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### Understanding Occupational Health and Safety Compliances in Pakistan's Textile Industry: Insights from Thematic Analysis

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to unveil and understand OHS problems common to textile factories with regard to risks, reporting, and safeguarding of workers. Hence, a qualitative method was used to interview textile factory workers, managerial employees, particularly human resource managers, and trade union officials to obtain information about the safety challenges in the industry. Subthemes identified were underestimation of injuries, accessibility to health care, and insufficient safety education and support. Consequently, research evidence shows that most incidents are not reported due to disciplinary action and administrative factors and that limited healthcare access means that workers' injuries are not treated on time. Also, safety training is lacking, and the lack of exposure and regular wear and tear of the machinery adds to the risk to the employees. Instead, the identified problems require the introduction of the labor card system for recording hours of employment, monitoring incidents in real-time, and facilitating health care access. This system could increase transparency, allow government control, and improve the treatment of injuries. Others in the safety management area include the formation of security committees alongside upgrading training procedures to encourage safety culture. The study, emphasizes the importance of policy direction to ensure that worker welfare, especially in hazardous sectors such as the textile industry, is enhanced; this goes a long way in ensuring that the textile employee may enjoy improved health and safety at the workplace.

**Keywords:** Occupational health and safety, textile industry, injury prevention, labor card system, safety training, worker protection, qualitative study

## Introduction

Textile has often been identified as one of the most critical industries, yielding a more significant portion of the country's GDP, employment, and export revenue. This sector alone has millions of employees who depend on it either directly or indirectly; many of the employees are women; therefore, experiencing high employment in textile manufacturing makes sense because it is labour-intensive. However, Pakistan's textile industry still has many constraints, especially with regard to occupational health and safety (OHS). Although there has been a progressive enhancement in production capabilities, compliance with OHS standards and requirements is still poor and inadequate in textile organizations (Daba et al., 2022). This has put the workers in a form of danger that exposes them to risks various events such as injuries, illnesses, and even fatalities, most especially bearing in mind the dangerous

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processes involved in the textile manufacturing industries. Machines, chemicals, inadequate air circulation, and long hours at work doom the health of the workers in different factories. Since more and more consumers turn to materials that are ethically sourced and safe, these problems are not only a matter of ethical concern but also critical for country's export market of textiles (Tharwani et al., 2024).

The main research question in this research can be derived from the realization of the continuing deficiencies in OHS practices in Pakistan's textile Industry. International and national OHS standards are always available but pitifully practiced within most organizations. Health and safety concerns are also compromised in most textile facilities; protection, emergency evacuations, ventilation or any sort, and more are poor or almost negligible. Additionally, the level of workplace organization of OHS remains low since many employees have no clue about their entitlements, and management's demonstration of concern is only a response to regulatory requirements (Jajja et al., 2020). This absence of adequate knowledge and enforcement leaves a vulnerable workforce with little or no defense against several workplace risks. However, with improved government efforts placed on the introduction of these reforms and the promotion of worker safety, there seems to be a shortage of more systematic analysis of the factors that hinder OHS compliance and those that cause them.

Hence, the rationale for this study lies in emerging from a genuine world concern to understand the present OHS scenario in the textile industry, especially details on how workers experienced OHS difficulties and how management realized OHS compliance issues. Using qualitative research, the study will elicit rich data that encompasses information on the attitude of the workers to health and safety measures, challenges experienced, and their level of awareness of OHS practices (Jing et al., 2022). Through the assessment of these matters, the study aims to contribute to the identification of the difficulties met when promoting safe working conditions, which may, in turn, help create better-fitted measures and strategies for enhancing OHS compliance in the textile segment.

This research is unique in its attempt to understand OHS in the context of textile sector. It uses a qualitative approach that focuses on the workers themselves since they are rarely heard in the conversations surrounding the industry. Almost all the previous research on OHS in the context of textile industry involves mere figures, including compliance or accident indices, without searching for the social and organizational contributing factors. Due to its general applicability, this paper contributes a qualitative analysis of OHS compliance

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that includes thematic areas of workers' behavior, management consideration, and social factors impacting health and safety at the workplace (Ehsan & Qureshi, 2019). This subtle understanding is crucial for appreciating the obstructions that face OHS enhancement and creating options that are friendly to the workers, explicitly focusing on the realities of the industry.

Importantly, this study cannot only reveal the overall gaps in current OHS practices and outcomes but also help to guide the reformulating of prior recommendations into definite actionable suggestions for policy and practice. The results of this study might be of interest to policymakers, business executives, and trade unions that are working for a healthier future in organizations. Explaining the resistance to OHS and presenting a better appreciation of workers' situation, this study calls for a more integrated concept of workplace safety, arguing for policies that consider the health of workers alongside organizational efficiency. Besides the advancement of health among workers, the government should work towards the improvement of OHS practices so as to fit the international standards, hence drawing the textile industry a better economic performance in the global market.

## **Literature Review**

### **Occupational Health and Safety in the Asian Textile Industry**

Global textiles are a complex production structure that encompasses a wide variety of processes that are generally fraught with risk factors that affect workers' health (Asare et al., 2019). Employment health and safety standards in Asian countries have dramatically enhanced due to standard legislation and trends in OHS, as well as the use of the technologies (Tahmid, 2020). Nonetheless, textile employees in several Asian countries have not been spared from working under dangerous conditions arising from poor political compliance and occupational safety measures (Thatshayini & Rajini, 2018). Textile is one of the biggest industries globally, employing millions of people, most of them in developing countries (Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019). This sector is characterized by increased cases of work-related accidents and illnesses through contact with hazardous substances, biomechanical hazards, and unfavorable working tools. Articles that the employees in the textile industries work with include dyes and solvents that may lead to respiratory disorders, skin diseases, and other related ailments (M. A. Khan et al., 2020). Also, repetitive work and practical ergonomics are seen to be other causes of MSDs among textile workers. In this regard, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has devised different standards and guidelines in relation to OHS

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in the textile industry (Noman et al., 2021). These standards outline the requirements for adequate flow of fresh air, safety clothing/helmets, comfort at places of work, and routine check-ups on the employees (F. H. Ali et al., 2021). Nevertheless, compliance is not the case in Asian many countries, especially in the areas of poor legal requirements and insufficient funding for OHS promotion (Nafees et al., 2024).

## **Occupational Health and Safety**

Occupational health and safety (OH&S) standards play a vital role in safeguarding the well-being of workers, ensuring safe and healthy working conditions, and preventing workplace accidents and diseases (Suárez-Albanchez et al., 2021). It is common knowledge that the textile industry faces unique occupational safety and health risks. According to Trillo-Cabello et al. (2021), these hazards include exposure to cotton dust particles, noise, fire smoke, smoking, exhaustion, alcohol consumption, and job-related stress. A textile firm in Bursa, Turkey, assessed their existing risk identification tools and found out that the risk assessment forms have Eight Features for hazards and 55 Sub features (Munir, 2023). This research utilized the Analytical Network Process (ANP) to establish the internal and external connections of these criteria. Although as many as five criteria were identified, the working equipment, machinery, and hand tools emerged as the most concerning criteria. Arefin et al., (2022) identified that electric shock was the sub-criteria that deserved the most attention concerning this primary criterion. The problems related to the textile industry include respiratory disorders, stress, depression, and behavioral issues in employees. Ibrahim, (2017) pointed out that because of poor working conditions and precarious economic realities, Textile manufacturing employees often suffer from stress and depression. As highlighted by Aurice Wekoye et al., (2020), workers in textile factories who indicated they had sleep problems that included difficulty in sleeping on duty had tendencies to develop workplace accidents. Further, a cross-sectional study from industries in Nepal pointed to the possibility of respiratory risks for employees engaged in jute and textile production (Andersson et al., 2019). Organizing and ergonomic working conditions of sewing and cutting machine operators in the clothing industry have also been reviewed. Research done in a garment industry organization revealed that the textile industry, especially the SMEs, is labor intensive, and most firms do not have occupational health and safety systems (M. I. Rashid et al., 2022).

## **Occupational Health & Safety Challenges in the Pakistan's Textile Sector**

In textiles, for instance, paying little attention to the well-being of the workers is very

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dangerous to their health (Ahmed et al., 2020). Another question is the problem of dusting, which can be hazardous to human life and may lead to chronic issues in respiratory tracts (M. R. Khan & Rammal, 2022). There are also other problems, such as the inability of unsafe buildings, poor emergency systems, and poor occupational health and safety standards within the textile industries (Jenkins, 2020). Noise, fire smoke, fatigue, and cotton dust particles are some of the potential hazards that may have a direct or indirect health effect on workers (Alama et al., 2020). Some OHS practices that are within the main pillars of OHS judging from the circular of textile organizations, include the following: an appraisal of the knowledge of hazards, periodic health checkups and tests, and others like personnel protective gear training and prevention of hazards, is observed that some of these OHS regulations may not be fully implemented in the textile organizations (M. H. Syed et al., 2023).

R. F. Syed & Mahmud, (2022) have pointed out that employers are going to double because of such changes. Workers gain extra happiness and healthier lives. Wang et al., (2020) Using personal protective equipment is also an essential part of making sure that textile workers are safe from possible dangers. Organization, (2021) Say that wearing a mask in places with a lot of airborne particles can help cut down on pollution. Tverytnykova et al., (2021) Says that managing programs for worker health and safety well can help bring down the cost of worker injuries. Businesses have to pay a lot of money for social benefits and workers' compensation. The textile market is an excellent example of this. (Yang & Maresova, 2020). According to Alsamawi et al., (2017), possible ways of dealing with this vice include Businesses asking for architectural assessments to identify the safety of their buildings and providing their employees with training and information regarding occupational health and safety. Most of the time, employees in the textile sector expose themselves to the risks (Dharejo et al., 2023). Employees are exposed to safety hazards in textile manufacturing because the requirement standards and procedures for safety regulation, product quality & implementation are not satisfactory (Bueno, 2017). Organizations and communities, in general, have woken up to the reality that it is mandatory to develop an organized approach to ensure workplaces are safe, secure, and productive (Seidu et al., 2024).

## **Current Occupational Health & Safety Conditions in SMEs of the Pakistan's Textile Sector**

For OHS, the textile industry and the SMEs related to it are riddled with challenges (Ibrahim

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& El-Karmalawy, 2017). Grimshaw & de Bustillo, (2021) assert that limited literature investigates workplace health and safety in SMEs to find new knowledge. As mentioned by Akbar, (2022), these matters should be resolved with the intention of maintaining safety measures for employers and eliminating possible incidents at workplaces. The risk assessment should be comprehensive in order to establish specific risks and challenges that the textile industry is bound to face and how to deal with them (Rajapakshe & Chandrasiri, 2023). In their study, Zainal et al., (2022) pointed out the following risks in the textile industry. The hazards that one is likely to be exposed to include cotton dust, noise, fire smoke if one smokes, fatigue, alcohol, job stress, exhaustion, etc. Hiba et al., (2021) found that the health hazards to the workers in the Pakistani textile industry include noise, fire smoke, and cotton dust particles. They may exercise negatively, affecting their health. Some of these may consist of Additionally, Awan & Anwar, (2019) pointed out a gap in the health and safety methods of the industry. For instance, there is minimal provision for protective clothing, gloves, masks, etc., and few staff have been trained on how to mitigate risks (Qureshi & Mudassar, 2019). M. Khan, (2017) also presented a study focusing on the musculoskeletal symptoms of the sewing machine operators separately.

## **Employment Injury Protection Scheme for Textile Industry Employees**

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation by making people less mobile and forcing them to work longer hours, both of which put additional strain on their bodies. If we care about the health and productivity of textile workers, we must address these issues and assist them. The COVID-19 pandemic has made textile workers even more concerned about their future employment prospects (Organization, 2022). Employees' mental health problems have worsened as a result of the pandemic's impact on job security. Workplace stability and overall happiness go hand in hand (Islam & Stringer, 2020). As a result, it is critical to assist textile workers in dealing with the current economic downturn and alleviate their concerns about their jobs (Vanpeperstraete, 2021). Several recent changes in the textile industry bode well for the future of those who work in the sector (Morris et al., 2021). Increased use of Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) applications, for example, can make textile workers happier, and software tools that reduce the need for manual labor everywhere may help reduce workplace injuries (Lollo & O'Rourke, 2020). Also, it enables them to consider social factors that affect the happiness of the workforce across the organizations. This means that people who have no issues with life other than work are helpful in the workplace. Another



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social issue relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic is the absence of social support for workers in the textile industry (Yuan et al., 2022). Family and friends' support is crucial in order to guarantee that employees are happy and healthy (Mahmud et al., 2018). Other factors that are also part of the efforts towards trying to minimize workplace injuries include workers' education and training. Sheikh et al., (2023) stated that targeting safety climate, work practices, active supervision, and training interventions can help to decrease workplace injuries. As a result, improvements to an organization to reduce workplace accidents for people in the textile industry are thus essential (A. Rashid et al., 2022).

## **Legal Framework and Compliance**

OH&S legal system instrumentality is crucial in Pakistan's textiles industry; the needed promotion and implementation (Shahab, 2021). Pakistan has ratified some international labor organization conventions concerning occupational health and hazardous and fundamental conventions, convention no155 Worker's Code of Conduct Occupational Safety and Health Convention no 187, a Promotional framework for occupational health (Thatshayini & Rajini, 2018). The country has shown its preparedness to accede to these conventions by enhancing the working environment and safeguarding the workers' interests (M. S. Ali, 2024). Nonetheless, although professionals have specific standards set, implementing these principles and tracking them is challenging. However, as stated by Gautam, (2020), it will be difficult to execute its legal programs meant to protect workers from workplace injuries if only the country lacks the administrative systems, processes, and mechanisms. It should also be noted that although there are numerous laws protecting workers, the textile industry does not always meet the WSH standards (Rafay, 2024).

Moazzem & Taznur, (2021) found these among the most severe problems: There is no regulation of established Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) programs. Due to their poor knowledge of the textile industry, most of the workers do not correlate with Workplace health and safety (Nafees et al., 2024). Thus, there is a dire need to lift specialized institutions in education on WH&S, including the Centre for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment, CIWCE. Since the textile industry is negligent in the regulation of workplace health and safety, many employees are compelled to work under poor conditions (Prentice, 2021). As mentioned by Bhatnagar & Niinimäki, (2024), there are several areas where there is room for development, namely the sphere of waste disposal, fire risk prevention, and healthcare. This is so because when workers are not trained on how to work



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on certain machinery or are not trained to perform a specific task, the rate of accidents and resulting injuries increases (Anwar et al., 2019). To resolve these problems and to stop them from worsening, the government has introduced the Employment Injury Protection Scheme for Textile Industry Employees (Arman et al., 2021). For the success of this strategy, some exploratory works are needed on the condition of occupational health & safety (OH&S) scenario of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) in the textile Industry (Saxena, 2022).

## **Methodology**

This action research utilizes a qualitative epistemology and method to examine the perspectives of the workers in the Pakistan textile industry regarding OHS and the mitigation of workplace-related injuries. Based on the pragmatic paradigm embraced in the current study, this approach asserts that knowledge is rather constituted of subjective apprehensions of distinctive social realities. This viewpoint fits well within the survey of workers' lived experience in the industry. Such an approach embraces the tolerance of diverse ontological and epistemological assumptions because the focus is on the efficiency of the research process and the effectiveness of the solutions found. This type of research takes its philosophical stance in interpretivism. However, it is commonly a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand the employee's point of view in terms of strength and the factors that complicate their WSI insurance. This process leads to the formation of this approach, as the study aims to construct new theories based on the experiences of textile workers. In structured, unscripted, and primarily general interviews, the investigation identifies elements that correspond to the experiences of subordinates regarding protective measures, difficulties with acquiring injury coverage, and opportunities for development.

The data collection process included interviews with 20 participants, including textile workers, human resource managers, and union officials, with first-hand information about the injury protection schemes. In this study, the purposive sampling method was employed in order to identify respondents who could provide relevant information on OHS practices and issues affecting protection. Every interview, taking roughly 45 to approximately 60 minutes, enabled the participants to elaborate on their experiences with policies on OHS, injury claim procedures, and safety measures in their workplace. Thus, thematic analysis proceeded according to the six steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This entailed identification with data, coding, searching and re-searching of themes, and redefining themes to gain a broader perception of the participants. Some of the themes that arose included what workers

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regarded as ‘barriers to protection scheme access,’ ‘perceived justice in injury protection procedures,’ and the theme that dealt with ‘workplace safety culture.’

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### Qualitative Data Analysis (Thematic Analysis)

It makes thematic analysis an integral part of exploring elaborate views of textile workers regarding workplace injuries, injury reporting systems, and measures in textile plants. The interviews with the participants from diverse textile departments, including spinning, weaving, knitting, processing, and garments sites, generated qualitative data used in analysis to determine more repeated patterns and themes. From this review, significant emphases were noted, especially the introduction of the labor card system as a possible intervention toward optimizing workplace injuries and safety measures.

### Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis revealed several significant themes and sub-themes critical for understanding the safety culture, injury reporting mechanisms, and the potential benefits of implementing a labor card system in textile industries. These themes are presented in the table below:

**Table 1: Themes and Sub-Themes from Thematic Analysis**

Theme	Sub-Theme	Key Insights	Supporting Quotes
Underreporting of Injuries	1.1 Fear of Workers Reprisal	Workers fear retaliation, loss of wages, or reduced work hours if they report injuries.	<i>“I didn’t report my injury because I knew it would mean fewer shifts next month.”</i> (Weaving department worker)
	1.2 Lack of Injury Documentation	The absence of proper documentation of injuries, particularly minor injuries, leads to underreporting.	<i>“Only serious injuries get written down; the rest we just deal with on our own.”</i> (Spinning department worker)
	1.3 Pressure to Continue Working	Workers feel pressure to keep working even after sustaining injuries	<i>“Even when we’re hurt, we have to keep working, or we don’t get paid.”</i> (Knitting department worker)

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			to avoid financial loss.	department worker)
Limited Access to Healthcare	2.1 Inadequate Healthcare Access	Limited healthcare facilities and delayed treatment due to the unavailability of company-supported services.	<i>"We don't get proper treatment unless the injury is severe, and it takes too long to get help."</i> (Finishing department worker)	
	2.2 Delayed Medical Support	Workers face delays in receiving treatment because of bureaucratic procedures for approval.	<i>"We wait for approvals, and by then, the injury gets worse."</i> (Administrative staff member)	
Safety Standards and Training	3.1 Insufficient Safety Training	Lack of proper training leads to unsafe work practices, increasing the risk of injuries.	<i>"We don't receive enough training to handle the machines safely."</i> (Weaving department worker)	
	3.2 Unsafe Work Conditions	Unsafe or outdated machinery increases the risk of accidents and injuries.	<i>"The machines are old, and sometimes they malfunction, putting us in danger."</i> (Spinning department worker)	
	3.3 Lack of Awareness of Safety Protocols	Workers are unaware of safety protocols, leading to more workplace accidents.	<i>"No one tells us how to protect ourselves from injuries."</i> (Knitting department worker)	
Organizational Barriers	4.1 Lack of Support from Management	Management's unwillingness to address safety issues contributes to a poor safety culture.	<i>"We've raised safety concerns, but nothing changes. It's not a priority for them."</i> (Administrative staff member)	

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	4.2	Bureaucratic Delays	Paperwork and red tape slow down injury reporting and treatment approval processes.	<i>"It takes too long for anything to get approved when we're hurt."</i> (Administrative staff member)
Resource Limitations	5.1	Outdated Machinery	Many textile firms operate with outdated or unsafe machinery, increasing injury risks.	<i>"We work with old machines, and when they malfunction, accidents happen."</i> (Spinning department worker)
	5.2	Lack of Financial Resources	Financial constraints prevent investment in newer, safer technology and proper safety measures.	<i>"The company can't afford new machines or safety upgrades."</i> (Administrative staff member)
Labour Card as a Solution	6.1	Unified Injury Documentation	A labor card could centralize injury documentation, improving injury reporting and transparency.	<i>"With a card, we won't have to worry about paperwork getting lost. Everything will be recorded."</i> (Knitting department worker)
	6.2	Access to Healthcare and Benefits	The labor card could improve workers' access to healthcare and ensure financial support during recovery.	<i>"The card would guarantee their medical bills are covered, and they would continue to receive some form of income."</i> (Administrative staff member)
	6.3	Reducing Underreporting	The labor card could reduce underreporting by providing a non-	<i>"If we had a card, I think more of us would report injuries. Right now, too</i>

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punitive system for *many of us keep quiet.*"  
documenting injuries. (Finishing department  
worker)

6.4 Integration The labor card could be *"It could be connected to*  
with Government linked to government *national insurance schemes*  
Initiatives initiatives for additional *to help us when we're*  
healthcare and financial *injured."* (Administrative  
support. staff member)

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## Injury Reporting and Documentation

### Sub-Theme 1.1: Formal Systems of Reporting

Injury reporting mechanisms varied considerably among the textile plants where interviews were conducted. Formalized systems for reporting workplace injuries were said to exist, though workers widely contested their effectiveness and accessibility. Most interviewees noted that their employers had implemented structured processes, usually involving completing incident reports or notifications to supervisors. However, these processes were frequently seen as overly bureaucratic and slow to produce results.

As a worker in the spinning department notes, *"When we get hurt, we have to tell the supervisor, but then it takes too long for anything to happen. We don't get the medical attention we need right away."* This perception of delayed responses not only discourages workers from reporting injuries but also undermines the credibility of the reporting system itself.

The workers also raised concerns that some incidents are not documented, particularly minor injuries that do not immediately seem severe but could worsen over time. This inconsistency in reporting reflects a failure to address the full scope of workplace injuries and limits the organization's ability to monitor trends that could improve safety protocols.

### Sub-Theme 1.2: Barriers to Reporting Injuries

Many of the interviewees emphasized that culture and structure became barriers to reporting injuries despite the existence of organizational forms. The other typical response for underreporting injuries was that the employees feared punishment. Several employees said they feared that it might be considered a reason for reduced output if they had to report an injury to their boss. This was especially apparent among the daily wage earners who have no other form of income sources other than the job they are doing daily.

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For instance, a participant from the weaving department expressed: *“If I tell my supervisor that I was injured at work, the consequences will be that my working hours will be reduced or I will be sidelined for some time to allow my injuries heal, and due to this, I will not earn enough to cater for my needs for the day. I prefer to keep quiet and continue working.”* This testimony shows how the threat of economic loss works against reporting workplace.

Further, some participants stated that they were discouraged from reporting injuries as this affected their department's performance. This results in a situation where people's safety is compromised to ensure that production goals are met.

The absence of a protective environment that would allow the reporting of the incidents also eliminated formal communication; for instance, the workers tended to each other's injuries without getting the attention of their superiors. This behavior emphasizes the urgent need for open and friendly reporting of work-related injuries and illnesses with no detrimental repercussions on the worker in question.

## **Common Types of Injuries**

### **Sub-Theme 2.1: Machinery-Related Injuries**

Apparel production requires the operation of large and complex machinery; hence, it entails many dangers to employees when proper protective measures are lacking or inadequate. Accidents involving machinery were among the most common reported during the interviews. These included surgical, avulsion, thermal, and compression injuries, all of which are rampant in departments where mechanical equipment, such as high-speed equipment, is in frequent use.

One worker from the processing department recounted a particularly severe incident: *“My colleague was cleaning it, and his hand got caught in the machine; he lost two fingers because there weren't safety guards on the machines.”* Despite this unfortunate workplace experience, the firm still has no effective guards on all the machines. This is evidence that, regardless of the havoc created by the lack of safety features, the firms have not deemed it fit to install good guards on all the machines.

As previously stated, many workers worked barehanded on machines without wearing the required safety gear or were required to turn off the safety features to increase productivity. Management always demanded that the machines run without stoppage, which led to the workers developing shortcuts that resulted in severe injuries.

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## **Sub-Theme 2.2: Musculoskeletal Disorders**

Another of the most common types of injury highlighted in the thematic analysis was musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), with workers involved in heavy pushing or lifting activities or workers who spent long hours on their feet at high risk of developing MSDs. Also, participants selected from the spinning and weaving departments complained of constant back aches, shoulder straining, and joint aching due to the incorrect position of working stations and lack of mechanical aid in the work carried out.

*“We work with heavy rolls of fabric rated over 200 kgs during the day, without any lifting aid around us. After the shift, all are massaging our backs,” a worker at the weaving division explained.*

The occurrence of MSDs is magnified by the lack of training on handling loads that need lifting and carrying and, more to the point, the lack of the use of lifting aids. Sources surveyed said minimal PPE was provided; however, ergonomics and training were neglected in most workplaces. The primary disadvantage of not maintaining adequate provision for long-term health risks such as MSDs is the considerable effect it has on the workforce since employees are compelled to continue working even if they are in pain or greatly tired.

## **Root Cause Analysis**

### **Sub-Theme 3.1: Superficial Investigations**

Furthermore, worthwhile studies in workplaces entail identifying the occurrence of workplace incidents in a bid to minimize any likelihood of a repeat mishap. However, according to responses from many participants, SPL interviews for injuries were routine and did not try to uncover the true nature of the accidents. The workers of the garments and finishing departments opined that if the cause was less deep, say, what all the workers did before the accident, then further probing into possible machine breakdowns or lack of training were ruled out. A participant stressed: *‘When someone is hurt, they simply ask the worker what he/she was doing, but it does not investigate whether the machine was to blame or if there had been sufficient safety checks.’* This approach to analyzing the accident leads to a departure from understanding all aspects and simply recognizing the worker's actions. Consequently, such losses are still experienced, and there is a slight improvement in the measures that protect the employees.

### **Sub-Theme 3.2: Lack of Comprehensive Analysis**

This failure hampers effective investigations of causations that may lead to injuries and



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promotes a blame culture where workers are always to blame for accidents. The participants drawn from the knitting department complained that even when safety audits were conducted, they were done without consulting the workers. As directors, they would not hear first-hand important information from the workers, which would help them understand risky behavior or substandard equipment. Consequently, the investigated data points to the necessity of a more comprehensive and nested approach to identifying injuries that engage different levels of a company, from workers to safety officers and equipment maintenance teams. If the organizational investigation embraces a broader perspective of each event, opportunities to pinpoint broader system safety problems could be accomplished with greater precision and efficiency.

## **Preventative Measures**

### **Sub-Theme 4.1: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

The interviews further confirmed that the use of PPEs was ubiquitously reported across the department and organization. However, the supply, quality, and compliance varied sharply. Garments and spinning department employees indicated that while they were provided with simple personal protective equipment like gloves and safety goggles, they were often of substandard quality or quickly worn out.

A worker from the spinning department said, “We are given gloves, but they don’t last long when they get torn. We can wait up to days or weeks to get new ones; by then, *we will continue working without them.*”

These plans are characterized by irregular distribution and replacement of PPE, which remains a decisive weakness in workplace protection. While many organizations meet the minimum PPE standards, poor equipment provision and maintenance undermine the protective measure's purpose.

### **Sub-Theme 4.2: Safety Training**

The interviews also touched on employee safety training as a preventive measure for work-related illness. Employees were asked about the safety training they receive, and all of them stated that they receive formal training infrequently, but when they do, it is usually a brief session. Concerning the interviews with the participants in the processing department, it was stated that their initial safety training was basic but did not cover the latest risks brought about by new machinery or changes in the process.

Indeed, one worker summarised the training well: “We were trained once *when we joined, but*

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*there is no repetition; many new machines have come, but no training has been given on how to use new machines safely.”*

It showed that sometimes, workers are on their own to determine the safe measures to assume, and they often get it wrong, resulting in more mishaps. This supports the earlier argument that most organizations must devote more effort, time, and financial resources to training their employees on safety practices.

## **Challenges in Injury Prevention**

### **Sub-Theme 5.1: Outdated Machinery**

One of the issues highlighted by several participants was poor equipment in most textile factories, mainly old ones. Employees explained how most machinery used in production had been in use for many years, and many had outdone their safety features, thus posing dangers to the employees. For instance, one of the participants from the weaving department said, *‘The machines that we use are not well developed and most of the time malfunction. When you have to start operating after it has stopped, it is hazardous not to get messed up.*

This study revealed that many employees continued to use old and less safe equipment, stating that modernizing equipment was very costly. We learned that smaller textile firms are especially financially constrained to afford investments in newer, safer technologies.

### **Sub-Theme 5.2: Lack of Financial Resources**

Lack of finances is felt when acquiring machinery and several aspects of workplace safety. Small and medium-scale industries, including the textile industries, lack the necessary capital to invest in new technology, preventive measures, and training. This has the effect of limiting the potential to achieve a safer workplace for the workers as may be wished for.

## **Labour Card as a Solution**

A significant discovery from the interviews was the possibility of implementing a labor card system. This theme discusses how a labor card system would help improve many of the problems pointed out in the previous themes regarding injury reporting, access to healthcare, and guaranteeing the workers' needed support.

### **Sub-Theme 6.1: Unified Injury Documentation**

From the aspect of the labor card system, it could be possible to create a joint base for recording accidents at work and tracking all the cases. Employees were to possess a personalized labor card containing information about certain aspects like injury history,

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related healthcare visits, and treatments. This would also aid in automating the reporting of injuries and maintaining a record of all the injuries irrespective of the degree of the damage. About the labor card idea, a member of the knitting department expressed excitement for announcing, “With a card, we shall never be afraid to lose our papers, things are recorded, *and we can seek assistance.* ”

Electronic injury registration would enable both workers and employers to have an open and detailed record of all injuries. It also has the potential to enhance audit and inspection activities so that safety measures are constantly revised based on the current figures obtained.

## **Sub-Theme 6.2: Access to Healthcare and Benefits**

It may also make the labor card more effective in expanding workers' access to health care services and other related privileges. Through these regulations, injured workers could take their labor cards to health facilities and get treated without enduring lengthy bureaucratic formalities. More so, the labor card could be associated with paying workers who cannot work due to injuries to receive an allowance for the time they are hindered from working.

For instance, one of the administrative staff members said, “The labor card system could mean that the worker does not lose his wages when he is injured; he just has to make sure his medical bills are sorted, *and he would still be earning something.*”

The labor card system could solve most of the systematic impediments care workers face by speeding up healthcare access and minimizing costs.

## **Sub-Theme 6.3: Reducing Underreporting**

The labor card could also significantly minimize the underreporting of injury incidents. This is especially true if the present model gave workers overtime and fear-free methods of reporting incidents in an organization instead of punishments. Employees would perceive that they have every right to report an injury in the workplace without fearing that their working hours will be cut, or some other unpleasant action will occur.

The lack of the card means more of the workers in the finishing department do not report their injuries as one of the workers said, “*If we had the card, more of us would report our injuries, but since there are many of us who are hiding our and suffer quietly because we fear to lose our jobs whenever the company detects our injuries.*”

## **Sub-Theme 6.4: Integration with Government Initiatives**

Finally, expanding the scope of the labor card system makes it possible to connect it with

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other social protection programs that the government uses now. By linking the labor card to national insurance schemes or employment injury protection programs, workers could get added financial and health care benefits in the event of an injury. This would ensure that the most vulnerable workers will have protection since some work in the informal sector or on a daily wage basis.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

### **Discussion**

This paper aims to identify obstacles to the effective management and prevention of occupational injuries related to textile industry and the need to enhance OHS interventions. From the gathered qualitative data, such as interviews with spinning, weaving, knitting, processing, and garment section workers, significant problems were determined. This paper also identifies that under-reporting of injuries, restricted access to health care resources, inadequate safety practices and procedures, and finally, structural barriers are ubiquitous in this sector. For instance, employees in textile factories develop their diseases from exposure to chemicals, strain injuries after spending several hours operating machines, and machinery accidents, among other dangers that occur in the workplace. Still, the affected employees lack faith in the organization's reporting systems and or fear being dismissed or transferred when they report the incidents. The high incidence and under-reporting of injuries magnify the need for protective measures and a proper way of measuring them. This work has recommended that an efficient way to prevent human error and ensure that all accidents are well documented is to come up with a labor card system supported by an implementation of strict safety measures.

A hazard assessment analysis showed that the majority of textile companies have no formal risk assessment of facilities, partly because of a lack of knowledge, experience, or employers' recklessness. Daily risks to employees include heat, chemicals, ergonomics, and ventilation, yet few, if any, organizations perform periodic hazard surveys. When a labor card system is adopted, for instance, hazards could be easily identified and documented in real-time, identifying the injuries and incidents that occurred so as to lead to tailored inspections and safety preventative measures. This system would also enable the workers to self-report hazards and promote a preventive safety awareness procedure. However, when compared to contemporary OHS policies around the globe, Pakistan's OHS policies, which are clearly presented in the 2018 Act, are still humble. However, other countries such as Germany and

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Australia pay a lot of attention to compliance, frequent assessment, and independent vital employees' involvement in safety decision-making. For the better implementation of OHS policies, Pakistan should adopt the strategies used in these countries, such as the use of technology in reporting the incidence of injuries on the job and the increasing involvement of the workers in safety measures.

Moreover, the results show that there is limited access to health care, and workers themselves do not receive adequate safety training. Most workers complain of a delay in seeking treatment because of organizational hurdles, a lack of company clinics and insurers, or insurance complications. This is in harmony with other researchers who have pointed out that where intervention is delayed, this complicates the injuries and the degree of recovery. Hence, a lot of money is lost on the affected workers. Further, a lack of safety training makes employees vulnerable when facing workplace risks because the chances of mishappening are highly high. These challenges relate to the systematic resource deficiency of companies because most textile firms cannot afford to replace machinery or train employees on safety measures frequently. Some of these problems may be solved by implementing the proposed system of labor cards, such as immediate access to health care, documentation of injury, and determination of compensation. With reference to the protection of these injuries and healthcare accessibility through such a system, Pakistan's textile industry may further improve workers' safety and health standards according to global standards and beliefs.

## **Conclusion**

From this work, one has a clue of some critical concerns along with the workforce in the textile industry, like the incidence of work-related accidents and safety policies. Some areas emerged from in-depth interviews and theme analysis: pre-hospital under-reporting of injuries, limited healthcare access, inadequate and delayed safety consciousness, institutional indifference, and an absence of resources. These threats are not only dangers to the textile workers' health but also the improvement of the other textile industries' working conditions. The research also developed the concept of the labor-card plan, which should be applied. It is radical since it involves injury reporting, access to health, and workers' secure employment. Therefore, the discoveries speak to the need for policy and enhancing industry actions with regard to the protection of workers. One of those measures that may improve the treatment of injuries, risks, and the welfare of textile industry workers, in particular, might be the

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introduction of a labor card system. Last of all, this research reveals a need for ERP approaches to foster structural changes, many times required on a systematic basis to augment the safety and bureaucratic responsibility of the workers, which in tandem will assist in strengthening industrial performance.

In addition, to foster a safer working environment, the study suggests that textile firms should increase the frequency of training programs conducted on safety and that all textile firms should form safety committees. Management must embark on conducting credible training sessions for employees so that they may be sensitized on safety measures, correct usage of machines, and probable incident evasive measures. Ideally, such programs should be updated periodically and aimed at all staff, from newcomers through to experienced workers, in order to achieve a safe culture. Also, the development of safety committees, which may include both managerial employees and workers, contributes to the achievement of organizational commitment to OHS. They include those that can assist in reporting and solving safety concerns, periodic reevaluation of hazards, and availability or use of safety accessories. These measures would complement government action in the enforcement of OHS standards and encourage proactive enhanced measures for safety, protecting workers, and reducing the average number of injuries in the textile industry.

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