being.

# Chapter 3

## Research Methodology

Before moving into the details of it, it needs to be clear the difference between the research method and the research methodology itself as this whole chapter is to be about the methodology of our research, so it is important to have a crystal clear concept about it. While defining the research method we can say that, it deals with the methods or techniques used for the preparation of the research or more simply the method a researcher has used to conduct the study of research problem. Now as we are clear about the research method and have seen two ways of defining it, we are ready to move on to the next concept which is research methodology. We can define research methodology as the way and steps that are used during the process of solving the research problem that has been identified in a more systematic way or simply we can put it as the system of methods for solving the research problem. Comparing both the purpose of research methodology as compared to research method is very broad. Hence we are using research methodology we can add to it as a procedure for the identification, selection, processing and analyzing of the information about the research topic to attain the authentic results (Wedawatta, Ingirige, & Amaratunga, 2011), along with the explanation of using one procedure over the other procedure.

This chapter specifically indicates the methodology that will be followed to analyze and investigate the relation between despotic leadership and psychological well-being with mediating role of emotional exhaustion and moderating role of organizational justice. The discussions in this chapter are related to research design,

population and sampling techniques, characteristics of the sample and instruments of all the variables and items present in each single variable of this research study.

## **3.1 Research Design**

Any research study with a good research design is a great help and assist for the researcher(s) to achieve the outclass and powerful results which further help and assist the research study itself to increase and enhance its worth and usefulness. Quantitative approach and qualitative approach are generally two research design approaches (Alrawabdeh, 2014), in social sciences that are used. A greater number of researcher or simply a majority of them are in the favor of quantitative research approach while comparing it with the qualitative research approach because of its effectiveness and reliability (Bernard, 2000; Baker, 2000).

The reason for the preference of quantitative research design over the other one is for the authenticated results it can produce along with the trustworthy results (Collins, Joseph, & Bielaczyc, 2009; Chase et al., 2016). To define research design, we can define it as the process of the gathering of the data through research questions for investigation and experimenting the required information to reach the evidence for the hypothesis to be correct or not (Juni, & Afiah, 2014; Yin, 2003). Use of questionnaire is helpful and valuable in such case (Bowling, 2005). Research design also explains the various aspects of the research which includes the hypothesis of the research, variables (independent variable, dependent variable, mediating variable, moderating variable) that are involved in the research, furthermore few analyses (regression and correlation) are also part of it and are under consideration for this research study too.

### **3.1.1 Research Philosophy and Quantitative Research**

The method used for conducting this study is “scientific method” which is also known as hypothetical deductive method, to understand it more clearly, “hypothetical” is linked with the hypothesis for the test of which we need to collect the

data so that we can analyze it and “deductive” is linked with deduction, which can be done after analyzing of the data and hypothesis are formulated in such a way through test these hypotheses must be falsifiable.

Prof. Karl Popper (1935, 1959) was the one who first developed this method in detail, as it was first published back in 1935 (Popper, 1935) and details were added to it later on in 1959 (Popper, 1959). This was then generalized by Hempel (Hempel, 1965). Research through this scientific method, different tests are performed and carried out for the purpose of verifying and clarifying the solution which is being proposed/presented for the problem that is demonstrated initially. To reach and target a huge number of population mostly quantitative research approach is used as it can assist in the collection of the quality data and it can also help to enable researcher in associating variables with one another to represent the nature of affiliation between the variables utilized in the precise research.

### **3.1.2 Type of Study**

The type of current study is a “descriptive study”. While defining descriptive study, it covers the collection of data through the questionnaires used for the study and where the results can be compared (Koch, 2014). This study covers the relationships that are found in the study, process which are in use for the study and the directions in which the study in developing through findings (Best, 1981). Descriptive study can enable researcher to accurately describe the characteristics of the targeted population (area of interest for the current study), to provide the insight for the frequency of occurrence of information (feelings, attitudes) while exploring the association between the variable of the study (Dulock, 1993).

This term is also referred when answer is explored for the research questions in the presence of the aim of discussing the cause and effect relationship among interventions (Baxter, & Jack, 2008). To find out the answers a survey is conducted by the researcher. Survey is a well formulated system used for the collection of data with the help of standard questionnaire(s), where the information received through the process of survey is further used to express and describe the feelings, behaviors, attitudes of the data (Pfleeger, & Kitchenham, 2001). That data being

collected and gathered from a pre-defined sample can project a view for the entire population of the study (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000), as it represents their behavior, feelings and attitudes.

This research highlighted the relation between despotic leadership and psychological well-being of an employee in the IT/Software project based organizations and software houses. The sample selected after calculation for current study represent the whole population of IT/Software project based organizations and software houses. This research was intended to help and assist project based organizations and software houses to discourage despotic leadership style of management and how psychological well-being of an employee can be restored with the help of organizational justice countering the negative effect of emotional exhaustion in employees.

### **3.1.3 Study Settings**

The present study was initially planned to be the field study (work place) because the respondents for the current study includes many different employees working on different projects at the same time. Only IT/Software project based organizations and software houses of private sector were selected for this study and only employees were the respondents to fill out the questionnaires within the job time (working hours) to make sure they filled the questionnaire without any pressure and influence. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 pandemic the field study was not applicable so that respondents can fill the questionnaire in their natural work environment. All the variables involved in current study were not controlled and manipulated and also no artificial setting was designed and produced.

### **3.1.4 Unit of Analysis**

The one of the most important and significant aspect of a research study is unit of analysis. To define unit of analysis, it is appropriate to say that it is the happening of circumstances in the context of some kind of boundary (Miles, & Huberman, 1994). To make it easily understandable it means individuals whose personality,

attribute, nature and characteristics are the focus of analysis of the study. It can be a country, industry, organization, software house, group or an individual who were considered to participate with researcher for the collection of data or from whom the research collects the data for the research study. This study is a micro level research study and for this reason the unit of analysis for this study were the individual employees from IT/Software project based organizations and software houses located in the cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad (twin cities of Pakistan).

### **3.1.5 Time Horizon**

Cross-sectional method to collect the data for the current study has been adopted and it took two months approximately for the collection of data. It is important to explore what is it according to definition but it will be easy to understand cross sectional if we study this in comparison to other method (longitudinal method). When the required data for the study is collected with no bound of time, this way can be called as the longitudinal. On the other end when the required data for the study is collected in a specific time and in within a time bound (limited time), this way is called cross-sectional.

This method of cross-sectional is beneficial and convenient when there is short time duration for the study (Pakin, 1981), for descriptive studies usually this method is used (Jesson, 2002). The reason for the selection of cross-sectional method is the short and limited time, as the time in the thesis is limited and short and one must have to complete the thesis within the required time span.

## **3.2 Population and Sample of Study**

The population of the study was based on employees that are currently working in various IT & Software project-based organizations and software houses of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.



TABLE 3.1: List of It/Software Project Based Organizations and Software Houses

<b>Organization/Software House</b>	<b>Location</b>
WebTechPk	Islamabad
EzSoftPk	Islamabad
Mirwah Tech	Islamabad
BroadPeak	Islamabad
Creatrixe	Rawalpindi
Zeki Expert Solutions	Islamabad
Translinguist	Islamabad
VQode Solutions	Islamabad
Syntax Squad	Islamabad
DevNatives	Islamabad
MTBC	Rawalpindi
Zigron Technologies	Islamabad
Apollo Telecom	Islamabad
Stella Technologies	Islamabad
S3 Technology	Rawalpindi
OneByte Technoogies	Islamabad
Helixatech	Islamabad
Codeage	Islamabad

This study covered different types of projects for data collection, for such reason data was collected from different organizations working on different and variety of projects (i.e. Website, Web application development & Mobile application development). Data were collected only from the employees using the respective questionnaires. As Despotism Leadership (Independent Variable) will have impact on employees working in any project, so they filled the questionnaire regarding despotism leadership in a project. Employees in the projects will be the ones who will be experiencing Emotional Exhaustion (Mediator), questionnaire related to

emotional exhaustion of an employee were therefore filled by employees. Despotic leadership through emotional exhaustion will lead to Psychological Well-being (Dependent Variable) of an employee working on a project, so employee was the one whose psychological well-being was expected to either be good or bad, so again questionnaire of psychological well-being were filled by employees and the Organizational Justice (Moderator) will be decided by employees, either they are being treated fairly or not, so questionnaire regarding to organizational justice for an employee in a project were also filled by employees. All of the data were collected only from employees as explained above. All the questionnaires were distributed in the latter half of May 2020. Essentially 350 questionnaires were distributed through the use of Google Forms due to the lockdown in respect to COVID-19 pandemic. From the total of 350 distributed questionnaires only 240 (excluding 12 questionnaires that were not completely filled) questionnaires were received back with the response rate of 68.57% which were considered for the purpose of analysis. The sample size that was used for this study mainly was consist of almost 350 questionnaires. Calculation of the sample size has been given below.

$$n = \frac{z^2pq}{e^2}$$

Assuming that 84% serve as an employee as developer and programmers in the IT & software private sector. That is why value of  $p=0.84$  as  $p$  is the estimated or assumed population. 95% of confidence level with plus or minus of 5% were selected as margin of error so  $Z=1.96$  and  $e = 0.05$  respectively. By subtracting the value of  $p$  from 1 we calculated the value of  $q$  as  $q = 0.16$  as the formula of  $q$  is  $q = 1 - p$ .

$$n = \frac{1.96^2(0.84)(0.16)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n=207$$

All items of variables included in the questionnaire i.e. Leadership is in charge and does not tolerate the disagreement or questioning, gives orders. In general, I often experience being wiped out. My supervisor treats me in a polite manner. I am engaged and interested in my daily activities. Responses were obtained

through 5 points Likert scale ranging from (strongly disagree 1 to 5 strongly agree). Questionnaire was comprised of six demographic variables related to respondent Gender, Age, Qualification, Experience, Designation and Marital status.

### **3.3 Data Collection Procedure**

Through the reference of teachers and friends, data for the current study were gathered and collected from the Private IT/Software project based organizations and software houses for all the variables; independent variable (i.e. Despotism Leadership), dependent variable (i.e. Psychological well-being), mediating variable (i.e. Emotional Exhaustion) and moderating variable (i.e. Organizational Justice) as the main focus and objective of the current study is the employees. Without reference data collection in Pakistan is very laborious and difficult as at first they (organizations and software houses) did not allow to collect data, because according to them it will waste their organization's and software house's time as their employee will need to spend time on unnecessary thing which is of no importance to them as their projects are way important. With this hurdle every feasible and possible way of reaching respondents was used so that maximum respondent can be approached and can participate with their valuable response. For this reason, all the respondents were requested to help and participate in the current study's data collection. To encourage them it was ensured that the information provided by them will be kept confidential and a cover letter was attached for this purpose with each single questionnaire. It was mentioned very clearly and in simple wordings that the study is being conducted for scholarly purposes. To all the respondents a promise was made to keep their names and responses in privacy for the purpose of getting their confidence so that without any hesitation employees can fill the questionnaires.

Approximately 350 employees were approached but only 240 responses were considered for the analysis purpose because they were the only responses completely filled out of the 252 received in total.

### 3.4 Sampling Technique

It is not possible to collect the data of whole population because of the in-finite factor of the population as doing so requires a greater, well organized and well integrated team with the back support of a resource in a huge amount (money), which is only possible for a government. First government who collected the comprehensive, huge data on large scale about the population was the Roman Empire (Singh, 2007). Due to this reason for the collection of data a proper technique for sampling is used. To define sample in the simplest way can be defined as, from the whole population sample is a subset or just a part of it (Webster, 1985) or a segment (Bryman, & Bell, 2016). This subset/segment can be drawn by following techniques; Probability technique or Non-Probability technique. Which is known as the sample. There are few benefits or reasons to use sample and the best ones are; it is very low in cost and need a short time for the data to be collected (Cooper, & Schindler, 2011). We have defined sample but it will help a lot if the population can also be discussed briefly as both concepts are strongly linked with each other. Population is the total (approximately) of all the people living in a particular area at a specific time period (Olanrewaju, Olafioye, & Oguntade, 2020). To refine even more population can be a total number of all member from any well-defined criteria (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010), as in the current study population of the study is all the employees of IT/Software sector. In this all employees are all members and IT/Software sector is well-defined criteria of the population.

As mentioned earlier of two types of sampling (probability and non-probability), probability sampling provides equal possibility and opportunity to each observation/member for the selection in a sample (Sugiyono, 2017). Whereas it is pre-decided (which observation/member would represent the population as a sample) in case of the non-probability sampling (Bhat, 2019), as the personal consideration of the researcher is involved (Malhotra, 2010). Each technique has its pros and cons but as the for the use of probability sampling researcher must have the complete information of the population, as for the current study this is not possible (due to limited time and resources), non-probability technique for sampling

is used. Non-probability sampling techniques has five types which can be acceptable; convenience sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling (Mohapatra, & Chamola, 2020), quota sampling and self-selection sampling.

For the current research study, type of non-probability sampling technique, convenience sampling was used. The exact population of IT/Software project based organizations and software houses is still unknown in Pakistan as a request in the form of email on March 5th, 2020 was sent to Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) for the purpose of knowing latest and updated number of IT/Software graduates in Pakistan which can help in further conclusion of IT/Software employees, but no response was received from PSEB. Researchers suggests that when the exact number of the population is not known it is reasonable to use non-probability sampling technique and for such reason convenience sampling technique was utilized. With the use of convenience sampling one can overcome the time and resource limitations, this is also the reason to use this sampling technique for the collection of data in current.

### **3.5 Handling of Received Questionnaires**

All the received questionnaires were examined very carefully for the missing data. As few questionnaires were having the problem of missing values when received which means those were the questionnaires not being answered by the respondents of the questionnaires. It causes serious problem in quantitative study if the missing data is not handled. Missing data in simple is the difference between the planned and collected set of data (Longford, 2005). One it constitutes to statistical power of the data. Statistical power means statistical technique analytical ability to discover any significant impact in observed data set (Roth, & Switzer III, 1995). Secondly, missing data also influence the accuracy of estimated variables.

To every problem there is a solution. Guidelines are there in the literature for the handling of problem related with missing data. There are many techniques for the handling of missing data including as; mean substitution, regression-based imputation (Wasylyshyn, & El-Masri, 2005) and list-wise deletion (Musil et al.,

2002) are the dominant ones. In mean substitution technique, for the missing responses a mean value is used and entered, in regression-based imputation, regression equation is devised based on related variables for imputing and estimating the missing values (Enders, 2011). In like-wise deletion, all the data related to the respondent is deleted if there is any missing data present in his/her response (Rithy, 2016). Each method has its advantages and disadvantages as mean substitution technique helps saving large amount of data but the major disadvantage of this approach is that it might interrupt the original links that have been shown by the respondents, which can lead to under estimation of the variance (Bennett, 2001). Regression-based imputation technique's advantage is that the calculations that are made about the data saves deviations from the mean and also from the distribution shape but the disadvantage of this approach is that the scope and strength of the freedom can get misrepresent (Vaishnav, & Patel, 2015). List-wise technique considers only the original responses of the respondents and there is no playing with the data set from the researcher's end, which means that following this approach it can influence the sample size as the large amount of data will not have to be considered (loss) if there are little missing values, so only favorable when a very small number of missing values are missing (Little, & Rubin, 2002). After punching the data, it was realized that there are no missing values found in the current study as using the Google Forms response to every item of the questionnaire was set as mandatory. In case if the missing values were found, the mean substitution approach was to be used.

### **3.6 Research Instrument**

For the collection of data, adopted questionnaires were used from different sources for all variables i.e. despotic leadership, emotional exhaustion, organizational justice and psychological well-being. All of the items included in the questionnaires has only filled by the employees. All the items in the questionnaires were responded by using a 5-points Likert-scale where 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree) and 5 stands for (strongly agree). The Questionnaires also

contains six demographic variables counting from Gender, Age, Qualification, Experience, Designation to Marital Status. Furthermore, some of the statements were changed in questionnaires without influencing actual construct of a scale. As in the “Emotional Exhaustion” scale, the statement “how often to do you” was changed to “I often”.

### **3.6.1 Despotism Leadership**

Despotism leadership is the independent variable and it was measured and assessed by 6 items scale developed by (De Hoogh., & Den Hartog, 2008). The items included in the scale are; “Leadership Is punitive; has no pity or compassion”, “Leadership Is in charge and does not tolerate the disagreement or questioning, gives orders” etc. The scale reliability was 0.876.

### **3.6.2 Emotional Exhaustion**

Emotional exhaustion is the mediating variable and it was measured and assessed by 5 items scale developed by (Pugh, Hennig Thurau, & Groth, 2011). The items included in the scale are; “I general I often experience being tired”, “I general I often experience being wiped out” etc. The scale reliability was 0.772.

### **3.6.3 Organizational Justice**

Organizational justice is the moderating variable and it was measured and assessed by 4 items scale developed by (Hausknecht, John, Sturman, & Roberson, 2011). The items included in the scale are; “The outcomes that I receive reflect what I contribute to the organization”, “In my organization, procedures are based on accurate information” etc. The scale reliability was 0.838.

### **3.6.4 Psychological Well-Being**

Psychological well-being is the dependent variable and it was measured and assessed by 8 items scale developed by (Diener et al., 2009). The items included in

the scale are; “I lead a purposeful and meaningful life”, “My social relationships are supportive and rewarding” etc. The scale reliability was 0.919.

TABLE 3.2: Instruments

Sr.No.	Variable	Source	Items
1	Despotic Leadership	De Hoogh., & Den Hartog, 2008	6
2	Emotional Exhaustion	Pugh, Hennig Thurau, & Groth, 2011	5
3	Organizational Justice	Hausknecht, John, Sturman, & Roberson, 2011	4
4	Psychological Well-being	Diener et al., 2009	8

### 3.7 Data Collection Technique

In the latter half of May 2020 almost 350 close ended questionnaires through Google Forms due to the lockdown in respect to COVID-19 pandemic were distributed. In response to the request of filling questionnaires towards respondents only 252 responses were received. As only 240 were selected because of completely and properly filled making the response rate of 68.57

### 3.8 Data Analysis Tool

The software that was used to process and evaluate the data collected through questionnaires adopted from different sources was IBM SPSS Statistics. The data collected were tested for correlation and regression analysis. Correlation analysis can be defined as a term which is used to express the association among two or more variables (Gogtay, & Thatte, 2017), another explanation for correlation analysis can be, how one variable (independent variable) is linked with other variable (dependent variable). Regression analysis can be defined as a tool for measuring the change in one variable (dependent variable) caused by the change in other variable (independent variable) (Ozer, Yalcin, Tarinc, & Yalcin,2020), this analysis acts like a prediction and forecasting tool (Hafidi, Abouatallah, Naziha, &



Salghi, 2020). Whereas hierarchical regression analysis is used for multiple factor that may cause divergence in the result, a common use is to control the individual differences effects related to the dependent variable, commonly the demographics (Rosenthal, 2017).

### **3.8.1 Analytical Techniques**

For the purpose of statistical calculations IBM SPSS Statistics software was used. Cronbach's alpha was to be calculated to measure the internal reliability of scale (Mete, 2013; Faed, 2013). To find out the change in one variable influenced by other variable correlation was performed and to find out the direct impact of one variable on other (dependent variable on independent variable) regression analysis was performed. Mediation and moderation test has been conducted through the use of (Preacher, & Hayes, 2004) process macros in SPSS.

## **3.9 Sample Characteristics**

Six of the demographics questions were used for the purpose of data collection with the promise and guarantee of keeping their information (responses) private and only to utilized for the purpose of analysis in current research study. Questions about the demographics are about their; Gender, Age, Qualification, Experience, Designation and Marital Status.

### **3.9.1 Gender**

The very basic division that can be done between the people is to categorize them as male and female. Only by asking the gender you can easily split the whole population into two distinctive blocks. In current research study, gender which is a crucial member of the demographics was used to bring out the element of gender equality but due to religious and cultural norms in Pakistan it was observed through data collection that the number of male employees was way greater than the female.

TABLE 3.3: Gender Frequency and Percentage

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	168	70
Female	72	30
Total	240	100

**Table: 3.3**, illustrates the information about gender. Through the table it was recorded that the male respondents were in large number making the 70.0% of the total and only the 30.0% of the remaining was made by the female respondents.

### 3.9.2 Age

Different age ranges were used for the easiness of data collection about employee's age. As hesitation has been observed in people when responding to the questions regarding age.

TABLE 3.4: Age Frequency and Percentage

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-25	90	37.5
26-30	75	31.3
31-35	42	17.5
36 and above	33	13.8
Total	240	100

**Table: 3.4**, shows the division of total respondents by age into different age ranges. Starting from the age range with maximum number of respondents was "20-25" making it the highest percentage of 37.5%. At second it was the age range of "26-30" and percentage recorded for this range was 31.3%. At third the age range which makes its place in top three was "31-35" as the percentage was 17.5%. At the very end it's the age range of "36 and above" which just made the percentage of 13.8% of the total.

### 3.9.3 Qualification

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”- Nelson Mandela. From individual level to a nation education is the decisive element which can turn the failure into success and enables to compete with the world. This is the reason education is one of the essential element after gender and age in the demographics.

TABLE 3.5: Qualification Frequency and Percentage

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Matric	2	0.8
Inter	7	2.9
Bachelor	109	45.4
Master	100	41.7
Ph.D./Post Ph.D.	22	9.2
Total	240	100

Respondent’s qualification has been represented by **Table: 3.5**, Respondent with the education of only matric made 0.8%, with the education of inter made 2.9%, with education of bachelor made 45.4%, with the education of master made 41.7% and only 9.2% of the total was made by the respondents with the education of Ph.D./Post PhD.

### 3.9.4 Experience

As people learn with experience and through experience their thinking, behavior and approach of handling of situations changes and improves. So an interne is definitely have different experience as compared to the employee who is working from last ten years. In order to collect the data of respondent’s experience and to make it easy for them different experience ranges were used.

**Table: 3.6**, shows that employees with experience of 0-5 years were the 59.6% of the total. Employees with the experience of 6-10 were 20.8%, employees with the experience of 11-15 were 11.7% and employees with the experience of 16 years and above were the 7.9% only.

TABLE 3.6: Experience Frequency and Percentage

Experience	Frequency	Percentage
0-5	143	59.6
6-10	50	20.8
11-15	28	11.7
16 and above	19	7.9
Total	240	100

### 3.9.5 Marital Status

Psychological well-being of an employee working on a project in a project based organization and software house under a despotic leadership negative style of management is the current study's concern and marital status can totally change the way an employee response to the situation because of the family factor and responsibilities. For such reason marital status is the vital element of the demographics.

TABLE 3.7: Marital Status Frequency and Percentage

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	161	67.1
Married	79	32.9
Divorced	0	0
Widowed	0	0
Total	240	100

**Table: 3.7**, reveals that respondents who are single were the 67.1% of total. 32.9% of them were married, 0% were the divorced and widowed.

## 3.10 Reliability Analysis

Internal reliability and consistency of the scale is measured by Cronbach's alpha as it measures and shows internal reliability and consistency of the scale or instrument (Connelly, 2011), when the value of Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.70 the scale qualifies for the consideration and acceptance (Rios et al., 2018). Lee Joseph Cronbach developed it in 1951 through the improvement of his previous studies

(Cronbach, 1943; Cronbach, 1946; Cronbach 1947). According to the founder of the Cronbach' alpha values;

TABLE 3.8: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability

Cronbach's alpha	Internal Consistency
$\alpha < 0.5$	Unacceptable
$\alpha \geq 0.5 \ \& \ < 0.6$	Poor
$\alpha \geq 0.6 \ \& \ < 0.7$	Questionable
$\alpha \geq 0.7 \ \& \ < 0.8$	Acceptable
$\alpha \geq 0.8 \ \& \ < 0.9$	Good
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent

Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha < 0.7$ .) raise questions about the internal reliability and consistency of the scale, whereas ( $\alpha \geq 0.7$ ) indicates the acceptable internal reliability and consistency of the scale and permits to use the scale (Cronbach, 1951). To keep the items minimum threshold is "0.70" (Nunnally, & Berstein, 1994), also known as coefficient alpha (Khadka, 2018).

TABLE 3.9: Scale Reliability

Variable	Items	Reliability
Despotic Leadership	6	0.876
Emotional Exhaustion	5	0.772
Organizational Justice	4	0.838
Psychological Well-being	8	0.919

As the reliability test is used to measure the scale's validity being used in the research and it is measured through the values between 0 to 1. Higher the value, higher the consistency and reliability of the scale as shown in the Table 5.5 and vice versa. Calculation of correlation between the internal variables in research study can also be done with the use of Cronbach's alpha or coefficient alpha (Munir, Lodhi, Sabir, & Khan, 2016; Kumar, 2020). **Table: 3.9**, shares the details of Cronbach's coefficient alpha as the coefficient alpha of Despotic Leadership is measured 0.876 with 6 items, coefficient alpha of Emotional Exhaustion is measured 0.772 with 5 items, coefficient alpha of Organizational Justice is measured 0.838 with 4 items and coefficient alpha of Psychological Well-being is measured as 0.919 with 8 items included in the respective scale.

### **3.11 Data Analysis Techniques**

List of procedures and techniques implemented for the data analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics on 240 responses (excluding 12 questionnaire's responses that were not properly filled) are as following;

1. At the very first only the valid and proper responses (completely filled questionnaires and only responses of employees) were selected to be the part of the analysis with no double values.
2. Respondent's characteristics were explained using the frequency table.
3. With the use of numerical values descriptive statistics were measured.
4. For the consistency and reliability check of every variable of current study Cronbach's alpha was calculated to ensure.
5. For the check of significant relationship existence among those variables correlation analysis was performed.
6. For the demonstration of the proposed relationships between the IV (independent variable) and DV (dependent variable) single liner regression was used.
7. To carry out mediation and moderation test, Preacher & Hayes's process macros in SPSS were used.
8. For the acceptance and rejection of the current research study's hypothesis, Preacher & Hayes's method and correlation were tested.

### **3.12 Research Ethics**

Following of the moral principles in conducting and reporting of the results for the research studies is known as research ethics (Joshi, 2017; Tiselius, 2019). While collection of data through questionnaire's responses research ethics were followed for current research study. As the purpose of this study was conveyed and shared

with all the respondents through cover letter while ensuring them the privacy of their data (responses). The collection of data was carried out in a natural setting where not even a single respondent was forced for some specific response and for instant response so that they can fill out the questionnaire when they are free but after some time period a reminder was sent to the respondents as a request of filling the questionnaire if they have not yet find the time to fill, which is why it took approximately two months to collect the responses.

# Chapter 4

## Results and Findings

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

All the basic information regarding the responses collected in return of the questionnaires & variables like despotic leadership, emotional exhaustion, organizational justice and psychological well-being of an employee for the purpose of analysis are shown in the table of descriptive statistics. Sample size, minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviations of all the variables are illustrated in the **Table: 4.1**. Agreement and disagreement of respondents towards anything is shown by the mean value, as the mean value is higher it shows the agreement towards something and on the other side when mean value is lower it shows the disagreement towards something.

TABLE 4.1: Descriptive Analysis

Variable	Sample Size	Min	Max	Mean	Std.Deviation
Despotic Leadership	240	1	5	2.14	0.93
Emotional Exhaustion	240	1	5	3.75	0.89
Organizational Justice	240	1	5	3.32	0.99
Psychological Well-being	240	1	4.8	3.04	0.86



**Table: 4.1**, is consisting of six columns. Starting from variable name, sample size, minimum, maximum, mean to the standard deviation column. Total collected responses of 252, only 240 were selected and used for the purpose of analysis in current study. Despotic Leadership (independent variable) shows the mean value of 2.14 while its standard deviation is 0.93. Emotional Exhaustion (mediating variable) produces the mean value of 3.75 and having the standard deviation of 0.89. Organizational Justice (moderating variable) demonstrates the mean value of 3.32 whereas its standard deviation is 0.99 and Psychological Well-being (dependent variable) presents the mean value of 3.04, having 0.86 as the standard deviation.

## 4.2 Correlation Analysis

While defining correlation analysis, one can say the extent to which variables of a study are related to each other (Mukumbi, Eugene, & Jinghong, 2020). One variable's dependency on another is also demonstrated by correlation analysis. Correlation analysis is also used to find out the relationship's strength among dependent variable(s) and independent variable(s) (Alotaibi, Yusoff, & Islam, 2013). It has the range of -1.00 to +1.00, negative values show the negative relationship and vice versa (Pearson, 1920). We can further explain this as the negative values (negative sign) demonstrates that the both variables under study are moving in different and opposite direction, if one increases the other decreases and on the other end positive values (positive sign) shows that the both variables under study are moving in the same direction, if one increases other increases too. Whereas 0 (zero) shows no relationship present among the variables.

TABLE 4.2: Correlation Analysis

Variable	1	2	3	4
Despotic Leadership	1			
Emotional Exhaustion	.145*	1		
Organizational Justice	0.114	.310**	1	
Psychological Well-being	-.214**	-0.091	0.046	1

\* Significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed). \*\* Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation among the variables is shown in **Table: 4.2**. Through results it can be stated that despotic leadership has significant positive relationship with emotional exhaustion and significant negative relationship with psychological well-being of an employee, as the correlation between despotic leadership and emotional exhaustion was ( $r = .145, p < 0.05$ ), correlation between despotic leadership and psychological well-being was ( $r = -.214, p < 0.01$ ), whereas correlation between despotic leadership and organizational justice was insignificant ( $r = .114, p > 0.05$ ). Emotional exhaustion and psychological well-being has insignificant negative relationship ( $r = -.091, p > 0.05$ ). Organizational justice and psychological well-being has insignificant positive relationship ( $r = .046, p > 0.05$ ), correlation between organizational justice and emotional exhaustion is significant and positive ( $r = .310, p < 0.01$ ).

### 4.3 Regression Analysis

We can define regression analysis as the style of relationship where change in one variable is dependent on the other variable (Raneta, & Kunychka, 2015). So we can say that actually this analysis is used for the finding of actual existing relationship among the variables. A statistical method was introduced in aim of measuring the actual relationship among the variables and was named as the regression by (Altman, & Krzywinski, 2015).

As the correlation analysis was performed to investigate the link among the variables and it doesn't show cause and effect relationship among the variables as it only demonstrates the existence among two variables. Regression analysis on the other hand enable us to perform test and find out causal relationship among the variables. As in regression analysis value of X (independent variable) enables to predict the value of Y (dependent variable). In other words, we can say that regression analysis allows to understand and note the one-unit change produced and noticed in dependent variable (Y) when one-unit change appears/occurs in the independent variable (X).

TABLE 4.3: Despotic Leadership and Psychological Well-Being

Predictor	Psychological Well-being		
	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	Sig
Despotic Leadership	-0.206	0.046	0.001

Results shown in **Table: 4.3**, supports hypothesis 1 that despotic leadership is negatively associated with the psychological well-being of an employee. As through results it can also be justify, despotic leadership has negative and significant link with psychological well-being of an employee in the IT/Software project based organization(s) and software house(s) as shown by the regression coefficient ( $B = -0.206$ ) and ( $P = 0.001$ ). The value of R square ( $R^2 = 0.046$ ) illustrates that despotic leadership brings 4.60% variation in psychological well-being of an employee.

**H1:** Despotic leadership is negatively associated with Psychological well-being of an employee.

#### 4.4 Mediation Analysis

When the sign of LLCI (lower limit confidence interval) and ULCI (upper limit confidence interval) are same, it illustrates that no 0 (zero) lies between the values of LLCI and ULCI, which proves the hypothesis to be significant (Hayes, 2012).

TABLE 4.4: Emotional Exhaustion as Mediator

Predictor Emotional Exhaustion	$\beta$	SE	95% LLCI	95% ULCI
Psychological Well-being regressed on Despotic Leadership through mediator (H2)	-0.0339	0.0194	-0.086	-0.0053

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , Bootstrap sample size = 10000

It can clearly be noticeable from **Table: 4.4** that indirect effect of despotic leadership on psychological well-being of an employee through the mediating role of

emotional exhaustion is significant because of same signs with LLCI value and ULCI value; (LLCI =  $-.0860$  & ULCI =  $-.0053$ ). Thus, our hypothesis 2 that emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between despotic leadership and psychological well-being is accepted. Plus, emotional exhaustion is partially mediated the relationship between despotic leadership and psychological well-being of an employee because the direct and indirect path of current study are both significant. So, as per (Hayes, 2012) emotional exhaustion partially mediates between despotic leadership and psychological well-being of an employee in IT/Software project based organization(s) and software house(s).

**H2:** Emotional Exhaustion mediates the relationship between Despotic Leadership and Psychological Well-being of an employee.

## 4.5 Moderation Analysis

Same signs of LLCI and ULCI supports hypothesis of the study to be considered as significant, as the same signs of LLCI and ULCI proves the non-existence of 0 (zero) between the LLCI and ULCI values (Hayes, 2012).

TABLE 4.5: Organizational Justice as Moderator

Predictor	Organizational Justice	$\beta$	SE	95% LLCI	95% ULCI
Psychological Well-being regressed on Emotional Exhaustion on moderator (H3)		-0.0175	0.0114	-0.0521	-0.0021

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , Bootstrap sample size = 10000

**Table: 4.5**, shows that the hypothesis 3 of current study that organizational justice positively moderates the relationship between emotional exhaustion and psychological well-being of an employee is supported significantly, as LLCI value is =  $-.0521$  and ULCI value is =  $-.0021$ . Organizational justice also weakens the relationship between emotional exhaustion and psychological well-being, which

shows that in the presence of organizational justice the amount of disturbed psychological well-being will be reduced as compared to the absence of organizational justice.

TABLE 4.6: Organizational Justice Effect on Emotional Exhaustion

Organizational Justice	Effect	95% LLCI	95% ULCI
2.3284	0.0009	-0.0199	0.0326
3.324	-0.0164	-0.0493	-0.0004
4.3195	-0.0338	-0.0859	-0.0052

Through **Table: 4.6** we can see that with one-unit increase in the organizational justice the effect of emotional exhaustion is reducing.

**H3:** Organizational Justice positively moderates the relationship between Emotional Exhaustion and Psychological Well-being.

TABLE 4.7: Hypotheses Summary

Hypotheses	Statements	Results
H1	Despotic leadership is negatively associated with Psychological well-being of an employee.	Accepted
H2	Emotional Exhaustion mediates the relationship between Despotic Leadership and Psychological Well-being of an employee.	Accepted
H3	Organizational Justice positively moderates the relationship between Emotional Exhaustion and Psychological Well-being.	Accepted

# Chapter 5

## Discussion and Conclusion

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter “discussion and conclusion” as name suggest holds the discussion about the outcome(s) of the current research study. More on it includes discussion about the followings; hypothesis, acceptance and rejection of hypothesis, theoretical implication, practical implication, strength(s) of the study, weakness(es) of the study, limitation(s) of current study, future directions of the current research study and an overall conclusion.

### 5.2 Discussion

The main aim of the current research study is to analyze the relationship between despotic leadership (negative style of management) and psychological well-being (of employees in a IT/Software project based organization/software house). For such reason, the data was collected from different private sector project based IT/Software organizations and software houses of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. As the study intends to explore, does the despotic leadership creates emotional exhaustion in employees and disturbs their psychological well-being? What kind of relationship is between emotional exhaustion of employees and psychological well-being of employees? Does organizational justice play a helpful role for improving

the psychological well-being of employees and how it can counter the emotional exhaustion of employees in a project, developed through the presence of despotic leadership? Where despotic leadership is independent variable, psychological well-being is dependent variable, emotional exhaustion is mediating variable and organizational justice is acting as a moderating variable in current research model.

Findings were that “despotic leadership is negatively associated with the psychological well-being of an employee”, which is also the first hypothesis of the current research study and through analysis of the data it was accepted. Second hypothesis that is “emotional exhaustion mediates the relation between despotic leadership and psychological well-being of an employee in a project” is also accepted. The results of the study show that emotional exhaustion partially mediates the relation between despotic leadership and psychological well-being of an employee because the direct relationship of current study “despotic leadership with psychological well-being of an employee” is also significant and supported which indicates it to be the partial mediation between the despotic leadership and psychological well-being of an employee. As per (Baron, & Kenny, 1986) partial mediation occurs when the IV’s (independent variable) influence on the DV (dependent variable) is reduced but still significant when the mediator of the study is controlled. Third hypothesis that is “organizational justice positively moderates the relationship between emotional exhaustion and psychological well-being” is accepted too. This study reports that organizational justice will weaken the relation between emotional exhaustion and psychological well-being of an employee.

The current research study’s main objectives were to study the relationship between independent variable (despotic leadership) and dependent variable (psychological well-being) in a IT/Software project based organization(s) and software house(s) in contextual setting of Pakistan. Other relations which are assessed are the mediating role of emotional exhaustion between despotic leadership and psychological well-being and moderating role of organizational justice between emotional exhaustion and psychological well-being of an employee. The results of the current research study suggest that despotic leadership style of negative management must be discouraged as it has a negative impact on psychological

well-being of employee in a project.

Discussion on each of the questions and hypothesis of current study is as following.

### **5.2.1 Question 1: What is the Relationship between Despotic Leadership and Employee's Psychological Well-Being in Projects?**

For the purpose of finding the answer to the question stated above,

#### **H1: Despotic Leadership is Negatively Associated with Psychological Well-Being of an Employee**

The premise of despotic leadership has negative and a significant relationship with psychological well-being of an employee was supported and accepted. As the hypothesis's results proves that there is significant relationship between IV & DV (despotic leadership and psychological well-being of an employee). The beta coefficient value reveals that one-unit increase in despotic leadership will bring 20.6% decrease in the psychological well-being of an employee in a IT/Software project based organizations and software houses. It also concludes the relationship to be inversely proportional. It is visible from the previous research study that despotic leadership directly effects the psychological well-being of employees and despotic leaderships reduces the psychological well-being of employees (Raja, Haq, Clercq, & Azeem, 2019), but a limited research has been found in the literature of social sciences on despotic leadership style of management. Thus, the current study's result is an additional as well as a new contribution in the existing literature of bad, unethical and negative leadership. Our current research study's theory of social exchange (SET) can also be helpful in the explanation of the despotic leadership relationship with psychological well-being of an employee.

Despotic leadership is already defined time to time by different researchers and have added different concepts based on their study and findings under the unique settings of their studies. So, we can define it as the one of the negative style of management where I manager or supervisor is not concerned about his/her employees, his/her initial objective is his/her own benefits and goals and to get these



things such manager or supervisor can do whatever it is needed. Like he/she can abuse his/her employees physically and verbally, in person or in public, demotivates employees to not let them grow so that they will remain under his/her control and command.

The most relevant definition as per the study of this research can be that a despotic leadership style of management is one which does not care about the personal life of employees and treats employees just like the machines considering them not having any kind of emotions and feelings, so such negative manager or supervisor use them for his/her benefits like tools. No doubt that like other projects, IT/Software projects do have the same constraints of scope, cost and time but we can say in IT/Software sector they are even more harder to achieve and it is the project manager or supervisor who is responsible of getting things done in the iron triangle (scope, cost & time). But without the core resource like employees who are the real workers, manager or supervisor can never get near to the results and outputs. So a manager or supervisor must care about its core resource (employee) as there are times when manager or supervisor is found short on ideas and employees are the ones with the way out. Another study of (Erkutlu, & Chafra, 2018), which argued about the despotic leadership and organizational deviance also found despotic leadership leaving negative impact on the psychological well-being of employees of an organization.

### **5.2.2 Question 2: Does Emotional Exhaustion Mediates between the Relationship of Despotic Leadership and Employee's Psychological Well-Being?**

For the purpose of finding the answer to the question stated above,

**H2: Emotional Exhaustion Mediates the Relation between Despotic Leadership and Psychological Well-Being of an Employee in a Project.**

The premise of emotional exhaustion mediates the relation between despotic leadership and psychological well-being of an employee in a project was supported and accepted but it was found to be a partial mediation. As the beta co-efficient

value demonstrates the one-unit increase in the emotional exhaustion will bring one-unit decrease in the psychological well-being of an employee. Values of lower limit confidence interval and upper limit confidence interval having the same signs means the results are significant. The findings of the current study are consistent with the results found in the research of (Nauman, Fatima, & Haq, 2018), where emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between despotic leadership and employee's family life. As it disturbs the employee's family life which is one of the key component of psychological well-being of an employee. As emotional exhaustion is the combination of the mental exhaustion and physical exhaustion, an employee mentally exhausted means that such employee's ideas are not been appreciated, that employee is not been asked by his/her manager or supervisor about his personal life or we can say manager or supervisor does not intend to build a healthy connection with the employee, while taking decisions employee's opinion is not taken as employee is the one who is ultimately going to perform the task and no suggest are allowed from the employees end on any matter in the project which gives a sense of loneliness to employee and which effects the psychological well-being of an employee under relationship with others block of psychological well-being.

On the other end the physical exhaustion deals with the physical state of an employee, like if an employee's physical energy level is there as per the need of the task. To better understand the physical exhaustion of an employee we consider a simple real life example; when an employee is working on a release of a product continuously from 48 hours, no doubt his mental exhaustion is also under thread but for now we are only focusing on the physical part of the emotional exhaustion, that employee's energy for sitting on a chair for 48 hours is no more allowing him/her to stay in the same position, same for the eyes when an employee is continuously seeing a screen from 48 hours his/her eyes are not being able to watch anymore but in Pakistan there are case in which employees are forced to work 72 hours without going home and staying at company's office to finalize the release, it is the perfect scenario of an employee being physically exhausted when he/she is not being able to work anymore and his/her reserve energy level

is also used. Results have shown that despotic leadership (independent variable) is source of emotional exhaustion (mediating variable) and when the employees in the project based organizations experience emotional exhaustion their psychological well-being (dependent variable) gets disturbed. Psychological well-being gets disturbed when any of these components of a psychological well-being gets affected; self-acceptance, employee's relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth.

### **5.2.3 Question 3: Does Organizational Justice Playing a Moderating Role between Employee's Emotional Exhaustion and Employee's Psychological Well-Being?**

For the purpose of finding the answer to the question stated above,

#### **H3: Organizational Justice Positively Moderates the Relationship between Emotional Exhaustion and Psychological Well-Being**

The premise of organizational justice (moderating variable) positively moderates the relationship between emotional exhaustion (mediating variable) and psychological well-being (dependent variable) of an employee in a project was supported and accepted. Before discussing the results of moderation, let us revise the results of moderation in theoretical manner so that we can easily understand and link the results of moderation in the current research study. As the moderation is; increase in despotic leadership will increase the emotional exhaustion in the employees working in a project based organization and with the increase in emotional exhaustion the employee's psychological well-being is observed to be decreasing. Now the role of moderator (organizational justice) is to reduce the such bad impact or in other way we can say that to weaken the relationship of emotional exhaustion with psychological well-being of an employee. So it is found to be possible with results that after the introduction of organizational justice (moderating variable) the psychological well-being of an employee can be improved as it is observed to be

less disturbed as compared to when the organizational justice (moderating variable) is not present, so it reveals an improvement in the psychological well-being of an employee in a project based organization.

As now we have developed the image of how the things are working we can discuss the results. The values of lower limit confidence interval (LLCI) and upper limit confidence interval (ULCI) have the same sign of “ – “which means the results are significant. Now as the one-unit change from 2.3284 to 3.3240 in organizational justice (moderating variable) is recorded we observed a decrease in emotional exhaustion (mediating variable) from 0.0009 to -0.0164 and when again the one-unit change in organizational justice (moderating variable) from 3.3240 to 4.3195 is reported, we again observed a decrease in mediating variable (emotional exhaustion) from -0.0164 to -0.0338. As the effect of emotional exhaustion is decreased the psychological well-being is observed to be less decreased too but without the role of organizational justice, psychological well-being of an employee was observed to be more decreased. The results of (Kayani, Zafar, Aksar, & Hassan, 2019) research study also supports the findings of this current research study that when the organizational justice’s perception is observed high in the employees, their psychological well-being also found to be increased.

### 5.3 Practical and Theoretical Implications

Through this research study a new domain has been opened for despotic leadership style of management where it has been already studied and explored with different variables in previous literature i.e. Knowledge Hoarding (Sarwar, Khan, & Mujtaba, 2017), Islamic Work Ethics (Haq, Azeem, & Mahmud, 2016), Organizational Commitment (Karadal, & Adigüzel, 2017), Emotional Stability (Ul Haq, Ahmed, Shabbir, & Khalid, 2019). Generally, through previous researches and work it has been established that despotic leadership is harmful for employee’s psychological well-being in a project. The current research study has added very significant aspects of despotic leadership to the previous literature through exploring and testing the relation between despotic leadership and psychological well-being of

an employee in a project based organization/software house. As employee is the real key for any project to be successful because they are the core resource and his/her psychological well-being is very important for him/her to perform well so that project can meet its success and quality criteria and organization can achieve its goal too. Through this dimension the literature was explored and a unique research model was designed so that a very important outcome (psychological well-being of an employee in a project) can be addressed and a new contribution can be made in the project management's existing literature.

This study will help IT/Software project based organizations and software houses of Pakistan along with the researchers to identify the reasons for negative/disturbed psychological well-being of an employee working on their project(s) and in their organization/software house. Results of the moderation (organizational justice) will help IT/Software project based organizations and software houses in Pakistan to put their employees of negative psychological well-being in recovery mode from negative to positive psychological well-being for the reasons identified with the presence and implementation of organizational justice, it will also help to counter the behavior of despotic leadership, a negative style of management and to communicate for the discouragement of such negative leader, manager or supervisor in their projects and organizations to prevent their employees from being emotionally exhausted. The current research has played a vital role in the literature by exploring and revealing the negative, serious and dangerous results of despotic leadership on psychological well-being of an employee in a project based IT/Software organization/software house. It is also important for the IT/Software project based organizations in Pakistan where the employees due to less jobs, job insecurity and other factors like costliness has made things even worse are found more exposed to the a despotic leader, manager or supervisor, organizations/-software houses must provide justice to the employees in response to despotic leadership style of management so that emotional exhaustion in employees can be reduced and their psychological well-being can grow in a positive direction.

Furthermore, the underlying theoretical assumptions of Social Exchange Theory (SET) are also extended and supported by the current research study; behavior

of one person can influence and change the behavior of other person, it can be good and it can be bad where both parties focus on maximizing the benefits and minimizing the damage/cost (Homans, 1958). Thus, it is evident that the actions, dealings and behavior of despotic leadership style of management has negative impact on the psychological well-being of employees in a project and employees in response as per the SET to complete the three step transaction (action, reaction and relationship development) shows the low job performance, low commitment, higher will to leave the organization, expression of sadness and holding of valuable knowledge. Therefore, the findings of current study have supported the theoretical foundations of SET. The current research study offers researchers to access the process success and failure through the perspective of employee's psychological well-being in a project and how organizational justice can increase the success rate and decrease the failure ratio of projects while discouraging the despotic leadership style of management so that employees can experience a better psychological well-being.

## **5.4 Limitations of the Current Research**

Nothing is perfect in today's ever changing world as there is always a room for the improvement(s) and in IT/Software sector which is an ever growing field with a great competition for faster, better, eye catching, user engaging and ever improving services and products to retain their top spot in the market is nearly impossible to call something perfect. Like the evolution of Microsoft Windows from Windows 1 to Windows 10 (Gibbs, 2014), which is still growing to meet the continuous changing demands of users, as the current latest version of Microsoft Windows 10 is version 2004 released on May 27, 2020 (Microsoft, 2020). Same like the example just mentioned above the current research study has also few limitations. Starting from the very first limitation of the current study is the time limitation for the completion of research thesis, so the data for the current study was collected in specific time period. Second is the limitation of resources as being a student it is

not possible to collect the data from different cities as it requires travel and expense, that is why the data was only collected from the IT/Software project based organizations and software houses of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. With both first two limitations combined it reveals the another limitation of the current research as a cross-sectional study. As the responses were collected online due to lockdown in respect of COVID-19 pandemic, employee's response may change under normal circumstances. For data collection, stratified random sampling technique was the priority but due to the lockdown it was not feasible to progress with that technique, so the convenient sampling technique is used. Due to work from home the targeted respondent's daily routine was changed and it was very hard to get their time and convincing them to fill the questionnaires, for this reason a reminder after some time period as a request to fill the questionnaire was sent which may have influenced the behavior of respondents and they might have filled the questionnaires considering just as a formality.

So, the results of the current study may not be possible to map on other countries because it was solely done for the IT/Software project based organizations and software houses of Pakistan. All the mentioned limitations should be overcome, time span for the collection of data should be increased to collect even more responses, more cities of Pakistan (i.e. Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Faisalabad, Multan, Abbottabad, Hyderabad, Sargodha, and Jhelum) should be involved for the collection of the data if the relevant resources are available, other sampling technique like stratified random sampling should be used for the purpose of data collection.

## **5.5 Future Research Directions**

Due to the room of improvements it allows to consider the future directions of the current research study. On the basis of current research study, followings are the few suggestions for the future research; Data from IT/Software project based organizations and software houses of other cities of the Pakistan should also be

collected for analysis alongside Rawalpindi and Islamabad. To make it generalize study for the whole county (Pakistan), number of the respondents should be increased. Data collection should be done using longitudinal method as for the current research study cross-sectional method is used. Only the private sector of IT/Software project based organizations and software houses are considered for current study, so government sector should also be explored. As only the IT/-Software project based organizations and software houses are the part of current study, current research model should be checked on other project based organizations like construction and weapon. Top management support as an additional moderator with organizational justice should be explored in order to advance in this area of research, which may even speed up the process of recovery from the negative to positive psychological well-being of employees in a IT/Software project based organizations and software houses.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

Through this research study an attempt has been made to study and analyze the relationship between despotic leadership and psychological well-being of an employee in the IT/Software project based organizations and software houses of twin cities (Rawalpindi & Islamabad) of Pakistan. For data collection private sector was only taken under the consideration of the current study and different questionnaires for despotic leadership, emotional exhaustion, organizational justice and psychological well-being were adopted to receive the responses of respondents (employees of IT/Software project based organizations and software houses). All the responses were requested from employees as they were the targeted respondents for the current study and before the process of data analysis on IBM SPSS Statistics few responses were dropped (not included for the analysis) as they were the responses from the managers. All the effort of data collection and data analysis was made to find out the association of despotic leadership with psychological well-being of an employee while emotional exhaustion acting as a mediator and organizational justice playing the role of moderator. Social exchange theory (SET)



is used in the current research study to check the association of despotic leadership and psychological well-being of an employee in a project based organization.

A total number of 350 questionnaires were distributed in the employees of companies, organization and software houses from Rawalpindi and Islamabad listed in the Table 3.1. Only 252 questionnaires were filled back and out of 252 only 240 were finally considered for the analysis as the 9 responses were from the managers so they were dropped at the first sight and further 3 responses were rejected because of improper filling. Model reliability was tested using the statistical tool and social exchange theory supported the current study's hypothesis. The current research's main contribution was to analyze and find the relationship between despotic leadership (independent variable) and psychological well-being (dependent variable), emotional exhaustion acting as the mediator and moderator between the emotional exhaustion and psychological well-being of an employee is organizational justice. Total number of hypothesis of the current research study was 3, which are analyzed and also tested in the contextual setting of our country (Pakistan). All the three of the hypothesis were supported by the results helped all the hypothesis to be marked as accepted.

Nothing is perfect and everything needs improvement with time, changing behaviors, needs and demands of the people, as the current research study was carried out in the contextual settings of Pakistan and more precisely the sample was only collected from just two cities; Rawalpindi and Islamabad. So with this small sample this study is not able to qualify to be considered as a general study for Pakistan IT/Software industry. Other limitation is that the responses were collected in COVID-19 pandemic which may have influenced the responses of employees and there is higher expectation of change in response when the same questionnaires will be asked to fill when the things get back to the normal (post COVID-19 time). As the main aim of this study was to discourage the despotic leadership negative style of management as it destroys the psychological well-being of an employee working in a project based organization and results of the study have shown the reasons of why such style of management must be discouraged and it suggests

IT/Software project based organizations and software houses of Pakistan to discourage despotic leader, manager or supervisor so that employees can grow, find meaning in their work and life, can easily develop relationships at workplace and out of the office too, can share their creative solutions, can have their say to avoid emotional exhaustion, to develop love and a sense of belonging to the organization or software house.

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# Appendix-A

## Questionnaire

**Dear Respondent**

I hope you will be doing well. I am the student of MS Project Management at Capital University of science and technology Islamabad. I am conducting a research on a topic titled “Project Role Overload and Emotional Exhaustion as Antecedents of Project Supervisor Incivility: The Moderating role of Time Consciousness”. You can help me by completing the attached questionnaire; it will take only 10-15 minutes and I am sure that you will find it quite interesting. I appreciate your participation in my study and I assure you that your responses will be held confidential and will only be use for education purposes.

Sincerely,

**Adeel Ahmed Kalyar,**

**MS (PM) Research Scholar,**

**Faculty of Management and Social Sciences,**

**Capital University Science and Technology, Islamabad.**

## Section 1: Demographics

Gender:	1- Male, 2- Female
Age:	1 (20-25), 2 (26-30), 3 (31-35), 4 (36 and above)
Qualification	1 (Matric), 2 (Inter), 3 (Bachelor), 4 (Master), 5 (PhD/Post PhD)
Experience	1 (0-5), 2 (6-10), 3 (11-15), 4 (16 and above)
Designation	1- Manager, 2- Employee
Marital Status	1- Single, 2- Married, 3- Divorced, 4- Widowed

## Section 2: Despotic Leadership

Please tick the relevant choices: 1= strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree.

1	Leadership Is punitive; has no regret or sympathy.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Leadership Is in charge and does not tolerate the disagreement or questioning, gives orders.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Leadership Acts like a cruel or despot; arrogant.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Leadership Tends to be unwilling or unable to hand over control of projects or tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Leadership Expects unquestioning obedience of those who report to him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Leadership Is vengeful; seeks revenge when wronged.	1	2	3	4	5

## Section 3: Emotional Exhaustion

Please tick the relevant choices: 1= strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree.

1	In general, I often experience being tired.	1	2	3	4	5
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2	In general, I often experience being wiped out.	1	2	3	4	5
3	In general, I often experience feeling run-down.	1	2	3	4	5
4	In general, I often experience feeling rejected.	1	2	3	4	5
5	In general, I often experience being exhausted.	1	2	3	4	5

## Section 4: Organizational Justice

Please tick the relevant choices: 1= strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree.

1	The outcomes that I receive reflect what I contribute to the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
2	In my organization, procedures are based on accurate information.	1	2	3	4	5
3	My supervisor treats me in a polite manner.	1	2	3	4	5
4	My supervisor communicates details in a timely manner.	1	2	3	4	5

## Section 5: Psychological Well-Being

Please tick the relevant choices: 1= strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree.

1	I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.	1	2	3	4	5
2	My social relationships are supportive and rewarding.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I am a good person and live a good life.	1	2	3	4	5

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7	I am optimistic about my future.	1	2	3	4	5
8	People respect me.	1	2	3	4	5