

THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST ON WORKPLACE DEVIANCE: MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB AUTONOMY AND MODERATING ROLE OF JOB EMBEDDEDNESS

ERUM NAZ AKHTAR^{*}, SALMAN SARWAR^{*}

ABSTRACT

This study specifically aims at determining the association between organizational trust and workplace deviance by investigating the intervening role of job autonomy and buffering role of job embeddedness. The survey was completed by self-administered questionnaire and data was gathered from employees working in different branches of private and public banks of Pakistan. 168 responses were used for analysis. Results of the study indicate that organizational trust significantly reduces workplace deviance. In addition, job autonomy mediates between organizational trust and workplace deviance. Whereas job embeddedness buffers the impact of organizational trust on job autonomy in a way that rise in job embeddedness strengthens the relationship of organizational trust and job autonomy. The implications of these findings are also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The workplace deviance is a behavior that defies and violates the norms of the organization (Griffin & Lopez, 2005). In particular, deviant behavior is a voluntary behavior that breaks important organizational norms and threatens to damage the organization, its members or both (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Workplace deviance appears in the form of a number of employee behaviors. Earlier studies report that nearly 75% of employees involve in workplace deviance like theft, fraud, vandalism, sabotage and voluntary absenteeism (Gross-Schaefer, Trigilio, Negus, & Ro, 2000; Lawrence & Robinson, 2007; Chirasha & Mahapa, 2012). Workplace deviance has greatly plagued organizations since the industrial revolution (Klotz & Buckley, 2013). The

organizations suffer both the direct costs (such as stolen or damaged merchandise and equipment) and the indirect costs from attempts to reduce and prevent deviant acts (such as monitoring employee behavior and ethics training), workplace deviance is estimated to cost organizations billions of dollars annually (Case, 2000; Harris & Ogbonna, 2006).

Workplace deviance continues to be an area of interest to researchers and managers alike due to its associated high costs (Case, 2000; Harris & Ogbonna, 2006; Marasi, Cox, & Bennett, 2016). It is important to enhance our understanding of workplace deviance for the benefit of the organization's overall well-being and success.

^{*}Capital University of Science & Technology, Islamabad.

Correspondence E-mail Id: editor@eurekajournals.com

A critical factor that has been found to provoke employees to behave deviantly is low organizational trust (Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007; Thau, Crossley, Bennett, & Sczesny, 2007). On the other hand high organizational trust reduces such workplace deviance (Marasi, et al., 2016). It is important that organization's managers and employees consider importance of trust, promotion and their role in trust (Fitzroy, 2007). For successful feedback and observation of advanced organizational behavior, we need high level of interpersonal trust among the co-workers in organization (Bakiev, 2013). In new era, responding the basic needs of employees in each organization is on priority and one of the most important needs of employees in organization is establishing trust among them and organization. High level of trust in organization creates low costs of evaluation and other control mechanisms (Khanifar, Moghimi, Jandaghi & Zarvandi., 2009).

It is well documented in the literature that organizational trust influences employees' engagement in deviant behaviors (Berry et al., 2007; Thau et al., 2007; Marasi, et al., 2016). However, there is a need to identify the mechanism through which organizational trust affects the workplace deviance. Job autonomy seems quite useful mediating mechanism between organizational trust and workplace deviance (Marasi, et al., 2016). Reactance theory (Brehm, 1966) argues that when employees experience a loss of job autonomy such that their freedom to make choices is interrupted, they will engage in "reactance" by becoming motivated to restore their perception of control. Additionally, reactance theory suggests that employees who feel restricted and unable to ameliorate their situation may become frustrated and are more

likely to engage in negative and perhaps destructive forms of "reactance," such as workplace deviance, to compensate for the loss of job autonomy and control (Mitchell et al., 2007; Rothbaum, Weisz, & Snyder., 1982). Employees with greater job autonomy feel responsible for their jobs (Parker & Sprigg, 1999) and therefore are more likely to less engage in deviant behaviour.

Job embeddedness is an important moderating variable that significantly moderate the organizational trust-workplace deviance relationship such that participants who experienced low organizational trust and high job embeddedness engaged in more workplace deviance than those experiencing low organizational trust and low job embeddedness (Marasi, et al., 2016). We also proposed that interaction of Job embeddedness with organizational trust will also moderate the relationship between organizational trust and workplace deviance in presence of job autonomy as mediator.

This study, therefore, contributes in several ways to existing body of literature. First, it attempts to find the effect of organizational trust on workplace deviance. Secondly, the study will test the mediated mechanism of job autonomy between the relationship of organizational trust and workplace deviance. Thirdly, it examines how job embeddedness moderates the relationship between organizational trust and job autonomy and finally, it uses the Reactance theory (Brehm, 1966) to explain how organizational trust affects workplace deviance with roles of job autonomy and job embeddedness. The research model is shown in Figure1.

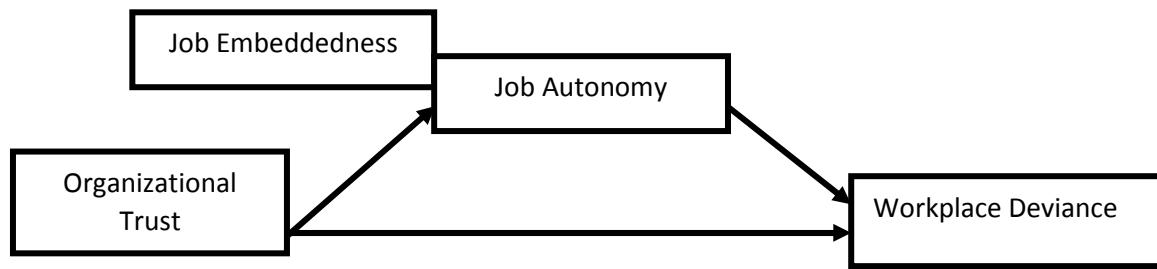


Figure 1. Research model

THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST AND WORKPLACE DEVIANCE

Workplace deviance covers various behavioral ranges of acts from major to minor behavior, i.e., abusive supervision (Tepper, 2007) and drug abuse (Kidwell & Martin, 2005). Subsequently, Bennett and Robinson, (2000) categorized workplace deviance into interpersonal and organizational deviance. The former category is directed towards individuals, (e.g., humiliating co-workers) while the latter category is directed to the organization (e.g., arriving work late without permission). “Decades of research show that fairness perceptions can substantially contribute to various attitudinal, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral outcomes among organizational members” (McCardle, 2007). When employees in an organization believe that they are treated unduly, they are likely to experience feelings of anger, outrage, frustration, and a desire for revenge (Greenberg, 1990a; Bies & Tripp, 1996). Under certain situations and conditions, these negative feelings can manifest into workplace deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Where, workplace deviance refers to counterproductive behavior in organizations (Griffin & Lopez, 2005).

A number of the researchers (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Kidwell & Martin, 2005; Spector & Fox, 2005; McCardle, 2007; Bordia, Restubog, & Tang, 2008; Nurmaya, 2012) envisage workplace deviance as negative and destructive in nature. Whereas, Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, and

Chermont., (2003) affirms that the nature of workplace deviance can be constructive as well as destructive. It is not necessary that it would always harm or damage an organization, but can also bring benefits to the organization (Thoresen, et al., 2003). For instance, “A researcher who develops a revolutionary vaccine for a deadly disease may exhibit behavior that departs from the creative norms of a workgroup, but does so in the benefit of the organization and a larger society. This clarifies that deviances can be seen as a constructive behavior to the organization” (Thoresen, et al., 2003). However, the justification presented by (Thoresen, et al., 2003) has a narrow acceptability, given that most of the researchers and scholars (for instance, Kidwell & Martin, 2005; Spector & Fox, 2005; McCardle, 2007; Bordia, Restubog, & Tang, 2008; Nurmaya, 2012) perceive workplace deviance as negative rather than positive for an organization. Therefore, this study accounts workplace deviance as negative and adopts the definition presented by Robinson and Bennett (1995), as it covers organizational as well as interpersonal deviance. “Employee deviance is defined as voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both.”

Workplace deviance covers a wide array of behaviors that may possibly damage or deliberately harm the stakeholders of the organization (Spector & Fox, 2005). Notably, workplace deviance has been reviewed and

studied under the terms such as aggression, violence, workplace incivility, retaliation, counter productivity, revenge, and dysfunctional behavior, and organizational misbehavior, unconventional practices at work, noncompliance behavior and general antisocial behavior (Anderson & Pearson, 1999; Griffin & Lopez, 2005; Spector & Fox, 2005; McCardle, 2007). The stated behaviors are deemed as damaging and counterproductive, conceptually and in theory they are different from one another (McCardle, 2007; Nurmaya, 2012). As majority of the literature in this domain suggests that workplace deviance is destructive for an organization, so it is the need to identify such variables which lessen workplace deviance. Prior research has demonstrated that employees' lack of organizational trust influences their engagement in deviant behaviors (Berry et al., 2007; Thau et al., 2007; Marasi, et al., 2016).

Trust in organization refers to an employee's trust and belief towards the management in cultivating relationships within the organization (Alias, Mohd Rasdi, Ismail, & Abu Samah., 2013). Lack of trust is associated with various forms of implications which includes lost output, incompetence, reduced in revenue, and exhibited antisocial behaviors (Thau et al., 2007). Prior research has demonstrated that employees' lack of organizational trust influences their engagement in deviant behaviors (Berry et al., 2007; Thau et al., 2007; Marasi, et al., 2016). Whereas organizational trust reduces the workplace deviance (Marasi, et al., 2016). So in line with these reasoning we hypothesis that:

HYPOTHESIS 1: Organizational trust is negatively and significantly related to workplace deviance.

MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB AUTONOMY

Job autonomy defined as "the extent to which employees have a major say in scheduling their work, selecting the equipment they will use, and deciding on procedures to be followed"

(Hackman & Lawler., 1971, also Hackman & Oldham., 1975) which is a prominent and important job design feature (Fried & Ferris, 1987; Karasek.,1990). It refers to the extent to which an employee can determine the pace, sequence, and methods to accomplish tasks. Job autonomy is different from freedom; the latter refers to people's opportunities to make judgements at work and to choose which tasks to accomplish (Cohen-Meitar, Carmeli, & Waldman., 2009). Employees with high job autonomy feel responsibility for their work outcomes since their personal initiative and judgment about how to carry out the work can directly influence work outcomes (Bandura, 1991; Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Substantial meta-analytic evidence suggests that perceived job autonomy is positively related to a range of beneficial outcomes such as work performance and organizational commitment, and negatively related to more detrimental outcomes such as stress and exhaustion (Humphrey, Nahrgang & Morgeson., 2007)

We argue that when employees have their trust in the organizations, the organizations also have their trust in their employees as the reciprocity of that trust. As the result of this trust in their employee's abilities, organizations allow their employees some autonomy to perform their job at their own. According to several conceptual papers, the lack of job autonomy reduces personal accomplishment (Maslach, Schafeli, & Leiter, 2001) and engenders a depersonalized attitude among workers (Crodes & Dougherty, 1993). In addition, research shows that burnout is triggered by individual perceptions of lack of control on the job (Glass & Mcknight, 1996) and the lack of involvement in decision-making (Posig & Kickul, 2003). Literature also suggests that employees with greater job autonomy feel responsible for their jobs (Parker & Sprigg, 1999) and therefore are more likely to less engage in deviant behavior.

HYPOTHESIS 2: Job autonomy mediates the relation between organizational trust and workplace deviance.

MODERATING ROLE OF JOB EMBEDDEDNESS

Job embeddedness is defined as the extent to which employees are enmeshed or entrenched within, connected, attached, or tied to their job which keeps them from leaving their current job (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski & Erez, 2001; Yao, & Wang, 2006). Job embeddedness is comprised of two sub-dimensions. The first sub-dimension, on-the-job embeddedness, pertains to how entrenched an employee is with his/her employing organization (i.e., promise of a near future promotion or salary increase, and high perceived costs of exit such as loss of benefits); whereas, the second sub-dimension, off-the-job embeddedness, refers to how embedded an employee is in his/her community (i.e., family obligations and community involvement: Crossley, Bennett, Jex, & Burnfield, 2007; Mitchell et al., 2001). Additionally, both of these sub-dimensions are characterized by three aspects: links (informal and formal ties between the employee and organization or other people), fit (an employees' compatibility or comfort with work and non-work environments), and sacrifice (cost of material or psychological benefits that may be forfeited by leaving one's job: Crossley et al., 2007; Mitchell et al., 2001).

Organizations have continuously attempted to discover ways to create and expand job embeddedness in their employees to increase retention and reduce costs associated with turnover, training, and recruitment. Correspondingly, management scholars have generally viewed higher levels of job embeddedness positively since embedded employees are less likely to voluntarily terminate their employment (Anazawa, et al., 2009; Hom, et al., 2009; Mallol, Holtom, & Lee, 2007; Sekiguchi,

Burton, & Sablynski, 2008). However, sociologists have long viewed job embeddedness as an explanation of "the process by which social relations influence and constrain economic action" (Granovetter, 1985; Uzzi, 1997), and thereby, a negative notion for organizations.

Based on the sociological perspective, job embeddedness is viewed as limiting, restricting, or constraining an employee's ability to change or alter their current job situation. In this regard, job embeddedness may create obstacles for employees who desire to leave their current job but are restrained from doing so for various reasons (such as having non-transferable job skills or inability to achieve the same level of benefits elsewhere) and thereby, enhance anguish and frustration in the employee, which may potentially have harmful or negative effects on the employee and/or organization. Additionally, these feelings of frustration and/or negative outcomes have been argued to potentially lead to an increase in workplace deviance (Ng and Feldman, 2010; Sekiguchi et al., 2008). Literature is evident for the moderating role of Job embeddedness between the relations of organizational trust and workplace deviance (Marasi, et al., 2016). We suspect that when organizational trust and job embeddedness is high among employees, the interaction of these two variables will also enhances the job autonomy of such employees. In line with these arguments, we propose that:

HYPOTHESIS 3: Job embeddedness moderates the relation between organizational trust and job autonomy, such that the relation would be stronger when the level of job embeddedness is high.

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURES

The participants of this study were the employees from different private banks of Pakistan. This was a field study as the questionnaires were got filled

during working hours in their natural work environment and settings. The data has been collected within three months (March, 2017 to May, 2017). 220 respondents were contacted and requested to complete the questionnaires. 168 questionnaires were included in the analysis which found complete in all respect. The response rate was 76.36%. Out of 168 respondents 76.8% (129 n) were male while 23.2% (39 n) were female. The respondents were blend of different age groups however majority of the population was young within the age range of 26-33 years. The sample includes respondents having the education from Metric to MS/PhD, however majority of the respondents were having the master degree. The sample was also varied in term of job experience however 1-5 years' experience found more frequent in the sample.

MEASURES

The scales used for measurement in the study were 'Likert' scales which were ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for job embeddedness, job autonomy, and workplace deviance whereas from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high) for organizational trust.

ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST

Organizational trust was reported by the employees, using 12-items scale developed by (Nyhan, & Marlowe Jr, 1997). Item examples include "My level of confidence that my supervisor is technically competent at the critical elements of his or her job is__." The value of Cronbach alpha for this scale was .91.

JOB EMBEDDEDNESS

Job embeddedness was reported by employees, using 7-items scale developed by (Crossley, Bennett, Jex, & Burnfield, 2007). Item examples include "I feel attached to this organization." The value of Cronbach alpha for scale was .89.

JOB AUTONOMY

Job autonomy was also reported by employees, using 3-items scale developed by (Spreitzer, 1995). Item examples include "I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job." The value of Cronbach alpha for this scale was .90.

WORKPLACE DEVIANCE

Workplace deviance was reported by employees, using 19-items scale developed by (Bennett, R. J., & Robinson, S. L. (2000). Item examples include "Taken an additional or longer break than is acceptable at your workplace." The value of Cronbach alpha for this scale was .82.

CONTROL VARIABLES

Gender, age, qualification and experience affect follower workplace deviance (van Gils et al., 2015). Therefore, these demographics variables had been included in the study. However, it was found that no demographic variable had significant effect on workplace deviance. Thus, we did not control these variables during the regression analysis.

RESULTS

In order to test our hypothesis, we employed the process method of Preacher & Hayes, (2008) as this method allowed to test the indirect effect of independent variable on dependent variable through mediating variable even the independent variable has no direct effect on dependent variable. We also bootstrapped with 5000 iterations in order to construct bias-corrected confidence intervals for the significance tests of the indirect effects.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables used in the study. Organizational trust is positively and significantly correlated to the job embeddedness

and job autonomy while it is negatively and significantly correlated with workplace deviance. Job embeddedness is positively and significantly correlated with job autonomy while it is

negatively and significantly correlated with workplace deviance. Whereas, job autonomy is negatively and insignificantly correlated with workplace deviance.

Table 1.Means, standard deviations and correlations of main variables

		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1	Organizational Trust	3.5824	.83324	1			
2	Job Embeddedness	3.6176	.86348	.530**	1		
3	Job Autonomy	3.0574	.80905	.216**	.375**	1	
4	Workplace Deviance	2.3511	.80133	-.359**	-.383**	-.084	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Table 2 shows the result of regression analysis. Organizational trust has negative and significant effect on workplace deviance (B = -.16, t = -1.74, p < .05), accepting the first hypothesis. The indirect effect of organizational trust on workplace deviance through the mediation of job autonomy is also significant. The bootstrapping values for indirect effect are .0011 to .1591 with a 95 % confidence interval excluding zero. These

results suggest sufficient support for the acceptance of second hypothesis i.e. job autonomy mediates the relationship between organizational trust and workplace deviance. Finally, the results also indicates the acceptance of third hypothesis i.e. job embeddedness moderates the relationship between organizational trust and job autonomy in such a way that higher the job embeddedness, stronger the relationship (B = -.21, t = -3.45, p < .05).

Table 2 Regression Analysis

Variables	B	SE	T	P
Organizational Trust → Workplace Deviance	-.16	.096	-1.74	.04
Organizational Trust × Job Embeddedness → Job Autonomy	-.21	.061	-3.45	.00
Bootstrap results for indirect effect		LL 95% CI .0011	UL 95% CI .1591	

Note. Un-standardized regression coefficients reported. Bootstrap sample size 5000. LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit

The result of third hypothesis is also supported through moderation graph shown in figure 2.

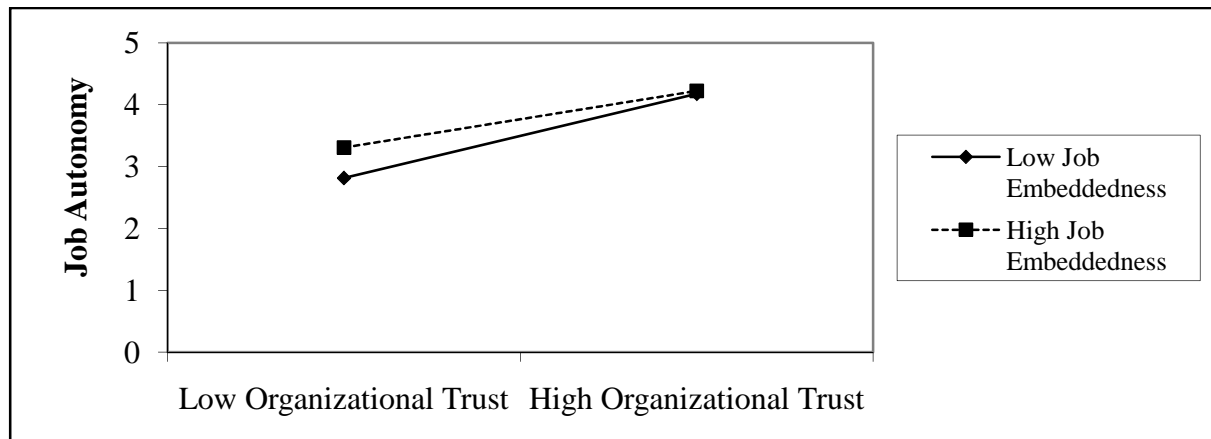


Figure 2.Moderation Graph

Upward slope of the lines indicates a positive association between organizational trust and job autonomy. The dotted line represents high job embeddedness situation whereas bold line reflects low job embeddedness. As dotted line lies above the bold line with a high steeper slope, it represents that in case of high job embeddedness, the association between organizational trust and job autonomy is stronger, while the bold line lies below the dotted line with less steeper slope shows that in case of low job embeddedness situation, the association between organizational trust and job autonomy is weaker. The graph clarifies the buffering role and direction of job embeddedness between organizational trust and job autonomy which gives additional support for the acceptance of hypothesis 3.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was meant to investigate the negative relations between organizational trust and workplace deviance with the mediating mechanism of job autonomy through which organizational trust reduces the workplace deviance. The combined effect of organizational trust and job embeddedness on job autonomy was also proposed. It was found through empirical evidence that organizational trust has negative and significant effect on workplace deviance which is aligned with previous study (Berry et al., 2007; Thau et al., 2007; Marasi, et al., 2016).

The job autonomy mediates the relationship between organizational trust and workplace deviance, which is a significant contribution in the existing literature. The results indicated that high job embeddedness strengthens the positive relationship of organizational trust and job autonomy. This moderating role of embeddedness is aligned with previous study of Marasi, et al., 2016, wherein the same role between organizational trust and workplace deviance was identified.

IMPLICATIONS

The study has certain implications, theoretically as well as practically. It not only enriches the existing literature of workplace deviance by providing empirical proves, the research can be useful practically, within organizations in understanding the role of organizational trust on workplace deviance through mediating mechanism of job autonomy and moderating role of job embeddedness, in order to enhance the employee performance, and ultimately organizational performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study has identified very important mediating mechanism i.e. job autonomy between the association of organizational trust and workplace deviance. Yet further empirical research is required to identify more mediating variables between organizational trust and workplace deviance like control. The focus of the study was banking sector of Pakistan, which is a collectivist society. The scope of the investigation should be extended to other service sector as well as manufacturing industries for generalization of the findings. Moreover cross cultural analysis to the individualist societies would also increase the generalization of the results.

LIMITATIONS

The current study offered some useful theoretical as well as practical implications but isn't without some limitations also which can be addressed in future empirical research. Small sample size can be one of the biggest hurdles in the way of the generalization of the empirical proven findings of the current study. Data were not collected in time lags, due to time constraints. Collecting data in time lags, may help get clearer picture. Similarly, results are based on data collected from the Rawalpindi Islamabad region, which again hampers the generalization of the study results.

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