Breach of Psychological Contract and Job Involvement: Does Organizational Cynicism Mediates the Relationship?

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ABSTRACT

This research study examined the association between breach of psychological contract & job involvement of nurses working in public health care sector of Pakistan. Specifically, this study has introduced organizational cynicism as a mediator between breach of psychological contact and job involvement. By using self-administered survey, we collected data from 162 nurses employed in various public sector hospitals in Pakistan. Findings of this study highlighted that breach of psychological contract causes decrease in job involvement of nurses among public sector hospitals and this association is partially mediated through organizational cynicism. Implications for practice and future research directions are highlighted.

Keywords: Breach of psychological contract (BPC), Job involvement, Organizational cynicism, Pakistan.

Introduction

Once an individual joins an organization, many contracts are signed containing terms and conditions of employment. But it is often seen that many employees do not recognize that they are also entering intoone moretype of contract that is not written nor enunciated. This unwritten agreement or common expectation between employer and employees is called a psychological contract (Rousseau, 1989).

A psychological contact breach is defined as employees' insight that their organization has proved unsuccessful to execute some duties or commitments coupled with perceived mutual promises (Tetrick&Gakovic, 2003). The breach of contract causes several depressing upshots in an organization which include organizational cynicism (O'Leary- Kelly & Johnson, 2003).Organizational cynicism refers to an employee's negative attitude towards his organization, consisting of three dimensions:(1) a strong perception that his employing organization lacks truthfulness or integrity; (2) negative affect with respect of his employing organization; and (3) tendencies of arrogant and unproductive behaviors directed towards one's employing organization representing these beliefs and affect (Brandes, Dean&Dharwadkar, 1998).

On the other hand, job involvement is considered as a type of the job attitudes(Janasz, Forret, Haack&Jonsen, 2013). Employee's high job involvement is a necessary condition for effective functioning of the organization because it results in a number of positive consequences for the organization including high job satisfaction, high commitment, lower intentions to quit (McElroy et al., 1995) low tendency to leave the work early, high effort level and performance (Blau& Ryan, 1997).However,job involvement in nursing profession is lacking in developing countries like Pakistan due to multiple reasons including low-graded status of nurse, lack of career advancement, inadequate incentives and aloofappointments, and poor working conditions (Khowaja, 2009).

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In the field of organizational behavior, there is dearth of research that explicates the association between BPC and job involvement. Existing literature had highlighted that BPC can have negative association with various job attitudes (Schmit, Amel& Ryan, 1993). Since, job involvement is also an important type of job attitudes(Janasz, Forret, Haack&Jonsen, 2013) therefore, it is reasonable to argue that job involvement can be influenced by BPC. Additionally, many nurses experience BPC and organizational cynicism at some time or another but not all of them leave their jobs because of it. Why do some nurses simply continue to work in a cynic environment? Whether there job involvement decrease due to their perception of organizational cynicism or not? In developing countries like Pakistan, there is much research linking BPC and various jobattitudes but there is little research establishing the linkage between BPC and job involvement (De Hauw& De Vos, 2010). Consequently, this study concentrate on this scarcity by developing the research question "Does breach of psychological contract leads to decrease in job involvement and does organizational cynicism mediates this relationship?" This study will have imperative implications for the nursing sector of Pakistan. Further, it intends to add to the existing body of literature both theoretically and empirically by illuminating the critical role of organizational cynicism in explaining the association between BPC and job involvement.

Literature Review
Breach of Psychological contract (BPC) and Job involvement
BPC denotes employee's perception that their organization has proved unsuccessful to perform some duties associated with perceived mutual promises(Tertrick&Gakoviv, 2003). Thus far many researches had studied the constructiveeffects of fulfillment of psychological contract on employees and organizational performance. However, there is scant literature showing the negative effects that BPC may have on employee's attitude & behavior. Substantial research highlighted that perception of BPC is negatively correlated with employee's job performance, OCB, and commitment with one's employing organization (Turnley, et al., 2000; Sheng, et al., 2007) satisfaction with job and loyalty with the organization (Lester, et al., 2002; Tufail et al., 2017).When employer fails to meet its responsibilities or obligations it can be a principal reason of employees frustration and consequent lower job involvement.

Job involvement denotes the extent to which an individual is cognitively worried, intensely tied up, and concerned with respect to his or her job (Paullay et al., 1994). Job involvement is one of the major factors contributing to organizational capacity to effectively meet the needs of this competitive and turbulent business environment. Social exchange theory Blau (1964) maintains that the relationships between persons are based upon mutual social obligations. When one party fulfills its obligations adequately the other will also do the same. It means, there is the principle of reciprocity that the action on the part of one person shapes the response of other(Mitchell &Cropanzano, 2005).When employers fail to fulfill its duties or obligations, then breach of psychological contract arise (Robinson & Morrison, 1997) which can result in lower job involvement (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; De Hauw& De Vos, 2010). Therefore, frustration aggression theory lends support to create a link between BPC and job involvement and constructing the first hypothesis:
H1.BPC is negatively associated with job involvement of nurses.

Organizational Cynicism as a Mediator

Cynicism and its consequences to the employees and organizations are primarily studied by Golden et.al.(1977).In the existing research studies, cynicism refers to an attitude highlighted by a dislike for and suspicion about others. Organizational cynicism according to Dean is an employee's negative attitude toward his organization, consisting of three dimensions: (1) a strong perception that organization lacks truthfulness; (2) negative affect and (3) tendencies of arrogant and unproductive behaviors representing those beliefs and emotions (Dean et al., 1998).

There are various factors which contribute towards the development of organizational cynicism in employee which include high stress level, increased complexity in the organization, low social support, miscommunication, low autonomy, work-role clash, BPC, incompetent management, trust deficitand hostile work atmosphere have been illuminated in the existing studies as the predictors of organizational cynicism among others (Cole, et al., 2006;O'leary- Kelly and Johnson, 2003;Tükeltürk, et al., 2012).

On the other hand, organizational cynicism can cause a number of undesirable outcomes among employees, e.g. minimum level of commitment towards the organization, reduced job satisfaction (O'leary- Keller and Johnson, 2003) decreased employee's performance, commitment with the unions (Bashir and Nasir, 2013) and lower job involvement (Brown and Leigh, 1996). BPC negatively influences the employee's conviction which leads to changes in behaviors and attitudes of employees (Robinson and Morrison, 1997)Frustration causes aggressive or hostile behavior among employees resulting inflow job involvement (Brown and Leigh, 1996). Through this study it is argued that since organizational cynicism results in employee frustration (Andersson, 1996), which can result in low job involvement. Hence, organizational cynicism is expected to act as a mediator between BPC and job involvement. Accordingly, the second hypothesis of this study is:

H2. Organizational cynicism mediates the relationship between BPCand job involvement of nurses.

Research Model

The following is the research model of this study

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┌─────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────┐
│ Breach of       │──────────────────────────────│ Job             │
│ Psychological   │        ┌──────────────┐       │ Involvement     │
│ Contract        │────────│ Organizational│──────│                 │
└─────────────────┘        │ Cynicism      │      └─────────────────┘
                           └──────────────┘
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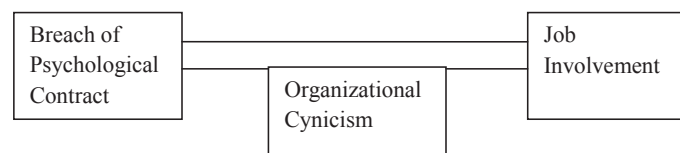
Methodology

Population Sample and Sampling Technique

The population of this study was nurses of public health care sector of Pakistan. However, due to limited access to the target population as well as time and financial constraints convenience sampling technique was employed to gather the required data from nurses. By using self-administered survey method, initially, 300 questionnaires were distributed among nursing staff of public hospitals in various cities of Pakistan. Out of these 300 questionnaires, 183 questionnaires were received back, 21 questionnaires were incomplete and were excluded from the study. Consequently, 162 responses were finally retained for analysis representing a response rate of 54%. To warrant secrecy and to obtain true and honest information, nurses were directed not to write

their in the questionnaire. Further, they were assured that their responses will be kept secret.

Instrumentation
We adopted questionnaires from earlier studies. We used Robinson and Morrison (2000) five item BPC Scale. To measures organizational cynicism, Dean et al. (1998) 13-item scale was used. Similarly, Kanungo (1982) 10-itmes Job involvement Questionnaire (JIQ) was used to measure level of nurses' job involvement. All the questionnaires used were in the shape of five-point likert scale with "Strongly disagree" (1) to "Strongly agree"(5) response range. Data were also captured on demographic variables of age, tenure, marital status and employment status.

Data Analysis And Results
Table 1 indicates the relation ship among variables and their reliabilities measures. A significant positive correlation (r= .767, p < .01)is observed among BPC and organizational cynicism. On the other hand, a negative correlation (r= -.686, p < .01)is detected between BPC and job involvement. Finally, organizational cynicism and job involvement are also found negatively correlated (r= -.671, p < .01).

Table: 1 Correlations and reliabilities (in parentheses).

	Mean	S.D	1	2	3
BPC	3.54	.776	(.764)		
OC	3.39	.732	.767**	(.836)	
JI	2.39	.858	-.686**	-.671**	(.768)

BPC= Breach of psychological contract; JI = Job Involvement, OC = Organizational Cynicism;
n = 162. *P<.05 **p<.01

       Table 2 depicts results about the hypothesized relationships among the study variables. The overall model of envisaging job involvement from BPC is significant (F = 177.25, P <.01). Our investigation controlled for the effects of age, gender and working experience. The results of the regression analysis highlighted that BPC is a significant negative predictor of job involvement (β = -.712, p < .01). Hence, we found strong support for first hypothesis of the study that increase in BPC would lead to decrease in job involvement. This relationship is also verified from statistically significant bivariate correlation between BPC and job involvement.

Table 2 Regression analysis results

Predictors	Job Involvement			
	βt		R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				
Control Variables	.012			
Step 2				
BPC	-.712**	-7.516	.771	.759

a. Predictors: (Constant), Age
b. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Organizational Cynicism, BPC
Values are unstandardized beta weights* p<.05**p<.01

We performed the mediation analysis through SPSS script by Preacher and Hayes(2008),for indirect effects. We performed bootstrapping and requested 5000 samples; a bias-corrected 95% CI is shaped for ab. For this 95% CI, the LL is -.4220 and UL is -.0332. Different criterion might be applied to evaluate the significance of the indirect path. In this study, both a&b coefficients are statistically considerable, and the bootstrapped CI for ab did not include zero. So, the indirect effect of BPC on job involvement through organizational cynicism is statistically significant. The direct path from BPC to job involvement (c') was also found to be significant; therefore, the effect of BPC on job involvement is only partially mediated by organizational cynicism. These results are summarized in table 3 below.

Table 3Upshots of Mediation

IV	Effect of IV on M	Effect of M on DV	Direct effect	Total effect	BS 95% CI	
					LL	UL
BPC	.84**	-.28**	-.73**	-.96**	-.422	-.033

CI: 95%, Number of Bootstraps: 5000, ****** P < .01

Conclusions And Implications

In general, our results supported the hypotheses of the current study. The first hypothesis of this study which was designed to explore the relation between BPC and job involvement is accepted. The negative relationship between these variables suggests that BPC decreases job involvement of nurses. Since, due to limited job opportunities in Pakistan (Qayyum&Siddiqui, 2007), many nurses cannot afford to leave their job when there is BPC instead, they may decrease their job involvement as a way of reprisal to the organizational strategies and policies. Hence, the nurses exhibiting lower job involvement in public sector hospitals of Pakistan, is actually a response for their perception of BPC. This study also highlighted that the relation between BPC and job involvement cannot be comprehensively clarified until organizational cynicism is not incorporated in the model. Existing literature tinted that the contract disobedience on the part of employer does influence the workers faith eventually originates change in their behavior and attitude (Robinson & Morrison, 1997) as well as magnification of organizational cynicism (Andersson, 1996; O'Leary-Kelly and Johnson 2003). Thus, BPC increases organizational cynicism and ultimately diminishes job involvement. The findings of current study can be useful for decision makers and administrator of public sector hospitals. Most of the nurses in their informal discussion with the authors had pointed out that management makes false promises regarding their benefits and career prospects. Since, the health sector is one of the important and sensitive sectors, hospitals must be cautious in making promises with their nursing staff because this is the key for their successful functioning.

Limitations And Future Research

While these upshots of the current study facilitate us to better understand job involvement of nurses in public sector hospitals of Pakistan, there are some limitations of this study which needs to be tackled by future searchers. The findings of this study are based upon a more restricted sample using convenient sampling technique, however more sophisticated sampling technique can grant more extensive picture on this issue. Likewise, this study is cross sectional in nature, the results might be different if longitudinal data were collected. Since organizational cynicism reasonably mediated the relationamongBPC and

job involvement; future scholars should explore some other possible mediating variables as well.

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