The Organizational Learning Culture and its Outcomes

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Abstract: *Organizations require updated skills and current knowledge to thrive. These competencies contribute to employee career development and foster higher performance, career satisfaction, and commitment. An organization's learning culture is pivotal in disseminating such knowledge and skills. This study empirically examines this concept using data collected from college faculty in the northern region of the Malakand division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study population consists of approximately 3000 teaching staff employees; the research sampled 220 employees and utilized PLS-SEM analysis through the software Smart PLS. The results of the analysis validate the theoretical link between organizational learning culture and perceived job performance with the mediating link of commitment and satisfaction, showing their positive impact. The findings demonstrated the importance of stimulating a learning-oriented environment for enhanced organizational performance. These learnings and understandings can guide policymakers in designing effective plans and strategies to enhance workplace performances, specifically in the higher educational institutions of Pakistan. Future researchers can replicate this study in other organisations or cultures along with the vast contexts to confirm and expand upon these findings.*

Introduction

Organizations must manage uncertainty through knowledge to survive in today's competitive world (Skerlavaj et al., 2010; Kandemir & Hult, 2005). As employees are the primary carriers of knowledge within organizations (Rahman et al., 2016), their workplace behavior has become a key area of research (Kinicki et al., 2006; Malik et al., 2010). These studies emphasize the critical role of organizational learning culture in shaping employee behavior. Employees are considered the face of an organization (Rahman, W., 2012), and organizations are often evaluated based on their employees' innovative, creative, and quality-driven performance (Rahman et al., 2015). According to Senge (2006), developing new processes and behaviors to enhance efficiency and effectiveness is crucial for organizational success. Recent research supports this view, highlighting that a robust learning culture drives individual and organizational growth. Furthermore, fostering a culture of continuous learning enhances employee performance, leading to greater innovation, which is essential for maintaining market competitiveness (Liu, 2024; Pérez et al., 2023). Organizations that

invest in a culture of learning are better positioned to adapt and thrive in an ever-changing business environment (Zhang & Chen, 2024).

The rapid expansion of the global economy and technological advancements have created a pressing need for organizations to prioritize employee learning and development (Egan et al., 2004, p. 279). Additionally, Rahman's (2015) research points out the scarcity of studies conducted in countries like Pakistan to examine the relationship between human resource performance and employee behavior, a gap also identified by Shahzad et al. (2008). This scarcity of research underscores the importance of exploring the perspectives and experiences of individuals who are impacted by the availability or lack of opportunities for growth and development.

The study at hand evaluates the relationship between organizational learning culture (OLC) and employees' perceived job performance (PJP), with the mediating role of career satisfaction (CS) and career commitment (CC). In this model, OLC is the independent variable, while PJP is the dependent variable. The OLC is characterized by a set of values and norms that encompass career commitment and career satisfaction. The researchers hypothesize that when employees perceive that their organization supports their skill development and knowledge growth, it fosters career commitment and satisfaction, which in turn enhances their perceived job performance.

Literature Review

Today's organizations can only survive if their workforce learns better and faster as compared to their competitors (Serrat, 2008, p. 2). Many researchers (e.g., Joseph & Dai, 2009), stresses that organizational culture with characteristics like employee involvement, constructive participation, group cooperation, trust, open communication, and empowerment are conducive to organizational performance. It is, therefore, expected that if organizations involve employees in learning new skills and the latest knowledge and keep themselves involved in learning activities, this will increase their level of satisfaction and commitment, which encourage performance improvement, stay in the organization, accomplishing organizational objectives efficiently (Ababneh, 2013).

Organizational-learning-culture (OLC)

Business literature has been evident for more than fifty years that individuals learn in their organization more than in learning in an academic environment (Wang & Huang, 2013). As it was defined and became under discussion in the 1990s in the business literature, it got popularity, and (Bapuji & Crossan, 2004; Crossan & Guatto, 1996; Senge, 2006, Rahman et al., 2016). This idea has been explained and expanded on three levels: theoretically, conceptually, and practically or empirically.(Rahman et al., 2016, Lipshitz, Popper, & Friedman, 2002; Wang & Huang, 2013). The reasons behind this expansion could be numerous factors, along with others, the expansions of businesses, the changing nature of business, globalization, and the development of international businesses and multinational companies in the decade of 1990s (Chiva & Alegre, 2005; Dodgson, 1993; Wang & Huang, 2013).

Organizational learning has been a topic of interest in business literature for over four decades, but it was not until the 1990s that it gained widespread recognition and has since been extensively defined and discussed (Bapuji & Crossan, 2004; Crossan & Guatto, 1996; Senge, 2006). Wang and Huang (2013) note that the concept has undergone significant expansion in three dimensions: conceptual, theoretical, and empirical (Lipshitz et al., 2002). This expansion is attributed to various factors, including technological advancements, globalization, and the rapid growth of multinational companies (MNCs) in the 1990s (Chiva & Alegre, 2005; Dodgson, 1993; Wang & Huang, 2013).

A robust learning culture fosters knowledge sharing and enhances innovative capabilities, which are crucial for maintaining competitiveness in industries like manufacturing (Liu, 2024; Rahman & Mehtab, 2018). Organizational culture directly affects employee performance through its influence on organizational learning and engagement (Hasan, 2023; Rafique et al., 2018). A strong organizational culture promotes knowledge sharing, essential for innovative employee performance (Liu, 2024). As seen in steelmaking companies, organizational culture shapes business strategies, where cultural values directly influence strategic implementation (Costa, 2024).

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While a strong organizational learning culture yields numerous benefits, it is essential to recognize that not all organizations may effectively implement such cultures. Some may face resistance to change or struggle with aligning cultural values with strategic goals, which can hinder potential outcomes.

Career Commitment (CC)

It refers to the degree of motivation and willingness an employee has to pursue a career in a specific role (Noordin et al., 2002; Riveros & Tsai, 2011). Career commitment encompasses an individual's attitude towards their chosen profession or vocation.

When organizations emphasize continuous learning, they create opportunities for employees to develop competencies that align with their career aspirations, enhancing their sense of belonging and long-term commitment to the organization. Employees are more likely to invest in their roles and remain loyal to employers who provide clear pathways for growth and development. Studies have shown that a strong learning culture improves and strengthens employees' identification with organizational goals, thereby increasing their career commitment (Egan et al., 2004; Kontoghiorghes, 2016). Career commitment helps individuals develop their specialized skills and nourishes the feeling of keeping membership in organizations to cultivate professional and business relationships. (Noordin et al., 2002, Rahman et al. 2023).

Career commitment is a collective term that includes professional and occupational commitment. It is essential to recognize that career and organizational commitment are distinct constructs with different areas of focus (Shim & Rohrbaugh, 2010). Organizational commitment results from individuals identifying with the organization and their specific careers. As Chang (1999, p. 1263) points out, individuals with high career commitment are more likely to be influenced by career-oriented practices in their organizational commitment, as they are more concerned with pursuing their career and meeting their career needs.

An organization's learning culture is a critical driver of career commitment, as it cultivates an environment where employees feel valued and motivated to invest in their roles. A robust learning culture fosters skill development, innovation, and professional growth, aligning individual aspirations with organizational objectives. Employees in organizations prioritizing learning opportunities, such as professional training and mentorship, are more likely to perceive their work as meaningful and rewarding, leading to increased engagement and loyalty.

Research highlights that such cultures create a sense of empowerment and adaptability, reducing turnover intentions and reinforcing commitment to long-term career paths within the organization. Moreover, during periods of organizational or economic change, a well-established learning culture can enhance resilience and trust among employees, further strengthening their dedication (SHRM, 2023; Education Development Center, 2023). Therefore, organizations aiming to improve employee retention and satisfaction should invest in comprehensive learning initiatives integrating continuous improvement and adaptive strategies. Studies suggest that career commitment bridges the learning opportunities offered by the organization and the resulting improvement in employee performance, emphasizing its pivotal role in maximizing organizational outcomes. This mediating effect highlights the interplay between personal development, organizational support, and measurable job performance outcomes, offering insights into theoretical frameworks and practical workplace applications.

Career Satisfaction

Career satisfaction refers to the overall happiness and fulfillment an individual experiences in their chosen career (Fu, 2010, p. 273). It measures how much an individual's career progress aligns with their values, goals, and preferences (Barnett & Bradley, 2007; Seibert et al., 2001). Although often used interchangeably with job satisfaction, career satisfaction encompasses a broader perspective. As Conklin, Dahling, and Garcia (2013) highlight, both industrial/organizational and vocational psychologists have explored the importance of job satisfaction and performance, with vocational psychologists focusing on individual outcome expectations and organizational psychologists examining organizational consequences, ultimately aiming to enhance career satisfaction (Joo & Park, 2010)

The concepts of career success and career satisfaction have been used interchangeably in most research studies (Joo & Park, 2010). Career outcomes can be distinguished into extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Extrinsic outcomes are tangible and observable, such as rewards and promotions, while intrinsic outcomes are subjective and relate to an individual's career achievements and satisfaction evaluation. While earlier research focused on situational factors influencing career outcomes, recent studies have recognized the direct impact of personality on career success and the business environment (Joo & Park, 2010; Seibert et al., 1999).

Recent research also highlights that organizations with robust learning cultures often cultivate environments that promote career satisfaction by prioritizing employee well-being and skill development. This satisfaction, in turn, creates a positive feedback loop, encouraging employees to contribute to organizational success through better performance metrics at both individual and organizational levels (Udin, 2023).

Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between organizational culture and performance, highlighting the importance of employee contentment in achieving organizational goals (Abawa & Obse, 2024).

Perceived-job-performance (PJP)

Scholars have long been interested in performance perceptions, a vital topic in HR that organizational scholars have extensively studied. Jones (2000) defines job performance as the result of an employee's effort, modified by their abilities, roles, and task perceptions. As Kirby (2011, p. 35) points out, employees' values and convictions about work outcomes and behaviors shape their attitudes and opinions about their organization, work, and culture. Understanding organizational culture is crucial for characterizing employees' performance (Ojo, 2009). Furthermore, Kirby (2011, p. 36) notes that an employee's satisfaction is influenced by the attitudes of their colleagues, highlighting the importance of a positive work environment. Gilley et al. (2002) acknowledge the dual nature of performance evaluations, emphasizing their role in enhancing individual performance and contributing to organizational success.

There are several compelling reasons to investigate commitment to research. As Somers and Birnbaum (1998) and Rahman et al. (2023) point out, understanding commitment can provide valuable insights into various employee behaviors, including punctuality, turnover, attendance, loyalty, work quality and quantity, and job performance. Research has shown that individuals with high career commitment invest more time in skill development, are less likely to leave their jobs or careers, and exhibit better job performance (Fu, 2010; Majd & Ibrahim, 2008). Among these behaviors, productivity is considered a crucial factor in an organization's success, and employers of all sizes have recognized its importance (Joseph & Dai, 2009). Chen, Chang, and Yeh (2004) explored the impact of career development programs on meeting individuals' career needs and influencing job behaviors and found that these programs positively affect professional development, job satisfaction, and productivity.

Recent research shows that the OLC encompasses a sense of belonging and employee engagement, enhancing employee commitment. Employee growth opportunities exist in such environments, which derives career satisfaction. The OLC fosters adaptability, creation, innovation, internalization, externalization, sharing, and application of knowledge, hence opening the avenues for individual, team, and organizational performance.

To summarize, past research indicates that the perception of a learning organization culture, as well as factors such as career commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention, can influence an individual's motivation and efforts, leading to variations in individual and organizational performance (Hsu, 2009, p. 7).

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses were developed in light of the existing literature and tested using a self-administered survey questionnaire that collected empirical data.

H1:   Organizational learning culture shapes employees' commitment to their careers.
H2:   Organizational learning culture governs employees' satisfaction with their careers.
H3:   Career-committed employees always perform better

H4:   Career-satisfied employees always perform better

H5:   Organizational learning culture can result in the best performance if the employees become career-satisfied and career-committed. Hence, career satisfaction and career commitment are mediating in the relationship between the OLC and PJP.

Figure 4   The Conceptual Model

Methodology

The study's methodology refers to all activities performed and their sequence during research, like population, sample and sampling method, data collection mechanism, etc., endeavor. The study population is all teaching faculty of colleges located in the northwest division of Pakistan, Malakand. The population is about 2500 teaching faculty. The simple random sample technique was applied, and the data was collected through a survey method, personally administered, and collected through surface mail. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, and about 222 were collected back. The analysis was run only on 202; the remaining were dropped because of incomplete filing.

The instrument was designed from adopted items from multiple sources. For OLC, the 10-item scale was adapted from the source available for academic researchers at *http://www.hfi.com /images/ocq_sample_reportshortver.pdf.* The 8-item scale for CS was adapted from the core source of the Job Diagnostic Survey, as developed by Hackman and Oldham (1980). The 7-item scale was adapted for measuring the CC from the research of Colarelli and Bishop (1990), and Chay and Bruvold (2003). The last 5-item scale for the PJP was adapted from the main source at the mentioned link; *http://www.surveyquestions.com.au/Questionnaires/Staff-Survey-Questionnaires. htm.* A Likert scale of five points ranging from strongly disagree to agree strongly was used.

Validity and reliability were established according to the research criteria. The Smart PLS was used for the analysis because of its simplicity and power. Microsoft Word and EndNote were used for the text and citation/referencing.

Analysis and Findings

a.   Demographic Characteristics

The Demographic Characteristics of the respondents were measured and mentioned in Table 1 below.

Table 1: *The descriptive statistics of the respondents*

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	36	17.8
Male	166	82.2
Age Group		
46 – and above	43	21.3
36 – 45	54	26.7
25 – 35	105	52.0
Designation		
Lecturer	119	58.9

Assistant Professor	43	21.3
Associate Professor	31	15.3
Professor	09	4.6

b. Common Method Bias

Common Method Bias (CMB) is used when the data for the independent and dependent variables are collected simultaneously from the same respondents, so it was applied. Several techniques are used to apply this method, and the simple way to find CMB is through the Bagozzi approach. According to the approach, if the correlation between variables is less than 0.9, then there is no CMB issue in the data; look into the correlational matrix. Table 2 shows that there is no CMB issue in the data.

Table 2. *The correlation matrix, standard deviation, and mean of the constructs*

Constructs	Mean	S.D.	Correlation Matrix			
			1	2	3	4
1. OLC	3.61	0.63	**0.611**			
2. CS	3.96	0.69	0.562*	**0.719**		
3. CC	3.78	0.72	0.417*	0.562*	**0.683**	
4. PJP	3.69	0.70	0.477*	0.647*	0.696*	**0.723**

*Significant at 0.000, Bold Values in the Diagonal are the Square Root of AVE.

c. Measurement Model

The study used the Partial Least Squares-SEM (PLS-SEM) method, specifically SmartPLS, to investigate the relationships between variables. This technique involves two main models: the Measurement Model and the Structural Model. The Measurement Model is assessed in terms of its Validity and Reliability, the two primary components of model evaluation

The questionnaire demonstrated clarity and logical structure, allowing respondents to easily understand the questions and items, thereby ensuring content validity. The content's validity was checked through item loadings, with items exhibiting loadings greater than 0.6 considered valid (Harter et al., 2002). The theoretical correlation among items, which is also known as convergent validity, was also established, as items with loadings above 0.6 were deemed valid (Harter et al., 2002). As shown in Table 3, the factor loadings exceeded the cut-off value, indicating the presence of both content and convergent validity.

Discriminant validity is established when factors are distinct within a reasonable range. This validity is evaluated using the Average Variance Extract (AVE) square root. If the AVE square root value is greater than the correlation values, it suggests that the items have discriminant validity. For the discriminant validity, Table-3 shows the analysis results below, which confirm it for their items(Harter et al., 2002).

According to various established and believed reliability models, Hays's model, Cronbach's Alpha, and composite reliability were used to judge and establish the reliability of the data (Harter et al., 2002). The overall reliability of a set of items was determined through Composite reliability measures, such as the composite reliability (C.R.) coefficient. As shown in Table-3, the values of Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability (C.R.) were all above the minimum acceptable value of 0.6, confirming that the data is reliable except the first one which is also very close to the acceptable region.

Table 3. *CR & AVE, Reliability through Cronbach Alpha, t-statistics, and Factor-Loading.*

Constructs	Factor-loading	t-statistics.	Cronbach Alpha.	CR. & AVE.
OLC			0.810	CR =0.853
OLC-1	0.572	3.352		AVE= 0.373
OLC-2	0.661	6.26		
OLC-3	0.488	4.118		
OLC-4	0.622	4.302		
OLC-5	0.708	8.336		
OLC-6	0.699	7.605		
OLC-7	0.403	4.564		
OLC-8	0.596	3.811		

OLC-9	0.716	10.846		
OLC-10	0.565	2.647		
CS.			0.867	CR =0.895
CS-1	0.718	8.347		AVE = 0.517
CS-2	0.7	13.578		
CS-3	0.724	9.249		
CS-4	0.692	9.108		
CS-5	0.716	13.668		
CS-6	0.781	12.023		
CS-7	0.679	12.034		
CS-8	0.736	9.313		
CC.			0.806	CR =0.857
CC1.	0.767	11.316		AVE= 0.467
CC2.	0.797	11.099		
CC3.	0.712	12.64		
CC4.	0.664	7.983		
CC5.	0.512	6.535		
CC6.	0.748	9.753		
CC7.	0.524	3.799		
PJP			0.776	CR =0.845
PJP1	0.685	12.573		AVE= 0.523
PJP2	0.744	9.794		
PJP3	0.752	13.027		
PJP4	0.67	5.38		
PJP5	0.76	8.179		

d.   Structural Model

The structural model, which is the second part of PLS-SEM, examines the relationships between constructs and tests the hypotheses. The model can be evaluated using the path coefficient (beta), explanatory factor (R^2), and their significant values in PLS-SEM (Rahman et al., 2016). The analysis was conducted using Smart PLS, and the significant values and t-statistics were determined using the bootstrapping method. The results showed that OLC significantly impacts CS and CC, leading to improved PJP.

Table 4. *The Result with Significance Value(p), T-statistics, and Path-coefficients of the mentioned Hypothesis*

Hypotheses.	Path Coefficients	T Statistics	Significance Value (p)	Result
H1: OLC →CC	0.411	6.380	0.000	Supported
H2: OLC →CS	0.557	10.604	0.000	Supported
H3: CC → PJP	0.471	6.793	0.000	Supported
H4: CS → PJP	0.217	6.793	0.003	Supported
H5: OLC→ CC,CS → PJP	0.167	2.933	0.003	Partial Mediation

The direct effect of OLC on PJP is 0.482 (path coefficient) and 8.702 (t-statistics) without the mediation of the CS. After the mediation, this effect changed to 0.176 (2.667), which is still significant, so there is partial mediation. When the mediation of CC was checked, it is now 0.236 (4.351), so here we also have partial mediation.

The overall fit of the model can be evaluated using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and the Normed Fit Index (NFI). According to established guidelines, SRMR values should be less than 0.08. This study's SRMR value was 0.073, which falls below the recommended threshold. The NFI value of 0.819 is close to 1, indicating a good fit. These results suggest that the model is acceptable. The path coefficients and corresponding t-statistics are presented in Figure-1 below.
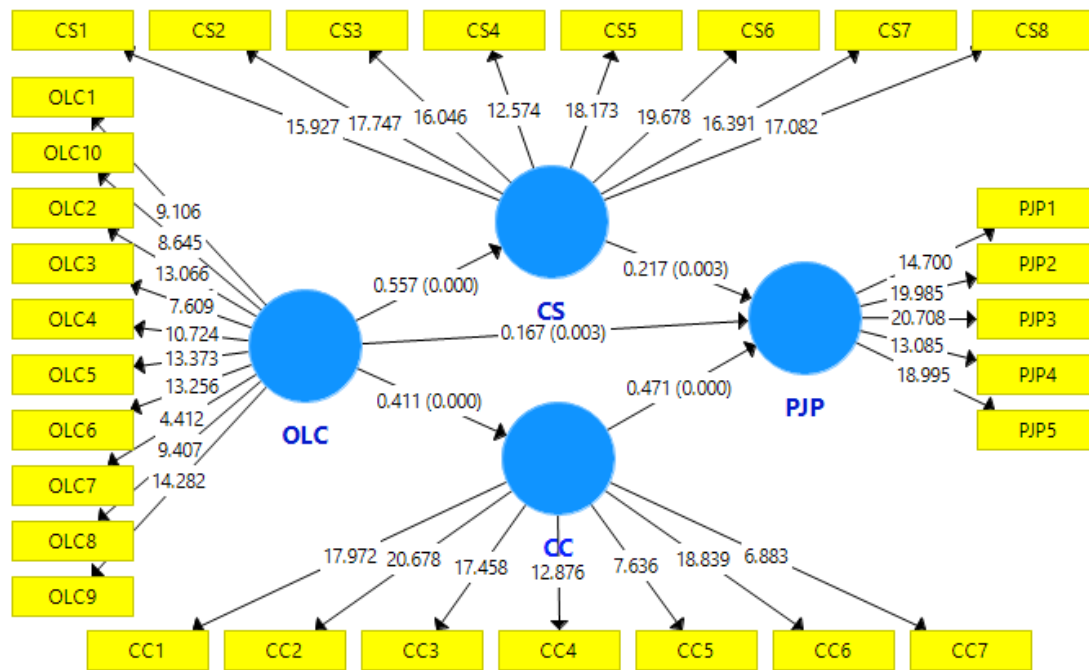
***Figure 1.** Path Analysis of the Research Model.*

Discussions on the Research Findings, Hypotheses Testing

Career satisfaction is a job-related output that is the influential result of the organizational culture and structure (Egan et al., 2004). Employees who are satisfied with their careers are likely to have a positive attitude toward their career or profession and be committed to it (Fu, 2010).

It is widely acknowledged that change is an inherent aspect of the global market, and an organization's survival is heavily dependent on its internal work environment and the collective behavior of its employees (Guest, 2001; Guest et al., 2003; Hung & Wong, 2007; Malik et al., 2010). The cited references underscore the significance of organizational learning culture in shaping employee behavior. As a result, developing new behaviors and processes that enhance effectiveness and efficiency has become a pressing concern for academics and practitioners (Senge, 2006).

In today's competitive business landscape, researchers such as Barnett and Bradley (2007) emphasize the importance of organizations supporting employees in their career development and enhancing their career satisfaction. An organizational learning culture plays a critical role in shaping employee behavior (Hurley, 2002; Hurley & Hult, 1998). Career commitment, which encompasses in the behaviour of the employees towards their career or profession, is one of the main forces of employee motivation and engagement (Noordin et al., 2002; Riveros & Tsai, 2011). It is very much important to understand the level of career commitment, as it provides organizations with valuable insights into employee behavior and how to leverage this information to achieve better outcomes (Somers & Birnbaum, 1998). A.S. King (1999) notes that career commitment is a fundamental building block for organizational behaviors such as consensus, cohesiveness, and cooperation, which have a positive impact on organizational performance (Bontis et al., 2002). Furthermore, career commitment has a direct positive impact on individual employee performance, customer satisfaction, and supplier relationships, as well as an indirect positive impact on financial performance (Guest et al., 2003; Senge, 2006; Shahzad et al., 2008; Skerlavaj et al., 2010). Research has consistently shown that career commitment and self-efficacy are positively related to performance (Niu, 2010), and that organizational commitment and career satisfaction are linked to higher employee engagement and performance (Yap et al., 2010).

Conclusion

According to the definition of an organization, a group of people working together to achieve common goals, employees learn with time while working together and get experience. However, the concept of organizational learning culture cannot be translated naturally. An organization with a learning culture invests resources in its employees, pays careful attention to developing and

retaining them, gets quality goods and services, or has enhanced performance. The goal is to achieve a competitive advantage in the field. Empirical evidence of the current study has validated and supported the proposed relationship and strengthened the base theories and previous literature. This means that, though some preliminary sort of learning and development opportunities exist in our public and private sector teaching colleges, these are insufficient to serve the theme and trends of a modern organizational learning culture. Therefore, more attention is required to keep pace with the modern world.

Future Recommendations

While this study provides valuable insights, its results should not be taken as absolute. Further investigation is needed to delve deeper into the complex relationships between variables. The researchers believe that a qualitative study is necessary to develop a more comprehensive understanding of organizational learning culture or environment. Moreover, replicating this study in different contexts would enhance the generalizability of the findings, providing a more robust understanding of the phenomena within and outside of Pakistan.

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