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## THE STUDY ON ORGANIZATIONAL CYNICISM, ORGANIZATIONAL INJUSTICE & BREACH OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT AS THE DETERMINANTS OF DEVIANT WORK BEHAVIOR

*This study attempts to uncover how organizational variables (organizational cynicism, organizational injustice, breach of psychological contract) cause deviant work behavior among doctors and nurses of the public sector hospitals of Pakistan. The research was conducted through a survey, adopted from the questionnaires by previous researchers. This study had a sample size of 300 doctors and nurses working in public hospitals of Pakistan. The data collected through survey questionnaires were statistically analyzed and multiple linear regression analyses were used to test the research hypotheses. The results show that organizational injustice, breach of psychological contract have significant and positive association with deviant work behavior and have an overall significantly positive impact on doctors' and nurses' deviant work behavior. However, organizational cynicism has an insignificant impact on the doctors' and nurses' deviant work behavior.*

**Keywords:** organizational cynicism; organizational injustice; breach of psychological contract; deviant work behavior.

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## ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙНОГО ЦИНІЗМУ, ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙНОЇ НЕСПРАВЕДЛИВОСТІ І ПОРУШЕННЯ ПСИХОЛОГІЧНОЇ УГОДИ ЯК ЧИННИКІВ ДЕВІАНТНОЇ ТРУДОВОЇ ПОВЕДІНКИ

*У статті зроблено спробу пояснити, як організаційні змінні (організаційний цинізм, організаційна несправедливість і порушення психологічної угоди) викликають девіантну трудову поведінку у лікарів і медсестер державних лікарень у Пакистані. Дослідження проведено за допомогою опитування згідно з відкорегованими анкетами з попередніх досліджень. У опитуванні брали участь 300 лікарів і медсестер пакистанських державних лікарень. Дані, зібрані за допомогою анкет, статистично проаналізовані, для перевірки гіпотез дослідження застосовано аналіз множинної лінійної регресії. Результати показують, що організаційна несправедливість і порушення психологічної угоди значно і позитивно асоціюються з девіантною трудовою поведінкою і мають загальний значно позитивний вплив на девіантну трудову поведінку лікарів і медсестер. Проте організаційний цинізм незначно впливає на девіантну трудову поведінку лікарів і медсестер.*

**Ключові слова:** організаційний цинізм; організаційна несправедливість; порушення психологічної угоди; девіантна трудова поведінка.

*Табл. 3. Рис. 1. Літ. 47.*

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**ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ОРГАНИЗАЦИОННОГО ЦИНИЗМА,  
ОРГАНИЗАЦИОННОЙ НЕСПРАВЕДЛИВОСТИ И НАРУШЕНИЯ  
ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКОГО СОГЛАШЕНИЯ КАК ФАКТОРОВ  
ДЕВИАНТНОГО ТРУДОВОГО ПОВЕДЕНИЯ**

*В статье делается попытка объяснить, как организационные переменные (организационный цинизм, организационная несправедливость и нарушение психологического соглашения) вызывают девиантное трудовое поведение у врачей и медсестер государственных больниц в Пакистане. Исследование проведено с помощью опроса согласно откорректированным анкетам из предыдущих исследований. В опросе участвовали 300 врачей и медсестер пакистанских государственных больниц. Данные, собранные с помощью анкет, статистически проанализированы, для проверки гипотез исследования применен анализ множественной линейной регрессии. Результаты показывают, что организационная несправедливость и нарушение психологического соглашения значительно и положительно ассоциируются с девиантным трудовым поведением и имеют общее значительно положительное влияние на девиантное трудовое поведение врачей и медсестер. Тем не менее, организационный цинизм незначительно влияет на девиантное трудовое поведение врачей и медсестер.*

*Ключевые слова:* организационный цинизм; организационная несправедливость; нарушение психологического соглашения; девиантное трудовое поведение.

**Introduction.** Workplace issues lie at the heart of organizational behavior research because of their significant impact on employees and organizations. Deviant work behavior is one of those important workplace issues that need to be studied by organizational scholars as employees often indulge themselves with acts that are counterproductive to achieving organizational goals. These counterproductive acts may take several forms such as absenteeism, work loafing, theft, verbal and physical aggression, fraud, to name only few of the several facets of deviant or counterproductive behavior of employees. The literature also reveals that deviant work behavior (DWB) has been a popular yet controversial issue that has gained considerable attention of researchers and they are keenly studying it to find ways to manage these behaviors. Due to deviant work behavior, organizations are compelled to spend millions of dollars to resolve workplace deviant behavior as Buss (1993) reported that the annual cost of disadvantages resulting from the DWB have reached an estimated \$120 bln and later Penney (2002) reported a loss of almost \$200 bln in the USA alone.

There are several factors that may lead to deviant work behavior of employees. There are 24 antecedents of deviant work behavior as identified by Marcus and Schuler (2004). These factors include breach of psychological contract, interactional injustice, cynicism, dissatisfaction, job autonomy, self-control, payment inequality, positive self concept to name only few. This study focuses on the healthcare sector because the current wave of counterproductive behavior among nurses and doctors in public hospitals of Pakistan has raised several questions to identify the critical factors of such behavior. The doctors and nurses even went on strike due to false promises by the administrations, payment inequality, perception of unfair treatment and injustice (Pakistan Today, 2011). Therefore, a research study was really needed to identify the most crucial factors of deviant work behavior of doctors and nurses and the current

study aims at investigating the impact of most common and significant factors, such as organizational cynicism, breach of psychological contract and organizational injustice upon deviant work behavior of the nurses and doctors in Pakistan because such factors, if found to have significant impact upon counterproductive behavior, will help in developing strategies to cope with unrest and aggression among the medical staff in Pakistani public hospitals.

### **Literature Review.**

**1. Deviant Work Behavior.** Robinson and Bennett (1995) defined workplace deviance, a behavior controlled by individual volition as to deliberately violating substantial organizational norms and, in doing so, threatening the well-being of organization or its members, or both. While describing DWB, Robinson and Bennett (1995) presented a classification of deviant work behaviors dividing these behaviors into 4 categories. 4 types of deviant work behaviors are: (1) Property deviant, a type of deviance behavior includes those activities which damage an organization's properties; (2) Political deviant, a type of deviance behavior include those activities which people demonstrate while interacting with organizational members leading to unethical and unhealthy political activities such as spreading rumors about organization or its members, or both; (3) Personal aggression, a type of behavior includes implying tough or aggressive behaviors towards colleagues and managers; (4) Production deviance includes those behaviors which cause to proceed slowly and prevent the production process.

The above mentioned types of DWB refer to deviant behaviors targeting the organization such as sabotaging (Mangione & Quinn, 1975), absenteeism (Johns, 1994), theft (Greenberg, 1990), being late to work or leaving early or withdrawing effort from work (Blau, 1995), violence against coworkers, supervisors, and subordinates at a workplace (Kelloway et al., 2006). People may exhibit these behaviors by making fun, behaving rudely, arguing (Lavan & Martin, 2007), cyber-loafing (Blanchard & Henle, 2008). These behaviors can be destructive and lead to undesirable outcomes. O'Leary-Kelley et al. (1996) identified that employees who become the victims of workplace deviance are more likely to quit, have stress-related problems, low morale and may cause decreased productivity. Spector and Fox (2005a, 2005b) proposed that organizational members carry out deviant work behavior when they deliberately engage themselves into acts inducing them to harm the employing organization or other organizational members.

**2. Organizational Injustice.** The theory of organizational injustice while explaining the same refers to distributive justice: employees' perceived fairness of the received outcomes (Adam, 1965), procedural justice: the procedures involved in the determination of the outcomes (Leventhal et al., 1980) and interactional justice: the interpersonal treatment they receive from senior management (Bies & Moag, 1986) guiding their behavior towards their work and organization. Adam (1965) in his equity theory proposed that when employees judge the received outcomes as unfair, they on perceiving psychological inequity suffer severe emotional strain and make an effort to restore equity.

*Organizational Injustice and Deviant Work Behavior.* (Sieh, 1987; Crino & Leap, 1989; Di Battista, 1989; Tucker, 1993; Crino, 1994; Neuman & Baron, 1998) have frequently cited organizational injustice as the antecedent of deviant work behavior.

Skarlicki et al. (1999) studied deviant behavior among organizational members and identified that the negative affectivity characterized by negative emotions caused deviant behavior. Aquino et al. (1999) and Fox et al. (2001) identified that perception of organizational injustice by organizational members leads to deviant work behavior. Gilliland and Chan (2001) put forth a significant evidence suggesting a relationship between the perception of organizational injustice and negative voluntary behavior within organizations. Jill K. (2001) studied the relationship between organizational injustice and deviant work behavior and proposed that employees' perception of distributive, procedural and interactional injustice leads to strong reactions and causes deviant work behavior. Douglas and Martinko (2001) said that hostile remarks and actions, exhibiting enmity and ill will, are the antecedents of workplace deviant behavior. Lee and Allen (2002) identified that negative job cognition compels employees to engage in deviant behavior. Kelloway et al. (2007, 2008) proposed that injustice refers to an employee's belief and perception of his or her being treated unfairly which further leads to counterwork behavior and may even force the victims to "even the score" by counteracting and thus threatening the well-being of organization or its members, or both (Bies & Tripp, 2005). Robinson (2008) studied the organizational injustice and deviant work behavior and found that employees perceiving injustice tend to react and this leads to counterproductive behavior. Jones (2008) further proposed that DWB manifests employees' desire for revenge as a reaction to perceived injustice. Furham and Siegal (2011) in their study of reactions to organizational injustice identified that the employees, who face injustice and unfair treatment, become dissatisfied with their job and management and thus their dissatisfaction results into a threat for organization by deviant work behavior.

Given these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

$H_1$ : Organizational injustice has a significantly positive impact on DWB.

**3. Organizational Cynicism.** James et al. (1998) proposed that to know and comprehend the nature and the extent of the extremity of the negative attitude of organizational members, it is mandatory to understand the concept of organizational cynicism. Organizational cynicism as defined by Dean et al. (1998) is "a negative attitude toward one's employing organization, comprising 3 dimensions: (1) a belief that the organization lacks integrity; (2) negative affect towards the organization; (3) tendencies to disparaging and critical behaviors toward the organization". Johnson and Kelly (2003) presented a recent conceptualization of cynicism built upon the definitions of Andersson (1996) and Dean et al. (1998) which suggest that organizational cynicism exists as a result of organizational members' perception of their employing organization lacking integrity. Moreover, cynicism interprets an attitude that can affect multiple objects, and be extrapolated from one target to another. Matrecia (2005) defined organizational cynicism as employees' attitudes (i.e., negative beliefs, feelings, and other related behaviors) towards their employing organization. She further says that cynicism is a response to a history of personal and/or social experiences that yield readily to the changes triggered by environmental influences. Johnson et al. (2002) believed that social exchange in organizations refers to the actions of organizational members that are prompted by the reciprocity from others. Johnson et al. (2003) also argued that the examination of social exchange theory can help in underpinning and corroboration of organizational cynicism. Blau's exchange theory (1964) identified

the occurrence of social exchange as a result of one's attraction to another, and anticipated that his association with other individuals will be in some way self-rewarding and he also postulated that social exchange among people at times gets beyond the material gains. Based on this line of research, it can be said that low-quality social exchange relationships result in negative attitudes, such as cynicism which further result in deviant work behavior. Thus, Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005) stated that the relationship between employer and employee should be such that organization in order to reciprocate should take care of its employees and their interests.

*Organizational Cynicism and Deviant Work Behavior.* Dean et al. (1998) defined organizational cynicism as the negative attitude towards one's employing organization and workplace deviance has been defined as a behavior as to deliberately violating significant organizational norms and, in doing so, inflicting harm to organization or its members, or both (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Spector & Fox, 2002). Judge et al. (2006) proposed a positive relationship between organizational cynicism and deviant work behavior. Moreover, Bashir (2011) giving the reference of past studies put forth that negative behavior follows negative attitude thus negative attitude, organizational cynicism is related to deviant work behavior and there is a positive relationship between organizational cynicism and DWB.

Based on the comprehensive review of the literature, the following hypothesis explains the proposed relationship between organizational cynicism and counterproductive/deviant work behavior:

$H_2$ : Organizational cynicism has a significant impact on DWB.

**4. Breach of Psychological Contract.** Argyris (1960) studied the relationship between employee and employer and was the first to use the term "psychological contract". An important aspect of psychological contract which supports the study of organizational cynicism is the concept of breach of psychological contract. Morrison and Robinson (1997) believed that breach occurs when organizations make promises without any intention to fulfill them as circumstances prevent organizations to keep these promises or some times organization considers that it is fulfilling promises but employees feel otherwise. Dollard et al. (1939) presented the frustration aggression theory suggesting frustration is the antecedent of aggressive behavior. Individual aggressive behavior depends upon the penalty attached to the exhibition of aggressive actions which could either be sabotaging or psychological in nature. When this theory was applied within a workplace setting, a number of negative attitudes and counterproductive workplace behaviors were associated with frustration. Fox and Spector (1999) identified certain organizational factors such as training, resources and policies if not managed properly may result in frustration.

*Breach of Psychological Contract and Deviant Work Behavior.* Kickul (2001) studied the breach of psychological contract and deviant work behavior and found that the breach of psychological contract does influence the negative feelings of employees thus leading to negative actions; deviant work behavior towards their organization.

Given these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

$H_3$ : Breach of psychological contract has a significantly positive impact on deviant work behavior.

**Research Methodology.** This section contains the complete research design about the data collection and instrumentation, sampling procedure, research ques-

tionnaire, theoretical framework and schematic relations between variables, econometric model developed and will be used in conducting this specific research study.

**1. Theoretical Framework.** Based upon the literature discussed, organizational cynicism (Judge et al., 2006; Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Spector & Fox, 2002; Bashir, 2011), organizational injustice (Aquino et.al., 1999; Fox et al., 2001; Chan, 2001; Douglas and Martinko, 2001; Lee and Allen, 2002; Kelloway et al., 2007, 2008; Bies & Tripp, 2005; Robinson, 2008; Jones, 2008; Furham and Siegal, 2011), breach of psychological contract (Kickul, 2001) are supposed to have impact on the attitude of the doctors and nurses in public sector hospitals of Pakistan. The attitude of the same was studied in the dimension of deviant work behavior. A schematic representation of the relationship between independent and dependent variables is shown on Figure 1.

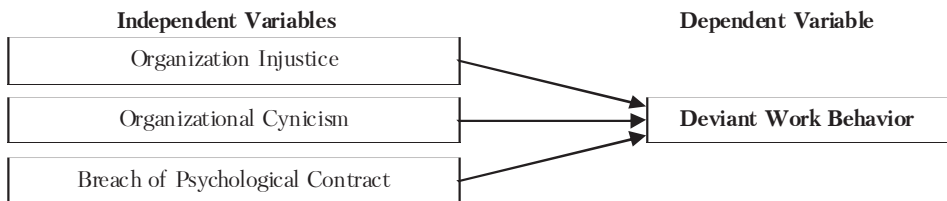


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

**2. Population.** All the doctors and nurses of public sector hospitals in 4 big cities of Pakistan (Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi) were the population for the current research.

**3. Sampling Procedure.** The primary data on organizational cynicism, organizational injustice breach of psychological contract & deviant work behavior were collected through mailed questionnaires. The instrument included 12-item organizational cynicism inventory (Dean et al., 1998), 15 items related to organizational injustice (Fitzgerald, 2002), 5 items related to breach of psychological contract (Robinson and Morrison, 2000), 8 items related to deviant work behavior (Kelloway, Loughlin, Barling & Nault, 2002) and 8 were demographic items. The reliability for the instrument, as determined by Cronbach's alpha, was 0.794. The data were obtained from 10 public sector hospitals in 4 big cities of Pakistan and the sample size of 300 respondents (doctors & nurses) was selected generating the 55% response from 165 doctors and nurses. The convenient sampling technique was used as to collect the data because of the usual slower response rate of the respondents in the country and further the judgmental sampling technique was also used to collect data particularly from the doctors and nurses who were involved in the protests and strikes in the hospitals of Pakistan.

**Data Analysis and Discussion.** The results of econometric model have been classified into descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis so as to identify the response pattern and impact of organizational cynicism, organizational injustice and breach of psychological contract upon deviant work behavior of nurses and doctors.

The respondents, on the average, agree that they have counterproductive behavior at work. The variation in thesis responses range from above neutral to strongly agree; it implies that doctors and nurses are having DWB. They are indifferent about

the existence of organizational injustice as the average response value is 3.01, close to neutral. However, several respondents agree that organizational injustice prevails in their work environment. The average response pertaining to BPC indicates that several respondents agree that organizations do not meet their oral promises which may lead to counterproductive behavior. They also have negative attitude to their organizations.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
DWB				
OI	3.01	.71	1.40	4.33
BPC	3.13	.62	1.60	5.00
OC	3.75	.26	3.17	4.67
D	1.29	.45	1.00	2.00

**Table 2. Correlation Analysis**

	OI	BPC	OC
OIA	1		
BPC	.675**	1	
OC	.211**	.153*	1
DWB	.417**	.148	.096

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the correlation matrix indicate the degree and significance of association between deviant work behavior and its determinants, namely, organizational injustice, breach of psychological contract (BPC) and organizational cynicism (OC). It is aimed at making preliminary investigation whether the relation exists between DWB and its determinants or not. The correlation coefficient .417 between deviant work behavior and organizational injustice indicates a significant positive relationship; it implies that increase in organizational injustice is accompanied by increase in DWB of nurses and doctors. The correlation coefficient 14.8 between deviant work behavior and organizational injustice indicates a positive relationship; it implies that increase in BPC is also accompanied by increase in DWB. Organizational cynicism has a positive association with deviant work behavior; it may indicate that negative perception of employees toward their organizations is accompanied with counterproductive behavior to some extent.

**Table 3. Regression Analysis of Deviant Work Behavior and its Determinants**

Multiple r	0.51			
Coefficient of Determination, R <sup>2</sup>	0.26			
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.24			
F-value	13.85			
Significance F	0.00			
Variables of Study	Coefficient	t-value	p-value	VIF
Constant term, α	4.06	10.67	.00	
Organizational Injustice (OI)	.27	6.03	.00	1.88
Breach of Psychological Contract (BPC)	.13	2.58	.011	1.84
Organizational Cynicism (OC)	.01	.16	.87	1.05
Dummy Variable(D)-Doctors vs. Nurses	0.17	3.31	0.00	1.09

Multiple correlation coefficients,  $r$  shows 51% association between independent variables (OI, BPC and OC) and deviant work behavior. 21% variation in DWB is explained by these 3 determinants. There are several other factors that affect the counterproductive behavior of employees. The model has reasonable predictive power as the F-value indicates the overall significant impact of OI, BPC, OC and dummy variable on DWB and model is a good fit. Organizational injustice and breach of psychological contract has a positive significant impact upon DWB; it indicates that the deviant work behavior increases with the increase in OI (Aquino et al., 1999; Fox et al., 2001; Lee and Allen, 2002; Kelloway et al., 2007, 2008; Douglas and Martinko, 2001; Robinson, 2008; Jones, 2008; Furham and Siegal, 2011) and BPC (Kickul, 2001), as a result, H1 and H3 are accepted. However, organizational cynicism does not lead to counterproductive behavior, as p-value is statistically insignificant which is contrary to the evidences found in literature. The dummy variable has been created to capture whether there is a significant difference between the deviant behavior of nurses and doctors. The p-value of dummy variable is statistically significant and its positive significant value indicates that doctors indulge more in counterproductive behavior than nurses do. Multicollinearity test was performed to investigate the multicollinearity problem and its value is lower than 10; it implies a negligible degree of multicollinearity (Gujrati, 2004).

**Conclusion.** The research aimed at identifying the common factors affecting the counterproductive behavior and its impact upon deviant work behaviour of nurses and doctors in the current scenario of strikes and protests in public hospitals of Pakistan. They are not satisfied with the level of organizational justice prevailing in the hospitals. Moreover, they do not trust the oral promises made by administration and are skeptical about the organizational environment and have negative perception of their work, goals achievement and work environment. Breach of psychological contract and organizational injustice have been found to have significant positive impact upon their counterproductive behavior. The doctors have been found comparatively more deviant than the nurses are as they have higher expectations in terms of pay and fringe benefits than nurses do. The concerned authority and policy makers can find the results helpful in addressing the issues of doctors and nurses and may come up with improved strategies to ensure organizational justice and improved working environment so as to control deviant work behavior.

**Limitations and Directions for Future Research.** Although this study tries to put forth a reasonably clear perception of DWB of the employees working in the health sector of Pakistan, yet certain limitations of the study may affect the generalizability of its results. The use of probability sampling technique and a larger sample size may be helpful in producing results with greater generalizability. The respondents can be contacted for interviews and discussions to have qualitative blend for recommending appropriate strategies to improve the work environment. The locus of control can be taken as a moderating variable and other factors may be considered as well to get more insights about deviant work behavior.

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Стаття надійшла до редакції 10.07.2012.