

## **The Mediating Role of Reflective Moral Attentiveness between Organizational Identification, Perceived Insider Status and Unethical Pro-Organizational Behaviors**

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### **Abstract**

Unethical pro-organizational behaviors (UPB) are generally defined as behaviors that are unethical but at the same time intended to help the organizations warrant renewed attention to address its long-term implications. Drawing from social exchange theory (SET), the goals of this research are to investigate effects of perceived insider status (PIS) and organizational identification (OID) on UPB through reflective moral attentiveness (RMA). Data was collected from 300 managerial employees from services sector of Punjab, Pakistan and subjected to hierarchical regression analysis and structural equation modeling with the help of SPSS 23. The results confirm significant positive effects of perceived insider status and organizational identification on UPB and mediation effect of reflective moral attentiveness. The study is first to incorporate RMA as mediator in associations of PIS and OID with UPB. The managers should make their employees conscious of short-term benefits and long-term harmful consequences of UPB. They should expand the intellectual abilities of their employees enabling them to think before performing the UPB. Additionally the organizations can place morally attentive employees at key positions to promote the culture of morality. The organizational executives can be role models for observing the moral principles and should recruit the morally attentive managers / employees and may direct frequent analytical and integrity programs to endure an environment of morality. Turning the managers and employees sensitive to moral matters, the organizations can eliminate UPB.

**Keywords:** perceived insider status, organizational identification, unethical pro-organizational behaviors, reflective moral attentiveness, social exchange theory, social cognitive theory.

## 1. Introduction

Unethical pro-organization behaviors (UPB) at work have captured attention in recent times due to its negative outcomes for both organizations and employees (Graham et al., 2020). UPB is conceptualized as deliberate and unethical approach workers adapt to provide the benefits to the organization (Umphress et al., 2010). Employees are a valuable asset in creating and enhancing organizational dignity and reputation and employers must keep them engaged in moral values with their work (Al Halbusi et al., 2021). Organizations must provide employees a supportive work environment to ensure that various employee characteristics do not translate into UPB thus enabling the organization operate efficiently and effectively upholding moral standards (Halbusi et al., 2021). In this way, the employees will improve their ethical practices and UPB go on declining (Khan et al., 2021). There are many examples of bribery and corruption conviction placed against Samsung vice chairman and apple deliberate decelerate of I-phones published on front pages of newspapers (Bryant, 2020). These examples and others such as giving incorrect information to customers, false feeding in the accounting records, selling damaged product to the customers all have worldwide implications and fallout (Inam et al., 2021). All these practices are unacceptable as they are considered unethical and have long term consequences requiring the organizations to arrest these escalating trends (Zeng et al., 2021).

This study is motivated to investigate the impact of PIS and OID on UPB through RMA. The main theories underpinning these constructs are social exchange and cognitive theories (Bandura, 2014; Blau, 1964).

Drawing upon social exchange theory the individuals feel compelled to reciprocate to the organization thus involving in UPB (Tang et al., 2021). Social exchange philosophy (Blau 1964) focuses on the association nurtured by the interchange of resources between two parties. Accordingly, if one party delivers a benefit, the other party is encouraged to reciprocate by giving a benefit in return (Nguyen et al., 2021). Though reciprocating benefits is intentional, those who fail to reciprocate may experience drawbacks such as distrust, reduced reputation, rejection of future benefits, and other sanctions (Will Bryant & Merritt, 2021). In contrast, those who reciprocate involve in a self-perpetuating interchange of paybacks including shared trust, support, and reverence (Chen et al., 2021). This theme pervades a variety of exchange relationship phenomena within work contexts (Gigol, 2021). Within social exchange framework OID can also translate into UPB (Naseer et al., 2020). Organizational identity is defined as individuals' oneness or belongingness with the organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Furthermore Blau's (1964) SET allows us to explain the effect of PIS on UPB. The insiders believe in reciprocating the organization in conjunction with Blau's (1964) SET. The insider outsider perceptions of employees exhibit distinguishing behaviors within organization (Stamper & Masterson, 2002). Similarly social cognitive philosophy (Bandura, 2014) assumes that behavioral outcomes are determined by individuals, stimuli, and the interaction of the two. This theory enables us to better understand moral attentiveness which consists of two dimensions (Reynolds, 2008). Perceptual moral attentiveness (PMA) states that the information is automatically processed as it is encountered whereas RMA points to morality paid to reflect

on moral issues (Halbusi et al., 2021). This suggests that humans differ in their responses to morality and moral issues and they engage in UPB when immoral are taken as morals (Khan et al., 2021; Miao et al., 2020). These two theories allow us to integrate OID, PIS, RMA and UPB in a study framework.

Despite growing body of research on UPB, there is limited research linking PIS and OID with unethical pro-organizational behaviors. This research taps the opportunity to examine the effects of these constructs on UPB through reflective moral attentiveness.

This study provides fresh intuitions into the linkages between PIS and OID with UPB through RMA. The employees need to be sensitized to moral aspects of their actions (Khan et al., 2021). Without any moral knowledge provided by the organization employees will emphasize the internal and external impact in defining the suitability of their actions (Halbusi et al., 2021). The internal immediate instantaneous myopic benefit will be noticeably prominent whereas external broader impact on stakeholders is less likely to be paid heed to (Mishra et al., 2021).

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Unethical Pro-Organizational Behaviors*

The workplace behaviors are divided into ethical and unethical behaviors (Shah et al., 2020). The ethical behaviors are desired behaviors such as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) that are discrete discretionary behaviors, not directly or clearly documented by the official reward system, and that in totality stimulates the functioning of the organization effectively (Shah et al., 2020). The unethical behaviors are distinguished into (UPB) performed to support the organization but are harmful in the long run and unethical harmful behaviors that are destructive intended to damage the organization such as counterproductive work behaviors (CWB), careerism, and narcissism (Shah et al., 2020). Different unethical organizational behaviors include constructive deviance, organizational misbehavior necessary evils and pro-social rule-breaking behavior (Shah et al., 2020). Unethical behaviors are cause of concern, prevalent in the wide range of organizations and have negative effects which include loss of valuable customers, irreparable damage in reputation, financial losses, and decline in organizational performance (Tan et al., 2021). The organizations are bound to ensure that employees are following ethical practices in order to reap continued support from valuable customers (Tang & Li, 2021). The covid-19 pandemic has drastically affected the global economy (He & Harris, 2020). Supervisors and peers encouraged unethical pro-organizational behaviors to ensure dwindling business running. Unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB) points to conducts intended to promote the effective functioning of the organization or its members but violate core societal values, mores, laws, or standards of proper conduct (Gigol, 2021). This characterization focuses on two aspects of UPB. Firstly, UPB is immoral in that it includes doing an act that is considered contradicting broadly thought social standards, rules, or ethics (Tang et al., 2021). Secondly, UPB is deliberate so far as workers involve in the UPB with the purpose of helping the organization, participants of the organization, or their leaders (Liu et al., 2021). It is thus dissimilar from other self-interested immoral behaviors that are committed with the intent of helping the wrongdoer (Miao et al., 2020). Instances of UPB might be lying to customers, disposing of possibly damaging organizational

documents, and covering-up or influencing information from the community to safeguard the organization's best interests (Shaw, 2021)

### *2.2 Organizational Identification*

Organizational identification is defined as the perceived oneness with organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). The organizationally identified individuals exhibit belongingness with the organization (Graham et al., 2020). They consider organizational success as their own and organizational failure as their personal failure (Bryant, 2020). They would feel embarrassed when someone criticizes their organization (Niederhauser, 2019). When others praise their organization, they would take it as personal compliments (Kong, 2016). This is in accordance with SET (Blau, 1964) that explains that people tend to maintain mutual relationships with their organizations. They are motivated to reciprocate to the organizations in order to build up trust and approval with the organization (Lee et al., 2019). It is likelihood that employees in this process of reciprocation surpass moral standards and ultimately engage in unethical pro-organizational behaviors (Wang et al., 2021). They forget that exceeding the moral principles can cost the organization in the long term (Bednar et al., 2020). For example highly identified individuals might tell a lie to the customer, over exaggerate the products or might attempt to sell the damaged product to the customers (Naseer et al., 2020). All this is unacceptable and can result in customer and financial loss in the future (Naseer et al., 2020). OID has the potential to lead to UPB as the employees believe in reciprocations (Niederhauser, 2019). They are interested to uphold the mutual relationships with the organizations considering the moral standards worth violating. They would minimize cognitively the ethical assessments and would not go through self-condemnation on this disregard of ethics. The individuals would engage in UPB maintaining their perceptions of oneness with the organizations. They would not vacillate to pass to give wrong information about the products just to win the customers for the benefits of organizations (Yang et al., 2021). The employees would not realize the repercussions of these moral violations (Yao et al., 2021). The organizations can subsequently lose the valuable customers and incur financial losses. The organizations might be forced to protracted litigations and damage to repute (Qiusi et al., 2021). It seems likely that higher is the organizational identification, greater the prospect of engaging in UPB. Thus we propose

- **H<sub>1</sub>:** Positive relationship exists between organizational identification and unethical pro-organizational behavior

### *2.3 Perceived Insider Status*

Perceived insider status refers to the employee perceptions of considering themselves integral part of the organization (Stamper & Masterson, 2002). They don't feel left out as opposed to insiders (Stamper & Masterson, 2002). The employees with outsider perceptions are not motivated to contribute to the organizations (Jiang & Zhang, 2020a). The organizations always focus on transferring the outsider perceptions into insider perceptions through training and socialization efforts (Lee et al., 2020). The employees with developed insider perceptions are driven to put efforts to contribute towards the growth of the organizations (Yin et al., 2021). This is in agreement with SET which is

founded on give and take principles (Blau, 1964). The employees feel obliged to pay back to the organization in order to build up trusting and complimentary relationships with the organization. In these reciprocal efforts, it is more probable that employees overlook moral standards and engage UPB which on one hand are pro-social in nature but undesirable on the other hand due to their unethical nature (Zhan & Liu, 2021). Given this and other investigations, it seems probable that when an employee is under stress to preserve or develop organizational associations and is presented a prospect to engage in UPB that would fulfill that demand, the person's moral assessment of the conduct may become skewed toward being more forbearing (Wang et al., 2021). By creating rational opinions within pointed at qualifying the moral abuse as essential or significant, persons can decrease the sanctions retained upon them that are characteristically practiced leading up to or following unethical behavior engagement (Yan et al., 2021). As the moral repercussion of the conduct is therefore reduced, UPB becomes a more appealing choice as an exchange resource for the employee to offer to fulfill perceived social exchange stresses (Toirova & Baek, 2021). For example the employees may conceal the true information about products from the customers or may check refund mistakenly charged with aim of providing benefits to the organizations (Bavandpour et al., 2021). All these tactics against norms and ethics certainly result in unfavorable consequences in the long run. The PIS is translated into UPB in consistent with exchange principles (Blau, 1964). The employees are motivated to uphold the relationships with their working organization. They would engage in UPB in disregard of ethics through rational reasoning. They perceive that act is essential, desired by the organization self-affirming just to protect their self-image. By engaging in UPB, the individuals have strengthened the trusting relationships with the organization otherwise would have faced disapproval. They would minimize the moral repercussions of their choice of engaging in UPB without having the discomfort of self-denunciation. This cognitive exercise operates in neutralizing of self-satisfying misrepresentations leading to UPB. Prior studies have investigated the role of PIS in context of UPB (Jiang & Zhang, 2020; Lee et al., 2020; Yin et al., 2021). This study is motivated to examine the effect of PIS on UPB in accordance with social exchange principle. The greater the insider perceptions, the higher are the prospects of employees' engaging in UPB. Therefore we propose

- **H<sub>2</sub>:** Positive relationship exists between perceived insider status and unethical pro-organizational behavior

#### *2.4 Moral Attentiveness*

Moral attentiveness encompasses two dimensions (Miao et al., 2020). RMA denotes the amount to which moral problems are deliberated and thought upon in routine selection of choices whereas PMA states the tendency to reminiscence moral contents in the surrounding (Khan et al., 2021). PMA can hence be described as an involuntary response, while RMA is premeditated (Halbusi et al., 2021). Though workers with extraordinary points of PMA are highly conscious of the moral content of their conduct, investigators emphasize that this may not essentially transform into moral conducts that contain actions (Dong et al., 2021). Certainly, previous effort recommends that RMA has dominant effects on moral decisions and moral thoughts than PMA (Wurthmann, 2013). For instance, Wurthmann (2013) established that though business ethics education improved both the

reflective and PMA of scholars, it was reflective rather than PMA that mediated the effects of business ethics learning on the amount to which persons observed that morals and societal responsibly are significant. In addition, Reynolds (2008) established that while RMA is connected with workers' moral conduct, PMA is not. Thus, in the existing investigation we stress on RMA rather than PMA as it is the action-initiated moral attentiveness constituent that can display actual effect on UPB.

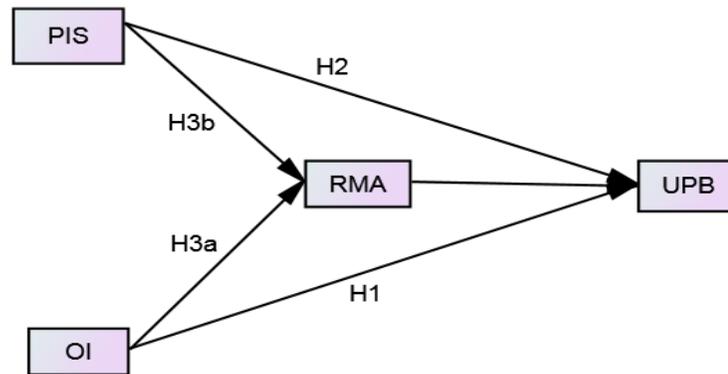
### *2.5 The Mediating Role of Reflective Moral Attentiveness*

The mediation of RMA in associations of OID and PIS with UPB is underpinned by social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2014). The agented standpoint of SCT describes, to be an agent individuals influencing their self-development, adaptation and changes. In this viewpoint the individuals are self-regulated, exhibit self-reflections, proactivity and self-organizations. Moreover they contribute in life and can influence life circumstances (Bandura, 2014). The theory talks about intended efforts and future focused goals. The individuals anticipate what can be the consequences of their actions. They possess forethoughtfulness in their action plans and strategies. They exhibit cognitive presence in the world and can visualize the future. They display motivated behavior to realize their goals (Bandura, 2014). The employees with greater OID and PIS may counterbalance the moral consequences of a conduct by self-confirming that the behavior is indispensable, looked-for by the business, or worth violating through rational reasoning (e.g., "this is what the organization would want me to do") leading to UPB. The employee's self- perception is so sheltered, and the behavior can be performed without suffering self-denunciation. Thus, we draw upon these cognitive processes that have been revealed to produce other practices of unethical behavior to study whether they may also play a role in the decision-making processes surrounding UPB.

Higher OID and PIS result into UPB due to cognitive minimization. Therefore in order to prevent UPB employees need to be cognitively developed. In other words organizations must enhance the moral attentiveness of their employees enabling them to execute their conduct in accordance with moral standards. Therefore we postulate the hypotheses as under

- **H<sub>3a</sub>**: Reflective moral attentiveness mediates the relationship between organizational identity and unethical pro-organizational behavior
- **H<sub>3b</sub>**: Reflective moral attentiveness mediates the relationship between perceived insider status and unethical pro-organizational behavior

The figure 1 below indicates the hypothesized interrelationships among the study variables.



**Figure1: Theoretical Framework**

### 3. Methodology

As elucidated the present study is explanatory and quantitative in nature as the primary goal of this study is to investigate the effects of OID, PIS on UPB through RMA in the services sector of Punjab where no research of this sort has yet been undertaken. The targeted population is the working employees such as sales managers, marketing managers, brand managers, import managers, supply chain managers and business development analysts etc. of pharmaceutical firms, banking, education, hospitality, education, construction, and health sectors of Punjab by utilizing convenience sampling. This research has a time lag structure because Podsakoff et al. (2003) proposed that the variables information would be gathered in a distinct time period to lessen common method biases. In this investigation, primary data was collected by utilizing the self-administered questionnaires on study variables from the services sector managerial employees at two different times (T1, T2) period with a temporal gap of one month. At T1, data on demographics variables gender, age, unethical pro-organizational behavior, RMA was collected. The data on OID and PIS was collected at time T2 after one month. The response rate was not so encouraging due to COVID-19 created alarming situations. The movements were restricted and people hesitated to see others. Above 500 questionnaires were administered but the data was collected from 330 respondents. The response rate was 66%. Sorting incomplete forms, 300 data forms were used for data analysis. The hierarchical regression and SEM techniques were used to analyze the data set. All assumptions are satisfactorily met ensuring robust regression analysis. Multicollinearity could threaten the robustness of analysis. The variables in the study are reasonably correlated at least .3 but not as high as .9 (Table 2). Regression analysis does not like high correlation. The tolerance and VIF values in the table suggest no problem of multicollinearity (Table 6). Outliers could also damage the robustness of regression analysis. This assumption is quite adequately met in this analysis. Outliers are those cases lying above 3.3 or below -3.3 standardized residual values. If one or few cases lie outside, that would not be a problem at all with this large sample size of 300. Linearity, normality, homoscedasticity assumptions

may also be tested from scatterplots produced in performing regression analysis. The P-P plot would show the residuals diagonally distributed from bottom to uppermost rightwards. The residuals displaying rectangular distribution along zero line without forming any systematic pattern would indicate no deviation from normality (Figures 2&3). Additionally outliers can be checked from mehalanobis distances as noticed in Residuals Statistics table generated in regression analysis. If the maximum value of mehalanobis distance is greater than critical value, then it is considered outlier. Does this outlier is having any harmful effect on the analysis, we see the cook's value in Residuals Statistics table, if this value is less than 1, then this is of no concern. Depending on the size of the data set, it is quite common for little outliers to emerge, therefore in this case we will not worry too much about this one case, which is only very slightly outside the critical value. The details of measuring instruments are as follows.

### *3.1 Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior (UPB)*

UPB was evaluated with a six-itemed measure established by Umphress, Elizabeth E., Bingham, (2010). Items evaluated respondents' agreement of their willingness to perform the UPB on a 5-point scale extending from 1 (strongly disagree) towards 5 (strongly agree). A sample item is if it would support my firm, I would distort the fact to make my firm look decent. According to Umphress, Elizabeth E., Bingham, (2010) the UPB scale has an excellent inner consistency with alpha digit stated of 0.89. In the present study, this factor is 0.88.

### *3.2 Organizational Identification (OID)*

OID was assessed by a six-item scale validated by Mael & Ashforth, (1992) on a 5-pointed gauge extending from 1 (strongly disagree) towards 5 (strongly agree). Mael (1992) states a coefficient alpha of 0.81 in a sample of working business and psychology scholars, and Ashforth (1992) states a figure of 0.83. Example items include; The organization's achievements are my achievements, and I am very concerned in what others think about my firm. As said by Mael & Ashforth, (1992), the OID scale has excellent internal consistency, with alpha figure described of 0.83. In the existing study, this value is 0.89.

### *3.3 Perceived Insider Status (PIS)*

PIS was weighed by a six item scale established by (Stamper & Masterson, 2002) on a 5-pointed measure extending from 1 (strongly disagree) toward 5 (strongly agree). Items include: I sense very much a part of my work organization and I sense I am an insider 'in my work organization. According to Stamper & Masterson, (2002), the PIS measure exhibits superb inner consistency, with an alpha factor stated of 0.88. In the present investigation, this number is 0.92.

### *3.4 Reflective Moral Attentiveness (RMA)*

RMA was assessed by five item measure advanced by (Reynolds, 2008) on a 5-pointed measure extending from 1 (strongly disagree) towards 5 (strongly agree). Example items are I frequently ponder about the ethical repercussions of my choices. As said by Reynolds, (2008) the RMA measure has an exceptional internal consistency, the alpha for RMA was 0.85. In the existing study, the alpha factor is 0.93.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The mean and standard deviations of UPB, OID and PIS and RMA are 3.35(.916), 3.24(.984), 3.28(1.046), 3.28(1.147).

### 4.2 Demographic Analysis

There are 111 males and 27 females in sales profession, 32 male and 7 female doctors, 7 male engineers, 25 male teachers and 9 female teachers, 14 male and 2 female managers in hotel industry, 11 male and 4 female lawyers, 23 male and 4 female bank managers, 17 male and 7 female managers from insurance firms giving rise to 300 respondents.

The table 1 sex \* age below shows there are 75 males and 16 females below age group 41, 111 males and 30 females between 42-48 age group and 54 males and 14 females above age group 49 in the sample, giving a sum of 300 respondents. This study finds no significant gender and age differences in performing the UPB.

**Table 1: Gender and Age**

		age			Total
		<= 41	42 - 48	49+	
Gender	1 Male	75	111	54	240
	2 Female	16	30	14	60
Total		91	141	68	300

### 4.3 Reliability

The following table 2 correlation describes the direction and strength of relationships among the study variables. The alpha coefficients shown in parentheses are in agreement with the previous studies. OID and PIS exhibit strong positive relationships with UPB whereas RMA shows strong negative relationship with UPB. The table shows that both OID and PIS are negatively correlated with UPB.

**Table 2: Correlation**

	11	22	33	44
UPB	(0.88)			
RMA	-.522**	(0.93)		
PIS	.598**	-.517**	(0.92)	
OID	.572**	-.346**	.383**	(0.89)

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

4.4 Validity

To ascertain the validity of the measures, we administered confirmatory factor analyses (Table 3 Confirmatory factor analyses of the scales). Confirmatory factor analysis maintained the original one-factor structure for UPB ( $\chi^2 = 815.555$ ,  $df = 15$ ), original one-factor configuration for OID ( $\chi^2 = 913.429$ ,  $df = 15$ ), original one-factor configuration for PIS ( $\chi^2 = 1273.000$ ,  $df = 15$ ), original two-factor construction for MA ( $\chi^2 = 2429.024$ ,  $df = 66$ ). As regards the discriminant validity, AVE (Average Variance Extracted) and CR (Composite Reliability) values were computed. AVE values are exceeding 0.50, and CR values are exceeding 0.7 demonstrating discriminant validity, and entire values of measures are exceeding these thresholds. Therefore, the data is appropriately well fit and we performed regression analysis.

**Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analyses of the Scales**

Scales	Factors	CFA Results							
		Discriminant Validity							
		$\chi^2$	p	TLI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA	AVE	CR
UPB	11	(15) =815.555	< 0.001	.980	.988	.034	.059	0.62	0.88
OI	11	(15) =913.429	< 0.001	.968	.981	.040	.080	0.66	0.89
PIS	11	(15) =1273.000	< 0.001	.984	.990	.030	.068	0.73	0.92
MA	22	(66) =2429.024	< 0.001	.949	.959	.056	.079	0.70	0.91

n = 300. UPB = Unethical Pro-organizational Behaviors; OID = Organizational Identification; MA= moral attentiveness; PIS= Perceived Insider Status;

4.5 Regression Analysis

As a first step in regression analysis we have tested the assumptions of multicollinearity. In this regard the tolerance figure for each explanatory variable is above .10; hence, we have met the multicollinearity assumption. This is also reinforced by the VIF values, which are well under the cut-off of 10. In the Figure 2 Normal P-P Plot we have observed all points shown up in a very reasonable sound straight oblique line from bottommost left to upper right. This advocates no major deviances from normality.

The table 4 model summary below is about assessing the model. Looking at the R Square value in the first Model summary box after the explanatory variables in block 1(OID, PIS) have been added, the whole model explains 49.50 % of the variance ( $0.495 \times 100$ ). After block 2 variable (RMA) has also been entered, the model as a whole explains 52.80 % ( $0.528 \times 100$ ) of variance. It is essential to note that this second R square figure comprises entire variables from both blocks, not just those incorporated in the second step.

In the output presented below Table Model summary, on the line with the mark Model 2, that the R square change digit is 0.033. This suggests that RMA explains an extra 3.3 per cent ( $0.033 \times 100$ ) of the variance in UPB, even when the effects of OID, PIS are statistically controlled for. This is considered statistically significant input, as designated by the Sig. F change figure for this line (.000). Precisely OID, PIS and RMA explain statistically significant variance in UPB.

**Table 4: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1 (OI and PIS)	.704	.495	.495	145.634	.000
2 (OI ,PIS and RMA)	.727	.528	.033	20.910	.000

The ANOVA table 5 below shows that the model as a total (which comprises both blocks of variables) is significant ( $F(3, 296) = 110.57, p < .001$ ).

**Table 5: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.
1(OI and PIS)	Regression	124.14	2	145.63	.000
	Residual	126.59	297		
	Total	250.73	299		
2(OI ,PIS and RMA)	Regression	132.49	3	110.57	.000
	Residual	118.23	296		
	Total	250.73	299		

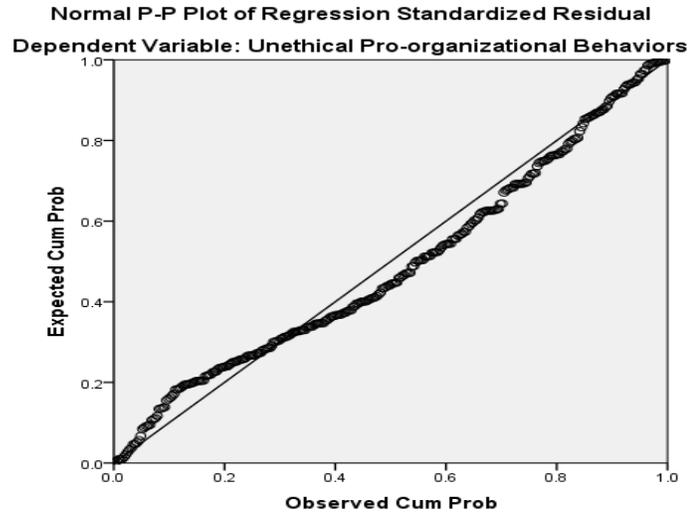
Now the step is to evaluate each of the explanatory variables. In this situation, we are concerned in matching the input of each explanatory variable; thus we look at the beta weights in Table 6 Coefficients. Looking down the Beta column we notice which beta weight is the biggest (ignoring any -ve signs out the front). In this situation the biggest beta factor is .364, which is for OID. This shows that this variable marks the solid distinctive input to explanation of the UPB, when the variance described by all other variables in the model is controlled for. The significant positive link between OID and unethical pro-organizational behaviors agrees to earlier investigations (Bryant, 2020; Graham et al., 2020; Kong, 2016; Lee et al., 2019; Naseer et al., 2020; Niederhauser, 2019). Concisely there exist statistically significant relationships amongst all variables supporting all three hypotheses in accordance with the postulates of social exchange and cognitive theories (Bandura, 2014; Blau, 1964). The results suggest that employees reciprocate to the

organizations in order to maintain mutual relationships. In this process of reciprocity the employees ignore moral standards engaging in UPB. Therefore the organizations need to improve moral attentiveness of the employees in order to diminish the UPB (Halbusi et al., 2021; Miao et al., 2020).

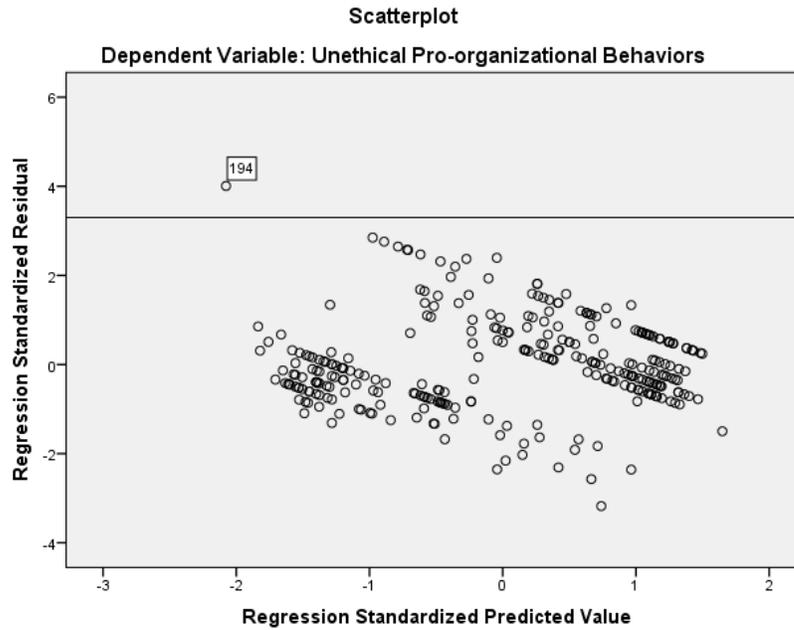
**Table 6: Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
				Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.866		.000		
OID	.374	.402	.000	.853	1.172
PIS	.389	.444	.000	.853	1.172
(Constant)	1.827		.000		
OID	.339	.364	.000	.823	1.214
PIS	.303	.346	.000	.685	1.459
RMA	-.173	-.217	.000	.707	1.414

In the Figure 3 scatterplot of the standardized residuals what we are expecting that the residuals will be approximately distributed in a rectangle, with maximum of the marks focused in the midpoint (alongside the zero point). What we don't expect is a perfect or organized arrangement of residuals (e.g. curvilinear, or greater on one side than the other). As the deviances from a centralized rectangle proposes some departure from the assumptions.

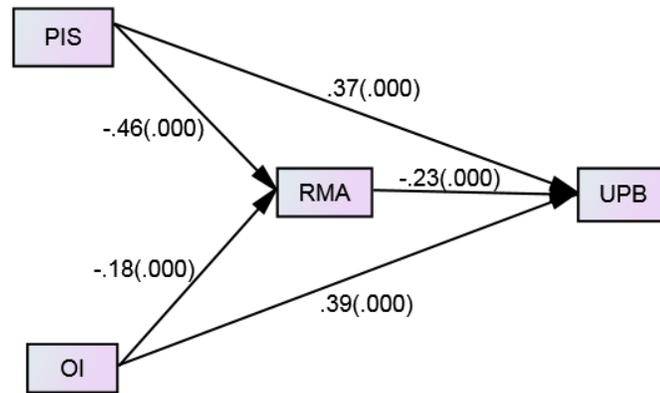


**Figure 2: Normal P-P Plot**



**Figure 3: Scatterplot of the Standardized Residuals**

The path diagram (Figure 4) below shows the significant standardized regression weights for comparing the direct and mediated variances explained by each variable in UPB. The hierarchical regression analysis and SEM analysis are quite parallel confirming the mediated role of reflective moral attentiveness.



**Figure 4: Path Diagram**

The results suggest that there exists significant positive relationship between OI and UPB supporting hypothesis 1 in parallel to preceding studies (Bryant, 2020; Graham et al., 2020; Kong, 2016; Lee et al., 2019; Naseer et al., 2020; Niederhauser, 2019). The hypothesis 2 also stands supported as results confirm significant positive relationship between PIS and UPB in conformity with SET (Blau, 1964). The results also conform with the notion that insider perceptions affect the work behaviors (Stamper & Masterson, 2002) whereas RMA significantly mediates the relationships between these explanatory variables and UPB supporting the hypotheses 3a, b. The SEM results also confirm that organizations are required to enhance the moral adventures of the employees to reduce damaging consequences of UPB (Halbusi et al., 2021; Miao et al., 2020).

In summary the results demonstrate that both PIS and OI are positively related to UPB. The employees with greater PIS and OI feel indebted to sustain the enduring relationships with their organization. They intend to support the organization whether they have to cross the boundaries of ethics. In this cognitive process they counterbalance their decision of engaging in UPB without the sorrow of self-admonition. The results exhibit that both PIS and OI are negatively related with RMA suggesting that employees overlook moral standards in performing UPB. The employees find UPB an appealing choice to fulfill the supposed social exchange strains. The results point to the importance of RMA signifying that employees need to be attentive to moral dilemmas.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Practical Implications

This research offers numerous practical recommendations. RMA has been found to mediate the relationships between OI, PIS and UPB. This research provides the evidence for the selection and training of employees on basis of their sensitivity to RMA. The marketplace has now aroused to the impending perils of immoral behaviors prompting the organizations to influence inattentive employees pay to their moral behaviors. As this

research suggests the organizations should employ cognitively tending individuals to create a culture of ethics and morals (Halbusi et al., 2021).

It is also pertinent for the managers to identify morally attentive employees and play to their inherent moral powers for the benefit of whole organization. These morally attentive employees should be placed at key strategic positions to promote the culture of ethics. They can become the agents of change and source of inspirations in the organizations. To the degree morally attentive individuals are identified and selected for important portfolios; the organizations can reap the benefits of moral behaviors in the market place. It is prudent for the organizations to let the other personnel to gain energy and skills from these treasured morally attentive individuals to nurture moral values (Khan et al., 2021). These employees can provide recurrent ethics interventions and ethics initiatives taking the organizations to new heights.

This research shows important useful implications as it provides empirical evidence of some of the antecedents of UPB. The previous research has done very diminutive work to generate the empirical evidence of UPB. Some theoretical work indicates that employees may involve in unethical acts that support the organizations. The researchers should pay vigilant consideration to behavioral intents of employees, to harm, to benefit or simply to self-benefit to discover other antecedes and consequences of UPB (Toirova & Baek, 2021). This research provides support to theoretical work done earlier that there are dark sides of OID and PIS as employees high on these constructs may involve in UPB. More work is required to be carried out to illuminate the reciprocity beliefs based on exchange relations and unethical acts.

This research provides the evidence that these employees need to be made cognizant of moral aspects of their behaviors through RMA. The culture of the organization plays an important role in promoting UPB (Tang et al., 2021). When employees see other employees being rewarded for unethical acts, this will increase the likelihood of UPB (Bavandpour et al., 2021). Employees observe salient role models for example peers, coworkers, supervisors what is considered appropriate and acceptable even unethical acts, they will most probably repeat the same in order to be get rewarded (Umphress, Elizabeth E., Bingham, 2010). When employees have undergone same personal experiences of being rewarded on unethical behaviors, they will engage in these acts with more intensity. More research is needed on this rewards culture to diminish UPB. This research has taken an important step to investigate how to promote an ethical culture through RMA. As these two explanatory variables in this study influence unethical behaviors, it is also pertinent to note that managers must be mindful of the essential role of formal and informal systems such as norms, language, policies, reward systems, leadership. The employees look forward to managers when they interpret the importance of UPB (Umphress, Elizabeth E., Bingham, 2010). The employees talk about loyalty to justify their unethical acts. The employees believe that they involve in UPB because the organization wants them to perform UPB. Thus the managers should care and uphold ethical standards to diminish the likelihood of unethical acts including UPB.

The first step to eliminate UPB is to acknowledge that unethical pro-organizational behaviors exist in the organizations. Significant attention is given to high profile wicked and mischievous scandals in the organizations but these unethical pro-organizational

behaviors that are performed to protect and support the organization go often unnoticed (Graham et al., 2020). The efforts to diminish and eliminate the UPB should be made the part of human resource development efforts such as mentoring, training and orientations. This research suggests that these independent variables in this research are the prominent precursors of UPB; the practitioners should understand what motivates UPB are the step to increasing the wakefulness and lessening them in the organizations.

A challenging state of affairs can arise for the managers when they find employees high on OID and PIS in the study are high performers and simultaneously engaged in UPB. The managers should present themselves as exemplary models by demonstrating they uphold and reward moral values. The managers have to cultivate a culture that nourishes ethics and principles by setting standards of morality. We advise to the managers that they resolve moral issues along with subordinates enabling them to learn vicariously how managers handle moral issues that confront them at work. Furthermore to diminish immoral behaviors, managers might consider hiring workers with high degrees of RMA by the use of psychometric tests, case based scenarios, and moral questions to evaluate prospective employees levels of reflective moral attentiveness (Dong et al., 2021). Business practitioners can improve critical thinking abilities of their employees through mentorship programs and analytical skills development training programs (Miao et al., 2020). The critical intellectual abilities help the employees to avoid violation of ethics, norms and moral standards. The policy makers can foster employees' moral salience and institute definite workplace moral standards exhibiting clear cut penalties for transgressors (Miao et al., 2020). RMA is pliable social cognitive orientation that is influenced by external ethical climate. The following section describes essential theoretical contributions of this research effort.

### *5.2 Theoretical Contribution*

This research is extending several noteworthy contributions in the field of u UPB. This study highlights the contradictory nature of UPB throwing fresh light on the rousing factors for the employees to engage in UPB. The UPB are considered pro-social in nature as these are perpetrated to support the organization. The UPB are performed violating the widely held principles of ethics and norms (Tang et al., 2021). At the same the perpetrator of UPB is gaining own personal benefit from UPB discounting the ethical implications and totally extricating from personal responsibility (Tang et al., 2021). Thus it is clear that UPB are intentional, unethical; serve self-interested motivations of the perpetrating employee and the interests of the organization (Graham et al., 2020). The employee is focusing on short term benefits for the organization such as profit implications, immediate instant benefits to internal stakeholders but ignoring the long term disparaging consequences to external stakeholder. The employees are considering unethical acts as ethically appropriate (Halbusi et al., 2021). This ethical inappropriateness might force the organization to litigation, fines, bad reputation and customer loss. Therefore our findings support the declaration that moral awareness has motivational power necessary to take the employees outside the sphere of self-interested unethical acts and unethical pro-social narrowly focused organizational interests.(Graham et al., 2020).

The study gives insights into role of reflective moral attentiveness in enhancing or diminishing UPB. Without sensitizing to moral aspects of their decisions, may signal to employees that their self-interests are supported, encouraged and are sole criteria for determining success (Khan et al., 2021). In the absence of moral awakening, the employees find no cues about broader aspects of their actions and restrain the involvedness of moral understanding in these backgrounds (Khan et al., 2021). As a result employees are more likely to consider the competing information signaling to unethical aspects of unethical pro-organizational behaviors as appropriate thus impairing their ethical judgments. Therefore by failing to provide ethical background, moral norms may deteriorate employees' moral judgments particularly for the employees whose self-interests and organizational interests are entangled.

This research provides fresh intuitions into the linkages between OID, PIS and UPB. Drawing from SET (Blau, 1964), persons reciprocate the organization engaging in UPB without giving due pondering to moral aspects of their actions. From the organizational perspective, it gives an increased importance to moral cogitation processes among the employees who are high on these factors that motivate them to perform UPB when they see overlap between their personal goals and organizational goals. Without any moral knowledge provided by the organization employees will emphasize the internal and external impact in defining the suitability of their actions (Graham et al., 2020). The internal immediate instantaneous myopic benefit will be noticeably prominent whereas external broader impact on stakeholders is less likely to be paid heed to.

Therefore our outcomes provide augmented backing to the argument that social exchange relationships play a key role in determining the moral awareness owing to the decline in domain specific moral sensitivity. The findings of this research confirm the SET postulates that employees with high OID and PIS engage in UPB just to maintain mutual relationships. In accordance with SCT, the employees need to be activated cognitively to sensitize them to moral aspects of their actions in order to safeguard long term beneficial consequences to the organization. Organizations might enhance moral knowledge of their employees by capitalizing on training and integrity programs so that the employees can judge the UPB as morally inappropriate. Managers can hold discussions on moral dilemmas employees encounter weighing short term benefit to organization at the cost of negative repercussions on the outside stakeholders and irreparable damage to organizational reputation. As an organizational effort to enhance moral implications of UPB, the employees could undergo experimental exercises putting them in the conditions where chance to involve in UPB is obvious and subsequently examining the probable impact on internal –external stakeholders (Graham et al., 2020). The organizations need to restrain from highlighting performance matrices that concentrate on short term results unconsciously promoting the unscrupulous immoral norms. The employee surveys can be very supportive to pinpoint the trigger points that encourage such immoral behaviors throughout organization. Creating unblemished expectations for morally principled behavior and holding workers answerable are also likely to be essential actions that reformat norms and expectations for morally responsible behavior (Graham et al., 2020). The succeeding section points to some genuine limitations just like any study.

### *5.3 Potential Limitations*

This research is not without potential limitations. The sample size may be insufficient given the complication of the analysis. The self-report scales used in this study provide lesser context than would be available in real employee decisions. The study could have been more interesting when social or organizational contexts essential for UPB are drawn upon by actual life factors than purely hypothetical ones. The limitations would have been overwhelmed by the comparisons of situational and traits like utilization of RMA scale. There are other possible shades that this study was also not able to capture, such as how assured dispositional traits may differentially influence each outcome, or if there is any association between the engagements of one type of behavior at the cost of the other. There is limited literature available on the precursors and consequences of UPB. Upcoming studies may explore other personality types and dispositional factors that motivate such behavior. The data were collected from pharmaceutical sales organizations, banks, educational institutes, from Lahore, Multan Pakistan; though the findings could be generalized for the entire services sector, additional investigations would be desirable to expand the data set to other industries that are prone to frequent UPB. The study has used cross sectional research design that limits the generalizability. To overcome this limitation and to determine causal association, experimental design, longitudinal designs offer possible alternates for prospective researchers.

### *5.4 Future Directions*

Additional assessments of state-trait impacts of moral attentiveness affecting the UPB would be helpful for thoughtful comprehension of the situational levers motivating UPB. Future researchers could also benefit from executing the research if RMA scale reflects the trait propensities appropriately. Knowing moral attentiveness exists as both dispositional trait and an activated state warrant more research to develop the tools that could measure state approach across wide variety of situations. The recent pandemic has challenged the steadfast commitment of the firms to morally principled practices (He & Harris, 2020). The employees are struggling hard to make extra sales to secure their jobs and putting relentless effort to put the firm on economically viable grounds. It would be fertile that the future researchers examine the attitudes and perceptions of the employees in post pandemic time when the firms are out of troubled crisis.

The current study investigates the possibility of engagement in UPB rather than actual behaviors. The real moral decisions can be absolutely dissimilar from the situations when employees are presented with unreal hypothetical situations (Dong et al., 2021). Future scholars should examine the mediating role of RMA on genuine decisions and unethical behaviors such as stealing, lying, over exaggerating information, concealing the actual information and other UPB. Future research could also gain benefits by incorporating moderating role ethical work climate. Furthermore organizational context in which ethical morally sound decisions occur could yield interesting results when considering UPB. It would also be prudent to replicate the research in other organizational and industrial contexts to enhance its generalizability.

### 5.5 Conclusions

This section gives brief account of the precursors in the study and the role of reflective moral attentiveness in alleviating UPB. Unethical pro-organizational behaviors are prevalent in the organizations. They deserve instant attention of practitioners to lessen their negative consequences on both organization and external stakeholders. The UPB are pro-social in nature committed to benefit the organizations but unacceptable and unethical (Tang et al., 2021). For example, employees' act of withholding hazardous information about a pharmaceutical product or cooking numbers to boost accounting work all constitutes UPB. The current study examines the impact of OID and PIS on UPB through RMA.

Organizationally identified individuals perceive organizational failures and successes as their personal is a notable predictor of UPB (Graham et al., 2020). This study explains that OID is positively related with UPB and negatively related to RMA. In multiple regressions analysis OID explains significant variance in UPB. The employees who perceive them highly identified with the organization reciprocate to the organization at the expense of moral standards in consistent with SET (Blau, 1964). For instance highly identified employees might conceal actual information of the product from the customers just to allure their loyalty. Therefore the managers need to improve the critical thinking skills of the employees to avoid the negative ramifications of UPB. The significant positive association between OID and unethical pro-organizational behaviors corresponds to previous studies (Bednar et al., 2020; Bryant, 2020; Graham et al., 2020; Kong, 2016; Lee et al., 2019; Naseer et al., 2020; Niederhauser, 2019).

PIS is the degree to which workers consider them the valued member of the organizations (Stamper & Masterson, 2002). Insiders do not feel left out as opposed to outsiders. Believing in reciprocity in accordance with SET (Blau, 1964) the employees high on PIS tend to give back to the organizations to uphold exchange relationships. This study has found positive association between PIS and unethical pro-organizational behaviors in consistent with SET (Blau, 1964). The results also conform to the earlier findings that insider perceptions affect the work behaviors (Stamper & Masterson, 2002). The findings of this research suggest that PIS is positively related to UPB and explains significant variance in UPB and negatively related to RMA. Managers need to restrain the employees high on PIS from moral violations by demonstrating the importance of critical thinking and analytical skills.

The study offers significant theoretical contributions in terms of the role of RMA. In consistent with SCT (Bandura, 2014) moral attentiveness is the extent to which employees recognize and thoughtfully consider moral aspects of their decisions. RMA exhibit significant R square and F change when added in hierarchical regression analysis. RMA mediates significantly between these two explanatory variables and UPB suggesting organizations can take many moral initiatives to improve and sustain organizational competitiveness. The managers can introduce ethics intervention programs and strategies to hire the workforces attentive to moral principles and placing the morally attentive individuals to strategic pivotal positions. These individuals can become the source of energy and inspirations for the whole organization in future. The results found in this study

conform to the previous studies on the mediated role reflective moral attentiveness (Halbusi et al., 2021; Miao et al., 2020).

This research is extending several remarkable contributions in the field of UPB. Without sensitizing to moral aspects of their decisions, may point to employees that their self-interests are supported, encouraged and are sole criteria for defining the success. Additionally to eliminate immoral behaviors, managers might consider hiring employees with high points of RMA through the usage of psychometric tests, case based scenarios, and moral questions to evaluate prospective employees levels of moral attentiveness (Dong et al., 2021). Business managers need to expand critical intellectual abilities of their employees through mentorship programs and analytical skills development training programs. The study could have more interesting when social or organizational contexts essential for UPB are drawn upon by actual life factors than purely hypothetical ones. As the current study investigates the possibility of engagement in UPB rather than actual behaviors, the real moral decisions can be totally different from the circumstances when employees are offered with imaginary hypothetical situations (Dong et al., 2021). It would be prudent that future studies focus on the mediating role of RMA on actual decisions and unethical behaviors.

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