

Article

Employer Responses to Poaching on Employee Productivity: The Mediating Role of Organizational Agility in Technology Companies

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Abstract: This study investigates the impact of an organization's response to poaching on employee productivity while considering the mediating role of organizational agility, contributing to the sustainability literature. The study aimed to explore the impact of three responses toward poaching, including the constructive response (CR), defensive response (DR), and retaliatory response (RR), on employee productivity. The survey-based approach collected data from companies in the Pakistani service sector, an essential step toward understanding sustainable human resource practices in developing countries. Regression analysis was used to analyze the collected data, revealing significant relationships between predictor variables and employee productivity. Specifically, Model 1 found a significant negative relationship between CR and productivity, whereas DR showed a positive and significant association with productivity. The study also considered the unique characteristics of the Pakistani service sector to explain the observed negative and positive relationships between CR and DR, respectively, and employee productivity. Model 2 improved the model fit by introducing organizational agility as a predictor variable, demonstrating a positive and significant relationship between productivity and all four predictor variables. The study suggests that the positive relationship between organizational agility and productivity could be due to agile organizations being more adept at responding to changing market conditions and demands, resulting in improved overall performance. This study provides valuable insights into the impact of an organization's response to poaching on employee productivity while considering the mediating role of organizational agility. It contributes to the sustainability literature.

Keywords: employee poaching; employee performance; defensive response; constructive response; retaliatory response



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1. Introduction

In developing countries, sustainable human resource practices are even more critical. According to the International Labour Organization, almost 70% of workers in developing countries work in the informal economy without legal protections or job security [1]. It makes it even more challenging for organizations to retain top talent and maintain productivity. However, studies have shown that investing in sustainable human resource practices can help to improve employee well-being and productivity, ultimately benefiting the organization and the broader community [2]. For instance, sustainable HR practices can improve employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment and reduce turnover intentions in developing countries [3]. Therefore, in developing countries, organizations must focus on sustainable human resource practices that prioritize the well-being of employees, such as fair and equal treatment, safe working conditions, and opportunities for

training and career development. By doing so, they can contribute to their community's sustainable development while maintaining long-term business success.

Historically, poaching has been defined as the illegal hunting or acquiring of wildlife. Farmers who lacked the skills, time, or weapons to hunt for food in the agricultural sector had to look for other ways to support their families. However, the term "poaching" has evolved to include companies recruiting personnel from their competitors, which creates competition for top talent and often leads to better career opportunities and higher wages. This practice is most prevalent among young and talented workers in Pakistan. It has caused temporary work suspension and a high unemployment rate among young graduates due to a lack of professionalism [4]. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the unemployment rate in Pakistan was 5.7% in 2012 and decreased to 4.5% in 2019. However, it increased to 6.0% in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic [5]. Different sources may report slightly different statistics based on their data collection and reporting methods. Many factors directly provoke such staff poaching [6].

The term "employee poaching" has been defined in various ways throughout the literature. It generally refers to attracting and recruiting top-performing employees from one organization to another, often to gain a competitive advantage. Employee poaching involves recruiting employees from a competing organization to enhance an organization's talent pool and gain a competitive edge [7,8]. Employee poaching involves using incentives, such as higher salaries, better benefits, or more attractive career development opportunities, to lure top talent from other organizations [9]. It aims to improve a firm's human capital and competitiveness in the market [10,11]. Recruiting personnel from competitors raises the stakes in the competition for top talent and allows talented individuals to further their careers at a greater wage. Some worry that removing competition via non-employment agreements violates antitrust laws. The practice of poaching decreases workers' commitment to the company's goal and productivity. Since this is the case, more progress is needed. For Pakistani enterprises to escape their current condition, employee engagement strategies must be implemented [12,13]. In this case, organizational agility significantly affects how quickly companies embrace change and affects organizational performance. This type of coaching has been instrumental in creating a corporate culture that aims to create a better work-life culture where employees enjoy their psychological security and are motivated to innovate and deliver the products. Such agile organizational performance can lead to for-profit projects and economic growth [14]. In Pakistan, the private and public sectors have faced employee turnover issues that have affected job satisfaction, organizational engagement, career growth, and organizational culture. To solve poaching issues, Pakistani organizations must develop HR policies that minimize employee distraction and increase job-related satisfaction.

The literature to date should provide a better understanding of how an organization's constructive, retaliatory, and defensive response can increase or decrease overall employee performance. It is the first study on a related topic in Pakistan, and this authentic study significantly bridges that gap. Additionally, it viewed organizational flexibility as a facilitator that channels the impact of the organization's response to poaching on employee performance. This insight will help Pakistani managers and decision-makers to develop powerful HR strategies to retain talented employees. Therefore, its scope focuses mainly on considering the role of organizations' active response to poaching in improving the overall productivity of workers, with organizational flexibility playing an important role. After reviewing the background study on current worker attitudes toward poaching and its associated side effects on the socioeconomic growth of the Pakistani state, it becomes clear that such research is needed to solve this problem that most Pakistani organizations face. Therefore, the problem of this research paper is posed in the form of a question: "How has the organizational response to employee eviction had a major impact on employee productivity under the mediating role of organizational flexibility?" Based on the above problem, the research goals are based on the following:

- To explore the impact of employee poaching on productivity in Pakistani firms;
- To analyze the effect of different organizational responses to employee poaching (construction, retaliation, and defensive) on productivity in Pakistani firms;
- To assess the mediating role of organizational agility in the relationship between organizational response to employee poaching and productivity in Pakistani firms.

The practice of employee poaching has become increasingly prevalent in many industries, posing a significant challenge for companies seeking to maintain a stable workforce and sustain their operations. This issue is particularly relevant in the Pakistani technology industry, where firms grapple with a shortage of skilled workers and intense competition for talent. The impact of employee poaching on the productivity of Pakistani firms is a pressing concern, as it can disrupt operations, erode employee morale, and compromise the quality of products and services. To address this issue, it is essential to explore how organizations respond to poaching and whether these responses impact employee productivity. This study investigates the impact of employer responses to poaching, including constructive response, defensive response, and retaliatory response, on productivity in Pakistan's technology companies. The study also examines the mediating role of organizational agility in this relationship, as agile organizations may be better equipped to respond to poaching and mitigate its adverse effects on productivity. This research is essential for Pakistani firms to develop sustainable human resource practices to maintain a stable workforce and improve their overall performance. Sustainability and ethical business practices have become increasingly important for organizations worldwide in recent years. In developing countries like Pakistan, where labor laws are often weakly enforced, organizations must take proactive measures to ensure that their employees are protected and that their business practices are sustainable. This is particularly important in the technology industry, where competitors often target skilled employees through poaching. The response of employers to poaching can have a significant impact on employee productivity, as well as on the overall sustainability of the organization. This study aims to explore the impact of employer responses to poaching on employee productivity in technology companies in Pakistan, with a specific focus on the mediating role of organizational agility. Understanding the role of governments in promoting sustainable business practices in this field is crucial, as it can help to ensure that organizations are held accountable for their actions and are incentivized to prioritize the well-being of their employees.

The topic of employer responses to poaching on employee productivity is particularly relevant for managers and experienced employees in Pakistan. In recent years, the Pakistani technology sector has been rapidly growing and, as a result, employee poaching has become a common challenge for organizations. The loss of skilled employees can significantly impact an organization's productivity, ultimately affecting its bottom line. Therefore, managers and experienced employees must understand how different responses to poaching can impact employee productivity and the role of organizational agility in mediating this relationship. This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by exploring the impact of different employer responses to poaching on employee productivity while also considering the mediating role of organizational agility in technology companies in Pakistan. By shedding light on this critical topic, this study can provide valuable insights for managers and experienced employees in the Pakistani technology sector, helping them to develop effective strategies to mitigate the negative impact of poaching on employee productivity. The study "Employer Responses to Poaching on Employee Productivity: The Mediating Role of Organizational Agility in Technology Companies in Pakistan" uses a survey-based approach to investigate the impact of an organization's response to poaching on employee productivity. The study's novel contribution is exploring the mediating role of organizational agility, a variable not previously considered in this context. The study's findings show significant relationships between the predictor variables (constructive response, defensive response, retaliatory response, and organizational agility) and employee productivity. Specifically, the study found that the defensive response showed a positive and significant association with productivity, while the constructive response

showed a negative and significant relationship. The study's consideration of the Pakistani service sector's unique characteristics also helped explain these relationships. Model 2, which introduced organizational agility as a predictor variable, improved the model fit and demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between productivity and all four predictor variables. Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the impact of an organization's response to poaching on employee productivity while considering the mediating role of organizational agility.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Organizational Response toward Employee Productivity

The psychological well-being of employees is essential for working within an organization [15]. The study stated that the power dynamics-based mutuality factor strengthened employees' productivity. After conducting a qualitative research study, the study concluded that psychological factors positively influence employee development and loyalty. It also concluded that there is a need for an effective communication channel between organizational management and its employees to enhance their productivity. Before this, the study considered employee motivation and working performance factors by conducting a comparative study in Ghana mining companies' contests. According to the study, most employees are highly motivated toward upcoming challenges faced within an organization. It developed a job satisfaction model which generates productivity factors among existing employees. That is why most large-scale companies developed employee-oriented strategies and policies [16].

Sometimes, it becomes risky to enhance the job productivity factor of employees in developing states. The employees' overall skills and capabilities must also be upgraded to match this competition [17]. In the current digital era, most organizations prefer to replace human resources with machines and other artificial intelligence-based devices. In this situation, sustaining productivity growth within an organization becomes quite challenging.

2.2. Employee Poaching and Employee Productivity

Employee poaching, defined as the practice of firms hiring skilled employees from other firms, is becoming increasingly common in the modern corporate world. This phenomenon has significant implications for both the poached employee and the poaching firm, as well as for the firm that loses its skilled worker. This critical literature review examines the impact of organizational response toward employee poaching on productivity. Organizational agility and its influential culture positively strengthened the response to employee poaching [18]. The study suggests that an agile organizational culture helps to mitigate the effects of employee poaching by fostering a positive and supportive workplace environment. Furthermore, green HRM practices, such as providing employees with opportunities for skill development and training, can increase their productivity. Thus, organizations that respond to employee poaching positively and proactively may benefit from increased employee productivity and a more engaged workforce.

The relationship between effective employee performance and organizational agility found that a professional and goal-oriented management approach can reduce employee turnover rates and positively impact productivity [19]. It implies that prioritizing professional development and goal attainment can help organizations retain employees and maintain productivity in the face of employee poaching. Non-compete agreements may also help reduce the negative impact of employee poaching, but careful consideration of enforceability and local laws is necessary [20]. Investing in employee development and taking measures to prevent poaching can lead to a more productive workforce and a more resilient organization. However, such measures must consider the legal and ethical implications.

Employee poaching is a growing concern in Pakistani firms, hurting employee productivity, commitment, and turnover rates. A study found that employee poaching in the banking industry negatively affected productivity [21]. The loss of skilled employees can lead to an increased workload and reduced job security, resulting in decreased

motivation and productivity. Another study found that employee poaching can lead to decreased employee commitment and increased turnover rates, resulting in high costs for firms regarding recruitment and training [22].

In contrast, firms that took a retaliation strategy experienced higher levels of conflict and stress, which could ultimately lead to decreased productivity. Pakistani firms must proactively retain their skilled employees and foster a positive work environment. This can be achieved through constructive strategies emphasizing employee development and job security. However, it is essential to avoid retaliation strategies, as these can result in higher levels of conflict and stress. These findings highlight the importance of effective management practices that foster a supportive and productive workplace culture in achieving organizational success.

Overall, the literature suggests that organizations that respond to employee poaching proactively and positively may benefit from increased employee productivity and a more engaged workforce. This can be achieved by adopting green HRM practices, such as providing opportunities for skill development and training and promoting a positive and supportive workplace culture. While the use of non-compete agreements may also reduce the negative impact of employee poaching, their use requires careful consideration of the legal and ethical implications. In conclusion, further research is needed to fully understand the complex relationship between the organizational response toward employee poaching and productivity. Nevertheless, the studies reviewed in this paper provide valuable insights into the impact of the organizational response on employee productivity and suggest that a proactive and positive response can help to mitigate the adverse effects of employee poaching on organizational performance.

2.3. The Mediating Role of Organizational Agility between Employee Poaching and Employee Productivity

In the previous literature, scholars explored their understanding of organizational agility from a different perspective; for example, Paul and others stated that IT is one of the significant factors that majorly hit organizational agility within a workplace. According to them, technology plays a significant role in a company's survival in competitors' markets. They utilized the sensemaking hypothesis to understand how businesses manage and adapt to change [23]. Decisional agility is connected to the capacity to recognize and respond appropriately to change. As a result of information technology (IT), several parties are now interconnected, and IT is increasingly functioning as a company's primary source of assets. A study of others contemplated the prospect of agility inside a company's supply chain during the same year. According to these researchers, an organization's emphasis on management agility may make it simpler to provide a comprehensive perspective of supply chain difficulties and gaps. Businesses have responded to findings on the impact of investing in multi-functional resources and IT networks on the agility of the supply chain, according to the findings of the panel data research [24]. Due to the significance of organizational agility's influence on employee retention and productivity, their study merits close investigation.

Various studies have examined the impact of human resource management practices and organizational culture on employee outcomes and overall business success. A study found that organizational flexibility meets shareholder expectations and that green HR management and agile practices can improve management and worker outcomes. Green HRM techniques, which include recruiting, pay, participation, training, performance management, and assessment, were particularly effective [25]. Another qualitative study of young Pakistani bankers found that well-treated human resources staff can positively impact company morale [26]. The findings also revealed that young workers often seek shortcuts to success to save time and effort, highlighting the importance of effective HR management practices in retaining young talent. A research study examined the impact of organizational culture on employee performance and loyalty. Their study found that companies with a culture of employee innovation have the most productive workers, high-

lighting the importance of fostering a supportive and innovative workplace culture [27]. Workplace success generates employee loyalty and pride in corporate policy, enhancing productivity. They also claimed that updating HRM legislation and increasing flexibility can improve organizational effectiveness [28].

Recent research has also investigated the mediating role of organizational agility between employee poaching and productivity. For instance, in a study, the findings suggest that both practices positively affect affective commitment and the intention to stay and that affective commitment acts as a mediator between talent development and the intention to stay while fully mediating the relationship between leadership development and the intention to stay [29]. The study examines the talent development strategies used by three different types of organizations. It explores local and Western strategies and the industry's challenges and trends. The stakeholders interested in this research include chief learning officers, directors of human resources, and HRD scholars [30].

A significant gap exists in the previous literature regarding the poaching attitude of Pakistani employees in the current dynamic socioeconomic situation. The Pakistani organizational response toward employees, which directly impacts productivity, must be adequately studied. HR management has recently become a pressing issue in light of this developing nation's high unemployment rate and employee turnover. There needs to be more understanding of how to resolve the issue of employee poaching through an intelligent strategic approach. This gap is significantly addressed by an authentic research study that aims to critically investigate the organizational response to poaching and its influence on employee performance, with the mediating role of organizational agility.

2.4. Conceptual Model

The conceptual model used in this research study investigates the relationship between independent and dependent variables, with the influence of mediating variables. As illustrated in Figure 1, the independent variable is the organizational response to poaching, the dependent variable is employee productivity, and organizational agility is considered a mediating variable. The use of mediation analysis in this study is supported by the work of Baron and Kenn, who emphasized the importance of considering mediating variables better to understand the relationship between independent and dependent variables [31]. Organizational agility as a mediator has been suggested to play an essential role in mitigating the negative impact of poaching on employee productivity [32].

The relationship between the variables in this study is informed by two major theoretical frameworks: institution theory and the theory of planned behavior. Institution theory emphasizes the importance of norms, schemes, routines, and rules-based processes in establishing authoritative guidelines for significant social structures. Its components include creating, diffusing, adopting, and adapting over time and space. This theoretical understanding highlights the significance of organizational policies and regulations in shaping employee productivity and behavior [33]. On the other hand, the theory of planned behavior is a psychological theory commonly used by HR managers and other authoritative bodies to anticipate upcoming events and develop relevant strategies to address challenging situations. According to this theory, perceived behavioral control toward behavior and subjective norms shape intentions and individual behaviors. Initially proposed by Icek Ajzen, this concept aims to enhance the predictive power of reasoned action theory by focusing on perceived behavioral control.

In this study, organizational agility is viewed as a planned behavioral approach that shapes an organization's strategic and behavioral approach. It emphasizes the need for HR managers to take swift corrective action to address employees' poaching attitudes and improve their performance. Organizational agility has been found to play a vital role in mitigating the negative impact of poaching on employee productivity.

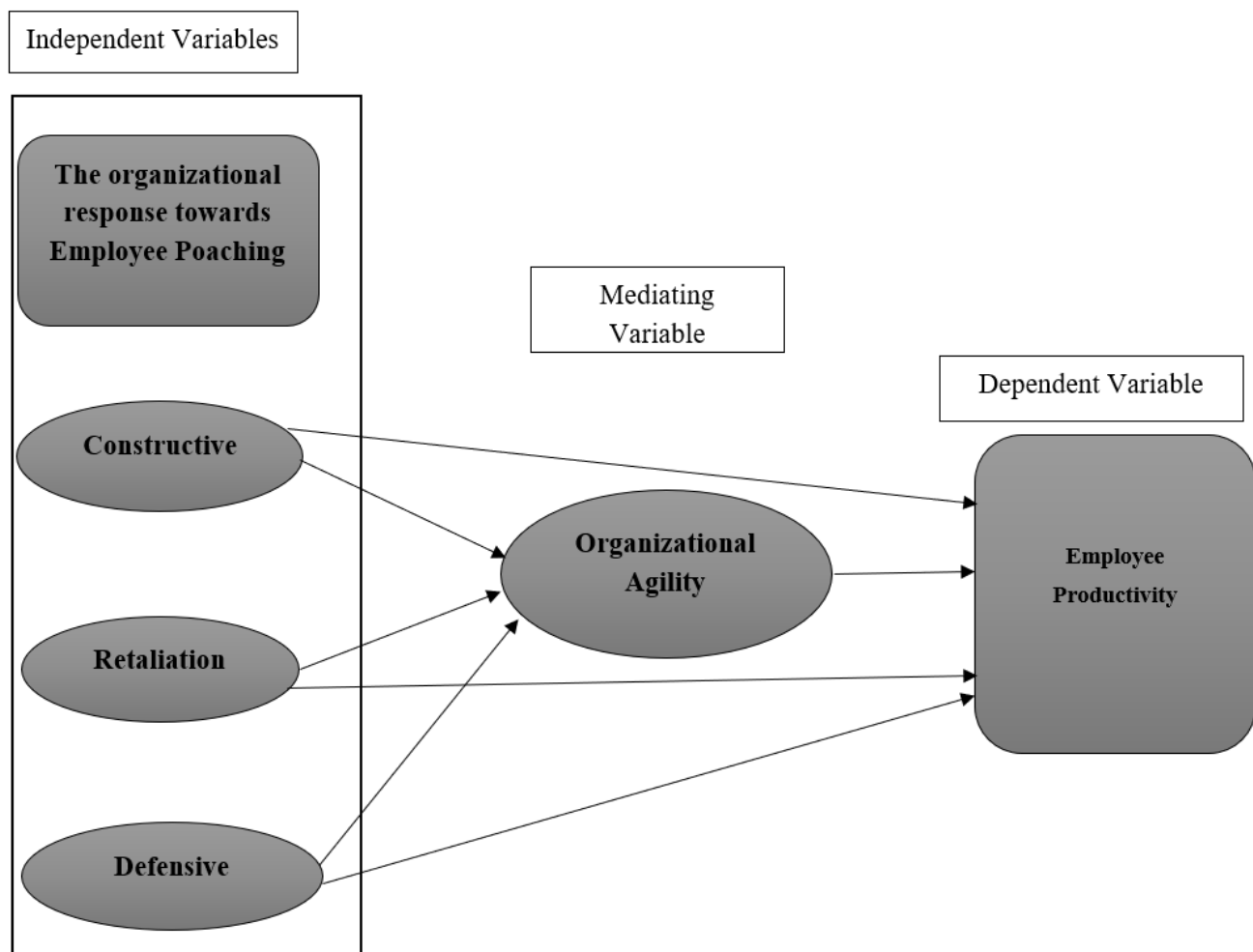


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

2.5. Formulation of Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this research study have been mentioned below:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *a significant relationship exists between constructive organizational responses toward employee poaching and employee productivity.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *there is a significant relationship between organizational retaliation responses toward employee poaching and employee productivity.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *there is a significant relationship between organizational defense response toward employee poaching and employee productivity.*

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *organizational agility will mediate the relationship between constructive response and employee productivity.*

Hypothesis 5 (H5). *organizational agility will mediate the relationship between retaliation response and employee productivity.*

Hypothesis 6 (H6). *organizational agility will mediate the relationship between defensive response and employee productivity.*

3. Methodology

A quantitative research design technique was adopted. Quantitative research is valuable for businesses because it allows for accurate measurements, representative samples,

objectivity, cost-effectiveness, and causal analysis through statistical testing. Its primary source of data collection was utilized for accurate data collection. As it focused on the organizational response toward poaching and its influence on employees' productivity, mainly Pakistani managers and experienced employees were considered for the data.

3.1. Instrumentation

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect reliable data on a five-point Likert scale (one = strongly disagree, two = disagree, three = neutral, four = agree, five = strongly agree). The survey classified organizational responses to staff poaching as either constructive, retaliatory, or defensive. As previously applied in related research, retaliatory responses were quantified using five distinct indicators [34]. Staff productivity was assessed using ten indicators adapted from previous studies [35]. Organizational agility was evaluated using ten indicators [36,37]. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: the first section consisted of demographic questions (such as age, gender, experience, and education) and the second section consisted of Likert scale items about the research factors.

3.2. Population, Sampling, and Data Collection Procedure

The population of interest for this research study are the managers and experienced employees in service sector companies. These companies include EFU Life Insurance, Allied Bank, Soneri Bank, DHA, Buch Executive, City Hospital, Sapphire, Khaadi, Honda, ZTBL National Bank, Tehzeeb Restaurant, Tasty Gardens Restaurant, Multan Medical Dental College, Punjab College Gholamiand, and Bank Alfalah Limited. It is important to note that the population is limited to service sector companies, indicating that the research study is focused on understanding the experiences and perspectives of individuals working in these types of organizations. Including various companies from different sectors within the service industry provides a diverse range of perspectives for the study. The focus on managers and experienced employees also highlights a specific subset of the population likely to have significant insights into the operations and culture of their respective companies. These individuals may have unique perspectives on leadership, employee engagement, and organizational performance issues. Overall, the population of this research study is limited but focused, providing a targeted approach to understanding the experiences and perspectives of managers and experienced employees in service sector companies.

Pakistan's service industry has expanded dramatically in recent decades, becoming a key economic contributor. The Pakistani service industry comprises the banking, telecommunications, transportation, retail, and hotel sectors. According to the World Bank, Pakistan's service sector accounts for 60% of the country's GDP and employs over 50% of the labor force (World Bank, 2020 [38]). Liberalization, infrastructure enhancements, and the emergence of the middle class have fueled the expansion of the service industry. The IT industry in Pakistan is rising quickly. The country is a vital outsourcing and software development hub with a large pool of skilled IT professionals and cheap labor costs (Pakistan Software Export Board, n.d.). Pakistan's IT sector has attracted worldwide investment and may stimulate economic growth. Even with the rise of the service industry, infrastructure, investment, and skilled labor gaps must be addressed to boost its performance (Government of Pakistan, 2021 [39]). The government has implemented several initiatives to stimulate the service sector and has ambitious development goals.

The sample size for a study is crucial for researchers as it affects statistical power, generalizability, and precision. The factors affecting the sample size include research design, objectives, statistical methods, effect size, variability, and expected error levels. Larger sample sizes are preferred as they increase the precision, power, and generalizability of the findings, but they may also increase costs and logistical challenges. Researchers can use power analysis, sample size calculators, and statistical software to estimate the sample size based on research questions, study design, alpha and beta levels, and effect size. General guidelines and rules of thumb for sample size selection exist in the literature [40].

The American Statistical Association recommends a minimum sample size of 30 for any statistical test [1]. In contrast, others suggest a sample size of 50 or more for studies using parametric statistical tests (such as *t*-tests and ANOVA) and at least 100 for studies using structural equation modeling [41,42]. This study utilized a sample size of 160 replies from the intended respondents.

The authors approached the management of various companies in the service sector, such as EFU Life Insurance, Allied Bank, Soneri Bank, DHA, Buch Executive, City Hospital, Sapphire, Khaadi, Honda, ZTBL National Bank, Tehzeeb Restaurant, Tasty Gardens Restaurant, Multan Medical Dental College, Punjab College Gholamiand, and Bank Alfalah Limited, through references and their superiors to conduct their research. They visited these offices multiple times and gave an average of one week to complete the questionnaire. The survey was distributed physically by visiting the offices, and the respondents were contacted through their superiors. The response rate was 70%, with 160 completed questionnaires received. The authors used a convenient sampling method to represent the population. We tested the reliability of the instruments using Cronbach's alpha value. Overall, the authors' survey represents a comprehensive effort to conduct research in the service sector and validate their results.

First, the demographic profiles of the respondents were analyzed. Then the data was analyzed using rigorous methods, including correlations between variables and regression analysis using SPSS software. SPSS is a popular software for regression analysis, providing a simple user interface for easy data input, analysis, and result generation. It offers comprehensive regression analysis methods and graphical data representation, making predicting and analyzing variables easy. SPSS also streamlines data handling and allows researchers to customize their analyses.

4. Results and Discussion

Various reliable statistical tests were employed to measure and analyze the relationship between the latent variables proposed by the conceptual model. The first step of the analysis involved examining the demographic breakdown of the sample, and the results of this analysis are presented below.

Table 1 provides the frequency and percentage distribution of several demographic variables of respondents, including gender, age, experience, and education for a group of individuals. Most individuals identified as male, with 79.4% falling into this category, while the remaining 20.6% identified as female. The largest group of individuals fell within the age range of 33–37 (30.6%), followed by those aged 28–32 (21.9%), those aged above 38 (26.3%), and those aged 23–27 (21.3%). In terms of experience, the largest group of individuals (46.9%) had 6–10 years of experience, followed by those with 1–5 years of experience (36.9%), and those with 11–15 years of experience (16.3%). Finally, an equal number of individuals (44.4%) had a bachelor's degree and a master's degree, while 11.3% had other types of education. The "cumulative percentage" column shows the percentage of individuals up to that point in the table. This table can help understand the characteristics of the individuals in question and may be used for further analyses and comparisons with other groups.

After finishing the first phase of the analysis, the following step is to determine the validity and reliability of each tested variable, which helps to justify the genuine link between the tested variables. First, shown below are the descriptive statistics for each examined variable.

Table 2 displays the mean, standard deviation, and internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of several scales/sub-scales for a research study. The employee poaching scale/sub-scale had 16 items and a high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.82$) [43]. The mean score for this scale was 15.36, with a standard deviation of 2.57. The retaliatory response scale/sub-scale had five items and a good level of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.78$). The mean score for this scale was 2.06, with a standard deviation of 0.58. The constructive response scale/sub-scale had six items and a lower level of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.58$). The mean score for this

scale was 11.48, with a standard deviation of 2.08. The defensive response scale/sub-scale had five items and a high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.83$). The mean score for this scale was 1.81, with a standard deviation of 0.53. The organizational agility scale/sub-scale had ten items and a moderate level of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.71$). The mean score for this scale was 1.76, with a standard deviation of 0.49. The employee productivity scale/sub-scale had ten items and a moderate level of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.74$) [43]. The mean score for this scale was 1.91, with a standard deviation of 0.34. Overall, the findings suggest that the scales/sub-scales have varying levels of internal consistency and different mean scores, indicating different levels of agreement or disagreement with the items in each scale/sub-scale. The scales/sub-scales can be useful for understanding different constructs related to employee behavior and organizational agility.

Table 1. Demographic statistics.

Name	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percentage
1. Gender			
Male	127	79.4	79.4
Female	33	20.6	100.0
2. Age			
23–27	34	21.3	21.3
28–32	35	21.9	43.5
33–37	49	30.6	73.8
Above 38	42	26.3	100.0
3. Experience			
1–5 years	59	36.9	36.9
6–10 years	75	46.9	83.8
11–15 years	26	16.3	100.0
4. Education			
Bachelor	71	44.4	44.4
Master	71	44.4	88.8
Others	18	11.3	100.0

Table 2. Descriptive analysis.

Scale/Sub-Scale	No. of Items	α	Mean	Standard Deviation
Employee Poaching	16	0.82	15.36	2.57
Retaliatory Response	5	0.78	2.06	0.58
Constructive Response	6	0.58	11.48	2.08
Defensive Response	5	0.83	1.81	0.53
Organizational Agility	10	0.71	1.76	0.49
Employee Productivity	10	0.74	1.91	0.34

Note: α = Cronbach alpha.

Correlation is a statistical measure depicting the extent to which two or more variables fluctuate their relation. Its positive and negative statistics help to understand whether variables are parallel critically. The related outcomes of this correlation analysis are mentioned in the following table (Table 3).

Table 3. Gender differences among study variables.

Variables	Males (<i>n</i> = 127)		Females (<i>n</i> = 33)		<i>t</i> (160)	<i>p</i>	CI		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
EP	15.48	2.52	14.90	2.73	1.15	0.25	−0.41	1.57	0.2
RR	2.02	0.57	2.05	0.64	0.05	0.95	−0.22	0.23	0.0
CR	11.60	2.03	11.03	2.21	1.42	0.15	−0.22	1.37	0.2
DR	1.81	0.51	1.81	0.59	−0.03	0.97	−0.20	0.20	0.0
OA	1.76	0.50	1.77	0.45	−0.12	0.90	−0.20	0.17	0.0
EPR	1.89	0.37	2.00	0.20	−1.68	0.09	−0.24	0.01	0.3

Note: EP = employee poaching, RR = retaliatory response, CR = constructive response, DR = destructive response, OA = organizational agility, and EPR = employee productivity.

From the given data in Table 3, we can interpret several gender differences. Employee poaching (EP): The mean score for EP is slightly higher for males ($M = 15.48$) than for females ($M = 14.90$), but this difference is not statistically significant ($t(160) = 1.15$, $p = 0.25$, Cohen's $d = 0.2$). Retaliatory response (RR): There is no significant difference in RR scores between males ($M = 2.02$) and females ($M = 2.05$) ($t(160) = 0.05$, $p = 0.95$, Cohen's $d = 0.0$). Constructive response (CR): The mean score for CR is slightly higher for males ($M = 11.60$) than for females ($M = 11.03$), but this difference is not statistically significant ($t(160) = 1.42$, $p = 0.15$, Cohen's $d = 0.2$). Destructive response (DR): There is no significant difference in DR scores between males ($M = 1.81$) and females ($M = 1.81$) ($t(160) = -0.03$, $p = 0.97$, Cohen's $d = 0.0$). Organizational agility (OA): There is no significant difference in OA scores between males ($M = 1.76$) and females ($M = 1.77$) ($t(160) = -0.12$, $p = 0.90$, Cohen's $d = 0.0$). Employee productivity (EPR): The mean score for EPR is slightly higher for females ($M = 2.00$) than for males ($M = 1.89$), but this difference is not statistically significant ($t(160) = -1.68$, $p = 0.09$, Cohen's $d = 0.3$). In summary, there are no significant gender differences in most of the variables, except for a slight non-significant difference in EP and CR scores and a slight non-significant difference in EPR scores.

Regression analysis considers which factor matters significantly in a significant relationship between variables. This kind of testing is utilized within an objective to justify/nullify the hypothesis [44]. It helps to justify the changes in independent variables associated with the change in the dependent variable. The related outcomes are mentioned below.

Table 4 summarizes regression analyses on the relationship between various predictor variables and employee productivity. Two models and their corresponding statistics are presented (Model 1 and Model 2). Model 1 includes three predictor variables (CR, RR, and DR) and has an R-squared value of 0.667, which suggests that the model explains 66.7% of the variation in employee productivity. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.557 indicates that this model may slightly overfit the data [45]. Model 2 includes the same three predictor variables as Model 1 (CR, RR, and DR) and an additional predictor variable (organizational agility). This model has a higher R-squared value of 0.832, indicating that it explains a more significant proportion of the variation in employee productivity. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.671 suggests that this model is also overfitting the data [46]. The standard error of the estimate is given for both models, which measures the accuracy of the predictions made by the model. Lower values indicate more accurate predictions [47]. The Durbin–Watson statistic is also given for Model 1 and indicates that there may be some autocorrelation in the residuals of the model [48]. The Durbin–Watson statistic is not given for Model 2.

Table 5 summarizes two regression models (Model 1 and Model 2) examining the relationship between several predictor variables and employee productivity while controlling for the mediator variable, organizational agility. The results of Model 1 suggest that CR has a significant negative relationship with employee productivity, with a beta of -5.086 ($p < 0.001$). In contrast, DR has a significant positive relationship with productivity, with a beta of 4.130 ($p = 0.067$). The negative relationship between RR and productivity is also

significant, with a beta of -3.047 ($p = 0.042$). The unique characteristics of the Pakistani service sector may explain these findings. Previous research has found that the service sector in Pakistan is characterized by low levels of human resource management practices, which can result in reduced employee motivation and job satisfaction [49]. This may explain the negative relationship between CR and productivity, as conflicts between colleagues and superiors can negatively impact employee motivation and job satisfaction. Employees explain the positive relationship between DR and productivity with more autonomy and decision-making authority, feeling more empowered and motivated to perform well [12]. This may be particularly true in the Pakistani service sector, where employees may face significant challenges and limitations in their work environments.

Table 4. Model summary of regression analysis.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin–Watson
1	0.817 ^a	0.667	0.557	5.53030	
2	0.912 ^b	0.832	0.671	5.37702	2.053

^a Predictors: (constant), CR, RR, and DR. ^b Predictors: (constant), CR, RR, DR, and organizational agility. Dependent variable: employee productivity.

Table 5. Coefficients of regression analysis.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	32.305	2.664		12.128	0.000		
	RR	−3.066	0.142	−3.047	−1.646	0.042	0.606	1.650
	DR	4.193	0.155	4.130	1.656	0.067	0.577	1.733
	CR	−5.229	0.223	−5.086	−4.030	0.000	0.898	1.114
2	(Constant)	26.210	3.227		8.122	0.000		
	RR	−6.155	0.141	−6.112	−2.02	0.04	0.582	1.719
	DR	5.235	0.151	5.158	3.300	0.001	0.573	1.746
	CR	−6.205	0.217	−6.077	−2.002	0.004	0.896	1.116
	Organizational agility	0.261	0.083	0.250	3.165	0.002	0.958	1.044

Dependent variable: employee productivity; the mediator: organizational agility; CR = constructive responses; RR = retaliation responses; and DR = organization defense responses.

The results of Model 2 suggest that the addition of organizational agility as a predictor variable further improves the model fit, and all four predictor variables have significant relationships with employee productivity. The negative relationships between CR and RR with productivity are stronger in Model 2 compared to Model 1, with CR having a beta of -6.077 ($p < 0.001$) and RR having a beta of -6.112 ($p = 0.04$). The positive relationship between DR and productivity is also more robust in Model 2, with a beta of 5.158 ($p = 0.001$). The positive relationship between organizational agility and productivity in Model 2 is also significant, with a beta of 0.250 ($p = 0.002$). The positive relationship between organizational agility and productivity in Model 2 may be explained by the fact that more agile organizations can better respond to changing market conditions and customer demands, resulting in improved overall performance. In the Pakistani service sector context, more agile organizations may be better able to adapt to their unique challenges and constraints, resulting in improved employee productivity. The collinearity statistics suggest that multicollinearity is not a significant issue for either model, with all tolerance values greater than 0.5 and all VIF values less than two [46].

Discussion

Theoretically, the results suggest no significant gender differences in most variables studied, including employee poaching, retaliatory response, constructive response, destructive response, and organizational agility. These findings are consistent with previous

research that has found no significant gender differences in organizational outcomes. However, the slight non-significant differences in employee poaching, constructive response, and employee productivity between males and females may warrant further investigation. For example, exploring why males reported slightly higher scores in constructive responses and whether this relates to their leadership style or other factors may be interesting. Additionally, further research could investigate the potential reasons for the slight non-significant difference in employee productivity between males and females. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that companies in Pakistan may not need to implement gender-specific interventions to improve organizational outcomes. Instead, companies should create an inclusive and supportive workplace culture that values diversity and encourages constructive behaviors. This could include providing leadership training and development programs that promote constructive responses and organizational agility and implementing policies and practices that support employee productivity.

The results of the regression models examining the relationship between the predictor variables and employee productivity in the Pakistani service sector provide important theoretical and practical implications for the companies mentioned in the study. The significant negative relationship between constructive response (CR) and employee productivity highlights the importance of promoting positive workplace relationships and reducing conflicts among colleagues and superiors. Therefore, the companies mentioned in the study should promote constructive communication and positively resolve conflicts to improve employee productivity. On the other hand, the positive relationship between destructive response (DR) and employee productivity suggests that employees with more autonomy and decision-making authority tend to perform better. Therefore, companies in the Pakistani service sector should consider giving employees more decision-making authority and promoting their sense of empowerment to improve their productivity. The results also suggest that more agile organizations tend to have higher productivity levels. Therefore, the companies mentioned in the study should aim to become more agile and flexible to improve performance. This could involve implementing strategies to respond quickly to changing market conditions and customer demands.

The coefficients of the regression analysis show the relationships between constructive organizational responses, organizational retaliation responses, organizational defense responses, organizational agility, and employee productivity. The analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between retaliation response and employee productivity (H2). At the same time, there is a significant positive relationship between constructive response and employee productivity (H1), and organizational defense response and employee productivity (H3). The results also showed that organizational agility mediates the relationships between constructive response (H4), retaliation response (H5), defensive response (H6), and employee productivity. The collinearity statistics indicate no issue of multicollinearity among the independent variables. These findings suggest that organizations should focus on adopting constructive responses to employee poaching and building organizational agility to improve employee productivity. Organizational retaliation response should be avoided as it negatively impacts employee productivity. Further research is needed to explore how organizational agility mediates the relationships between responses to employee poaching and employee productivity.

Overall, the study's findings have practical implications for the companies mentioned. The results suggest that promoting positive workplace relationships, empowering employees, and increasing organizational agility could improve employee productivity. Therefore, companies in the Pakistani service sector should consider implementing strategies to address these factors and improve their overall performance. From a theoretical perspective, the study highlights the importance of considering the unique characteristics of the Pakistani service sector when examining the relationships between predictor variables and employee productivity. The findings of the study also inform future research in this area.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study aimed to examine the relationship between different organizational responses to employee poaching and employee productivity, as well as the mediating role of organizational agility. The regression analysis results supported the hypotheses, indicating that constructive organizational responses and organizational defense responses have a significant positive relationship with employee productivity. In contrast, organizational retaliation response has a significant negative relationship with employee productivity. The results also revealed that organizational agility mediates the relationships between the responses to employee poaching and employee productivity. These findings suggest that organizations adopt constructive responses and build organizational agility to improve employee productivity while avoiding organizational retaliation responses.

The primary focus of this research study was to critically highlight the latest HR issue faced by most of the Pakistani business community and its management. In today's world, employees' poaching attitude is continuously increasing, creating an alarming situation in front of HR managers to retain talented and experienced employees. Additionally, this act generates an uncertain situation for upper management to take on some long-term strategic plan for sustainable growth. To resolve such an issue, this research study has been generated, with its objective based on critically investigating the influence of organizational response toward poaching on employee productivity under the mediating role of organizational agility in the Pakistan service sector. The study concludes in the context of developing countries, where the service sector is often a key contributor to the economy. In many developing countries, service sector jobs often require fewer technical skills and offer lower wages than other sectors. As a result, effective human resource management practices, employee autonomy, and organizational agility can improve employee productivity, job satisfaction, and overall organizational performance. The results of Model 1 suggest that low levels of human resource management practices, which are common in many developing countries, can negatively impact employee motivation and job satisfaction, ultimately leading to decreased productivity.

In contrast, providing employees with more autonomy and decision-making authority, and improving organizational agility, can help organizations adapt to changing market conditions and customer demands, resulting in improved employee productivity and organizational performance, as shown in Model 2. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research that highlights the importance of effective human resource management practices, employee autonomy, and organizational agility in developing countries' service sectors [18,50]. By improving these factors, organizations in developing countries can enhance their productivity, competitiveness, and overall economic growth. Overall, the results suggest that the predictor variables examined in this study are significant drivers of employee productivity in developing countries' service sectors. Therefore, organizations in these countries must adopt and implement effective human resource management practices, provide employees with more autonomy, and improve their organizational agility to enhance their productivity and competitiveness in the global marketplace.

This study's findings benefit organizational sustainability, particularly in the service sector. Improving employee productivity can increase efficiency, customer service, and profitability, leading to a competitive advantage. Prioritizing employee development, satisfaction, and motivation can also improve retention rates, reducing recruitment and training costs. The study emphasizes the importance of effective human resource management practices, employee autonomy, and organizational agility for improving productivity and overall performance. Organizations prioritizing these factors can improve their long-term sustainability and gain a competitive edge. The study's contribution to sustainable business practices can benefit many organizations.

The study's findings have several implications for Pakistani companies and policymakers, particularly in the service sector. Organizations can improve employee productivity by enhancing human resource management practices, offering employees more autonomy, and fostering greater organizational agility. For Pakistani companies, the study's results

emphasize the importance of investing in human resource management practices to increase employee motivation and job satisfaction. This can be achieved by implementing employee training and development programs, performance management systems, and employee engagement initiatives. Pakistani companies prioritizing these practices can improve employee productivity and performance. Organizations can promote employee productivity by offering employees greater autonomy and decision-making authority. Pakistani companies can adopt policies and practices that empower their employees and allow them to make more decisions about their work, such as delegating tasks, providing employees with more decision-making authority, and offering flexible work arrangements. This can help employees feel more motivated and engaged, improving productivity. Finally, the study's results suggest that greater organizational agility can enhance employee productivity in the Pakistani service sector. Pakistani policymakers can promote organizational agility by supporting companies through policies and initiatives encouraging innovation, flexibility, and responsiveness to change. Policymakers can also promote the development of new technologies and provide training and development opportunities for employees to adapt to these changes. Overall, the study's findings have important implications for Pakistani companies and policymakers seeking to enhance employee productivity in the service sector. By investing in human resource management practices, offering employees greater autonomy, and promoting organizational agility, Pakistani organizations can improve their performance and better meet the needs of their customers in an increasingly competitive market.

The findings of this study have practical implications for organizations. Firstly, the study highlights the importance of adopting constructive responses toward employee poaching to enhance employee productivity. Such responses include offering competitive compensation packages, providing professional development opportunities, and fostering a positive work environment. Secondly, the study suggests that organizations should avoid retaliatory responses toward employee poaching, as this negatively affects employee productivity. Instead, they should focus on building organizational defenses, such as non-compete agreements and other legal protections, to safeguard their employees. Finally, the study highlights the importance of organizational agility in mediating the relationships between responses to employee poaching and employee productivity. This implies that organizations should invest in developing agility by fostering a culture of adaptability, flexibility, and innovation. Overall, the findings of this study can guide organizations in adopting effective responses to employee poaching that enhance employee productivity while protecting their interests.

This study provides valuable insights into addressing employees' poaching attitudes and their impact on organizational performance. However, some limitations may affect its acceptability and validity. For example, the study only focused on the service sector of the Southern Punjab province in Pakistan for data collection and analysis. The findings might have been more comprehensive if the analysis included the manufacturing sector. In addition, the study's results may need to be more generalizable to other provinces or regions, as data from a broader sample could provide a complete picture of the issue. Another limitation is that the study did not compare the results with those from other Asian countries, such as India, Bangladesh, or China. Such a comparison could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the issue and the organizational strategies used to address it. However, the study was limited by the lack of large-scale data, which may affect the validity and acceptability of the results. Future research can build on this study by investigating the mechanisms underlying the relationship between organizational responses to employee poaching and employee productivity, examining the impact of additional variables, such as employee satisfaction and turnover intention, and exploring the effects of different types of poaching and cultural factors on responses and productivity. These avenues of research can provide further insight into how organizations can effectively respond to employee poaching and improve productivity.

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