



DYNAMIC LINKAGES BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT BREACH AND EMPLOYEES' WORKPLACE BEHAVIORS IN POWER SECTOR OF PAKISTAN

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 01 August 2019
Received in revised form 31 October 2019
Accepted 20 November 2019
Available online 29 November 2019

Keywords:

Psychological contract breach; Employees' Workplace behaviour; Workplace spirituality, Human resource management (HRM); Power sector.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the link between psychological contract breach and employees' workplace behavior by testing the moderating role of workplace spirituality. Behavioral facets of the workplace include voice, neglect, counterproductive work behavior and OCB which were taken as dependent variables. This study adopts a survey research design. The data was mustered over a self-administered questionnaire from a sample of employees randomly selected from a population of power sector employees of Pakistan. The study has empirically established that psychological contract breach has a positive impact on employee negative workplace behaviors and it has a significant negative impact on positive workplace behaviors. Results reveal a negative significant effect on positive behaviors citizenship and voice. The role of workplace spirituality was studied as a moderator between breach and workplace behavior. In this perspective, workplace spirituality is an important and influential aspect that cannot be ignored in the human resource management context and particularly in the organizational psychology field.

Disciplinary: Management Sciences (HRM).

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1. INTRODUCTION

The psychological contract has been considered as an individual perception of shared obligations in exchange relationships. The psychological contract is the leading and most critical aspect of organizational psychology (Robinson & Morrison, 1995). Among the consequences of "psychological contract breach", the most common ones include; lack of ownership, increase in wastage, high cost, poor performance and low productivity (Chao et al., 2011). Looking at these outcomes as possible effects of different relationships between different variables, researchers have

been looking at them in various organizational settings to see as to what extent Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) affects employee behavior in their respective organizations. The psychological contract has been studied with various perspectives including both, the organization as well as employee perspectives. It is a composite construction that consists of many dimensions, one of which is a cognitive organizational obstruction that has been studied in relationship with neglect, voice, and turnover intention (Gibney, 2007).

Bolon, (1997), Robinson & Morrison (1995), Rousseau (1990) have investigated the adverse impact of psychological contract breach on employees' attitude, behavior and performance. Empirical studies have looked into the relationship of PCB with counter-productive work behavior of employees with both the organizational and supervisor perspective (Griep & Vantilborgh, 2018). From these and other similar studies, it can easily be decided that psychological contract is one of the most powerful constructs linked with employee's workplace behavior and performance. It is necessary to investigate and thoroughly understand PCB and its detrimental impact on employee workplace behavior. Psychological contract breach is linked with behavior that, in turn, is linked with employee performance as well as organizational performance and productivity. Organizations need to be aware of the causes and consequences of psychological contract breach and its corresponding effects on the human resource management system. If it is ignored, organizations are supposed to suffer in terms of effectiveness, productivity, profitability, and performance.

Spirituality is a universal human trait and experience that touches us all. It is a deep sense of aliveness and interconnectedness within our being. It is something that is bigger than we are and helps us in searching for meaning in our life. It intricately links an individual's internal life with the external world. Having said that, one cannot ignore its role in upsetting the connection between employee workplace behavior and psychological contract breach. Therefore, this research is intended to investigate PCB in relation to worker behavior with the moderation of workplace spirituality. Employee behavior, in the context of this research, refers to voice, neglect, counter-productive workplace behavior (CWB) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Past studies have investigated other related constructs of the psychological contracts with various dimensions of employee behavior. This research is supposed to investigate the relationship of PCB with neglect, voice, CWB, and OCB with the moderation of workplace spirituality, as an effort to address the existing research gap.

The breach or fulfillment of psychological agreement affects employees' overt and covert behavior (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Therefore, an organization where employees experience PCB is believed to suffer seriously in terms of performance and productivity. The organization has to sustain huge losses if its employees are in a state of a high level of psychological contract breach. It has been noted that PCB negatively affects the positive behavior facets and positively affects the negative workplace behaviors. It is a double-edged sword. Organizations, where employees experience a high level of PCB, suffer both in terms of reduced favorable behaviors and increased unfavorable behaviors. PCB is a schema that develops over time through interactions and experiences of employees at the workplace and it determines the strength, level, and direction of the relationship between employee and employer (Lodha & Pathak, 2017). Because of the reasons and

consequences of PCB and its impact on the organizational environment, worker relations and performance, the study and investigation of PCB are highly beneficial for organizational performance and management effectiveness.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research looks at the connection of PCB (psychological contract breach) and employee workplace behavior with the moderation of workplace spirituality. The behavior facets which put under the scope of this study are neglect behavior, voice behavior, counter-productive work behavior (CWB) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). The PCB is assumed to have a positive impact on neglect and counter-productive work behaviors, whereas, it has a negative impact on voice behavior and “organizational citizenship behavior”. Workplace spirituality has been investigated as a moderating variable in connection amid workplace behaviors and PCB employees. The variables of the study had eight hypothetical relationships, hence constituting eight hypotheses. Four hypotheses are regarding the impact of PCB on employee behavior facets and another four hypotheses are regarding the moderation of workplace spirituality. Investigating moderation of workplace spirituality between PCB and the workplace behaviors is the major contribution of this study towards the theory of psychological contract and the field of organizational psychology.

Researchers have empirically evidenced that employees contribute to the best of their abilities with high performance and try to play extra-role behavior when they perceive they are fairly treated. On the contrary, they limit their efforts to the minimum job requirements when they perceive that they are not adequately treated by the organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). It is evident that “an employee’s perception” of support from the organization and its agents results in employees’ extra-role behavior (Wayne et al., 1997). A psychological contract is a determinant of employees’ behavior; balanced psychological contact is reciprocated by employees with positive behavior and good performance. Employees demonstrate the expected behaviors and remain satisfied with their jobs. Researchers have found that psychological contract violation harms OCB, consequently an employee, sometimes, considers options to part ways with their employer either emotionally by disassociating themselves or by quitting the organization (Gibney et al., 2011).

When an “employee perceives that the organization” is not fulfilling the implicit terms of the psychological contract, they start thinking over their exchange relationship with the organization. Such feelings harm the exchange relationship. The research study revealed that, in a situation where employees feel psychological contract breach, they may quit, propose recommendations, remain loyal and/or start a neglecting behavior (Rusbult et al., 1988). (Krivokapic et al. (2009) have argued that avoiding PCB and upholding psychological contract through proper understanding, can enhance the workers’ motivation, morale, and commitment. Understanding of PCB provides remedial measures like developing communication channels to maintain clarity and minimize misunderstanding which helps to overcome the problems due to misperceptions (Brown, 2015). Numerous studies have addressed various dimensions of PCB and its related constructs. However,

Ahmad et al. (2018), Parzefall & Shapiro (2011), Sahin & Cankir (2018) have expressed their concern that the existing body of knowledge regarding PCB is not exhaustive in terms of covering all the aspects that affect organizations and we need to know a lot about this field of inquiry.

Keeping this wanting aspect, it has been noted that the moderating role of workplace spirituality between PCB and employee's workplace behavior has not been addressed so far. Therefore, there is a need for addressing this gap so that the concept could be understood with more wholesomeness and thereby make substantial support to the body of knowledge and industry in this field of study. Given the above discourse, eight hypotheses regarding the linkages between workplace behavior and PCB and the moderation of the workplace spirituality have been drawn. The relationship between PCB and four workplace behavior facets constitutes four hypotheses of the direct impact of PCB on the dependent variables. Another four hypotheses show moderation of workplace spirituality between PCB and the same workplace behavior facets. These hypotheses are:

- H1:** PCB has a significant negative impact on voice behavior.
- H1a:** Workplace "spirituality moderates the link" of PCB and voice.
- H2:** PCB has a significant negative impact on neglect behavior
- H2a:** Workplace "spirituality moderates the association" of PCB and neglect behavior.
- H3:** PCB has a significant positive impact on CWB
- H3a:** Workplace "spirituality moderates the link" of PCB and CWB.
- H4:** PCB has a significant negative impact on OCB
- H4a** Workplace spirituality moderates the connection between PCB and OCB.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study examined the relationship of PCB with employee workplace behavior with the moderation of workplace spirituality. The relationship of PCB has conceptually been linked with voice, neglect, counter-productive work behavior and organizational citizenship behavior with the moderation of workplace spirituality. Employees are in a relational-transactional contract with employers. The transactional contract refers to reciprocation with monetary and short term returns and relational contract refers to the long term relationship with the organization (Rousseau, 2000). This study has investigated that Psychological contract breach affects this relationship. The conceptual diagram was shown in Figure 1. The relationship amid PCB (independent variable) and workplace behavior (dependent variable) faceted as voice, neglect, organizational citizenship behavior and counterproductive work behavior has been moderated by workplace spirituality.



Figure 1: Psychological Contract Breach, Employees' Work Behaviors and Workplace Spirituality.

3. METHOD

3.1 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The population of the study is the junior and mid-level managers of the power distribution sector of Pakistan, serving in the power distribution companies of PEPCO. The total strength (population) of the mentioned category of employees is 3368 (MoE, 2018). The junior and mid-level managers serve as line managers of the organization. Therefore, this segment of the population was deemed most appropriate for the study of psychological contract breach. The reason being they are directly influenced by the policies and decisions passed by the top-level managers and they directly lead the employees responsible for execution (Lopez-Cotarelo, 2011). The research employed a simple random sampling technique because the population was known, although it was spread in the electricity companies all over Pakistan. The sample size was 350 worked out as per Krejcie and Morgan (1970) at a 95 percent confidence level.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

Over the self-reported questionnaire, data were mustered by visiting respondents personally, and through courier and email, in case the respondents were in far-flung areas, for 10 months during late 2018-2019. The questionnaire for PCB, consisting of nine items, was adopted from Robinson and Morrison (2000). Six items scale for the voice from Van Dyne and LePine (1998) has been employed. For the neglect construct, four items scale from Kidwell and Robie (2003) has been employed. For CWB, the ten items scale of Spector et al. (2010) has been employed. For measuring OCB, the 15 items scale developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990) as cited and used by Agerero, Cortese, and Ferretti (2008) has been employed. While for determining the construct of spirituality, nine items scale established by Petchsawanga and Duchon (2009) has been used in this research.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis was done through SPSS. In this regard, factor analysis was showed to determine the construct instrument validity. A correlation test was applied to define the association between PCB and employee workplace behaviors. Regression tests were done to decide the variance explained by the independent variable in each dependent variable. The regression model of was used to test the moderation of workplace spirituality. Referring to the analysis of moderation, the interaction effect of PCB and workplace spirituality was determined to find whether or not such effect is significant in predicting the employee workplace behavior. The Hayes (2013) process model-1 for SPSS serves the purpose of this study, the mentioned software plug-in for SPSS was used to analyze the data for the moderation of workplace spirituality.

4. RESULTS OF STUDY

Before testing of hypotheses, the data was examined for its linearity, homoscedasticity, normality, multi-collinearity, reliability, and validity. The effects revealed that all of the data were free from any issues associated with normality, reliability, and validity, etc. The results for testing hypotheses are given.

The outputs Hypothesis H1 are provided in Table 1, consisting of the model summary statistics of the regression test. The output shows the impact of psychological contract breach on voice. R statistics (0.34) is the correlation coefficient which exhibits that there is a 34 % correlation between PCB and voice. The R square value (0.12) means that PCB explains 12% variance in the voice. The relationship between PCB and voice is significant as the p-value (<0.001) is below 0.05. Thus, psychological contract breach (PCB) is a significant predictor of voice behavior. As a conclusion, empirical data support the hypothesis.

Table 1: Model Summary Statistics: H1 (PCB and Voice).

R	R Sq.	SME	F	Df1	Df2	P
0.34	0.12	0.33	12.02	3	276	<0.001

The second hypothesis H1a results Table 2 show the interaction effect, that is, Int_1. The p-value (0.015) is significant. In addition to that, there is no zero in-between the lower level conditional interaction (LLCI) and upper-level conditional interaction (ULCI), which in the instant case varies between -.2589 and -.0277 having no zero in between. These results show that the conditional interaction effect of workplace spirituality as a moderating variable between the PCB and voice behavior is significant.

Table 2: Statistics for Moderation (H1a)

Model	Coeff	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	0.62	0.43	1.43	0.151	-0.22	1.46
PCB	0.26	0.12	2.02	0.043	0.01	0.51
WS	0.77	0.19	4.03	0.000	0.39	1.14
Int_1	-0.14	0.05	-2.43	0.015	-0.2589	-0.0277

The third hypothesis H2 results Table 3 consist of the regression test model summary statistics for PCB and voice. It determines the impact of psychological contract breach on neglect behavior. The R statistics (0.37) is the correlation coefficient. The given value of R means that there is a 37 % correlation between PCB and neglect. The R square value (0.14) means that PCB explains 14% variance in neglect. The relationship between PCB and neglect as criterion and outcome variables is significant as the p-value (0.000) is significant. Therefore, psychological contract breach is a significant predictor of voice behavior.

Table 3: Model Summary Statistics: H2 (PCB & NB)

R	R Sq.	SME	F	Df1	Df2	p
0.37	0.14	0.54	14.46	3	276	0.000

The fourth hypothesis H2a results Table 4 carry the empirical findings for the moderation of the workplace spirituality between the independent variable PCB and dependent variable neglect behavior. Moderating impact is shown by the interaction effect that is, Int_1. The significant p-value (0.015) and that there is no zero between the lower level conditional interaction (LLCI) and upper-level conditional interaction (ULCI) which varies between -0.29 and 0.00 having no zero in

between. These statistics show that the conditional interaction effect of workplace spirituality as a moderating variable between the PCB and neglect behavior is significant.

Table 4: Statistics for Moderation (H2a)

	Coeff	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.94	0.55	3.52	0.151	0.86	3.027
PCB	0.57	0.16	3.48	0.043	0.25	0.89
WS	0.42	0.24	1.74	0.000	-0.05	0.90
Int_1	-0.14	0.07	-1.90	0.015	-0.29	0.00

The fifth hypothesis H3 results Table 5 carry the empirical findings of the regression model summary statistics which show the impact of psychological contract breach as an independent variable on the dependent variable counter-productive work behavior (CWB). The R statistics (0.47) is the correlation coefficient which shows there is a 47 % correlation between PCB and counter-productive work behavior. The R square value (0.21) means that PCB explains a 21% variance in CWB. The relationship between PCB and CWB as criterion and outcome variables is significant as the p-value (<0.001) is below 0.05. Therefore, psychological contract breach is a significant predictor of counter-productive work behavior. The empirical data again support the hypothesis of the study.

Table 5: Model Summary Statistics: H3 (PCB & CWB)

R	R Sq	SME	F	Df1	Df2	P
0.47	0.21	0.58	25.49	3	276	<0.001

The sixth hypothesis H3a examined that workplace spirituality moderates the connection amid PCB and counter-productive work behavior. Table 6 shows the regression statistics for the moderation of the workplace spirituality between PCB and counter-productive work behavior. Moderating impact is shown by the interaction effect that is, Int_1. The significant p-value (0.015) and that there is no zero between the lower level conditional interaction (LLCI) and upper-level conditional interaction (ULCI), which in the instant case varies between -0.36 and 0.00 having no zero in-between, is the evidence of significance.

Table 6: Statistics for Moderation (H3a)

	Coeff	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.50	0.57	2.64	0.008	0.38	3.63
PCB	0.79	0.17	4.67	0.000	0.46	1.13
WS	0.48	0.25	1.91	0.056	-0.01	0.98
Int_1	-0.21	0.07	-2.74	0.006	-0.36	0.00

The seventh hypothesis H4 states that psychological contract breach has a significant negative effect on OCB. Table 7 is the regression model summary statistics which shows the impact of psychological contract breach on organizational citizenship behavior. The R statistic (0.45) is the correlation coefficient which means there is a 45 % correlation between PCB and OCB. The R square value (0.21) means that PCB explains a 21% variance in organizational citizenship behavior. The relationship between PCB and OCB as criterion and outcome variables is significant as the p-value (<0.001) is below 0.05. Therefore, psychological contract breach is a significant predictor of organizational citizenship behavior. The empirical data support this hypothesis as well.

Table 7 Model Summary Statistics: H4(PCB and OCB)

R	R Sq.	SME	F	Df1	Df2	P
0.45	0.21	0.63	22.82	3	276	<0.001

The eighth hypothesis H4a results Table 8 shows regression test statistics for the moderation of the workplace spirituality between the independent variable PCB and dependent variable organizational citizenship behavior. The moderation impact in the table is shown by the interaction effect that is, Int_1. The significant p-value (0.007) and there is no zero between the lower level conditional interaction (LLCI) and upper-level conditional interaction (ULCI) which in the instant case varies between -0.37 and -0.05 having no zero in between. These statistics show that the conditional interaction effect of workplace spirituality as a moderating variable between the PCB and organizational citizenship behavior is significant.

Table 8: Statistics for Moderation (H4a)

	Coeff	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.60	0.59	2.71	0.007	0.43	2.76
PCB	0.78	0.17	4.47	0.000	0.44	1.13
WS	0.47	0.26	1.81	0.071	-0.04	0.98
Int_1	-0.21	0.08	-2.68	0.007	-0.37	-0.05

5. DISCUSSION

By thorough analysis of the empirical effects of the present study, it is evident that these results are in line with earlier studies conducted in various cultures of the world. For instance, the studies conducted in the USA (Thomas et al., 2014) and Chinese international corporations in the western countries (Guo, 2017) have yielded similar findings, which are consistent with the finding of this study. Similarly, a study conducted in Turkish organizations (Karatepe & Kaya, 2020) and another such study conducted the South African industry (Penfold & Ronnie, 2015) also found that PCB has a significant relationship with voice behavior. However, these finding differs with studies conducted in Chinese culture, which found that PCB has no significant relationship with voice behavior (Shan, 2012; Shi-bin & Yong, 2014). As a whole, the empirical outcomes of the study support the hypothesis. It is, thus, concluded that psychological breach contract has a significant undesirable impact on constructive voice behavior.

The findings are also consistent with studies led in western countries and studies led in the Asian culture (Ahmed et al., 2016), another study conducted in Chinese culture (Shen et al., 2019). Researchers found in larger studies consisting of 41 samples from various cultural origins like American, French, Italian, South East Asian, Spanish and English that PCB is significantly positively related to workplace neglect behavior (Cantisano et al., 2008). However, these results are inconsistent with another study conducted in China by researchers (Shan, 2012; Shi-bin & Yong, 2014). Similarly, researchers (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997) believe that employees exhibit such behaviors as retaliation when they experience and come across unfair treatment in their workplace from the employer directly or indirectly. A psychological contract breach is a construct that triggers negative feelings among its beholders. Since PCB and CWB are both negative and detrimental constructs, the two variables were, therefore, posited to have a positive relationship.

PCB was presumed to have a positive impact on CWB. In other words, H3 assumed that the greater the level of PCB the greater will be the CWB level in an organization and vice versa. Similarly, researchers (Kaul & Kaul, 2017) in their study conducted in India, that is, south Asian

culture found that PCB has a significant impact on CWB. Researchers (Onyishi & Onunkwo, 2014) in a study conducted in Nigerian organizations have found empirical evidence regarding the relationship between PCB and CWB which too, is in line with the results of this study. In addition to the aforementioned studies researchers (Galic et al., 2016) in a study conducted in Croatia have also found that PCB has a significant positive relationship with CWB. Considering the aforesaid cited studies led in various cultures and the empirical findings of this study, it is decided that PCB has a significant positive effect on CWB.

Finally, this study empirical results show that the connection amid the mentioned two variables is highly significant and the results of are in line with the study conducted on manufacturing plants' employees in Europe by Abela & Debono (2019) and research conducted on employees of various cultural origins like American, French, Italian, South East Asiatic, Spanish and English found that PCB is significantly negatively related with OCB (Cantisano, et al., 2008). Similarly, a study conducted on Croatian employees has also yielded similar empirical results (Galic, et al., 2016).

6. CONCLUSION

The study and investigation of psychological contracts are extremely important. PCB has serious detrimental repercussions for the organization where employees recognize that their contract has been ruptured. The consequences of psychological contract breach are highly damaging to organizational performance. Employee's workplace behavior is significantly influenced by the feeling of a breach. The study determines that psychological contract breach positively impacts the negative workplace behaviors like neglect and counterproductive work behavior. Whereas, this construct negatively impacts the workplace behaviors of employees. As such, the psychological contract was found to has a significant negative effect on OCB and voice behaviors. This research has theoretically contributed to the field of organizational behavior by introducing the moderation role of workplace spirituality between PCB and workplace behavior as a new dimension of psychological contract theory. Workplace spirituality has been shown to significantly moderate the link amid PCB and employee workplace behaviors. The negative impact of PCB on OCB and voice turns less significant in the magnitude of negativity. Whereas the positive impact of PCB on neglect and counterproductive also turns less significant and the change is attributed to workplace spirituality which moderates this connection between workplace behavior and PCB.

7. AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIAL

Data can be made available by contacting the corresponding authors

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors appreciate the financial supports from Electric Power Company. Helps from Muhammad Anwar Khan is fully acknowledged.

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