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## Article

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## **Effect of Breach of Psychological Contracts on Workplace Deviant Behaviors with the Moderating Role of Revenge Attitude and Self-Control**

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### **Abstract**

Psychological contract, breach has been executed when employees perceive that employer has failed to fulfill one or more of its obligations. This breach of contract affects the behaviors and outcomes of employees in many ways. This study makes a unique contribution to the literature by being the first to examine revenge attitude as a moderator of the relations between the breach of the psychological contract and work place deviant behaviors. Managers should be aware of the importance of breach of the psychological contract and violation on employee behaviors and the value of deviant behavior in the performance of the organization. After an extensive review of relevant literature on the research problem, research has been conducted by using a sample size of 230 respondents. This data have been selected through random probability sampling and the result has been deducted by using correlation and regression analysis. This research contributes that an employee having low self-control more frequently execute deviant behaviors on the breach of the psychological contract than employee with low self-control. Similarly, it has also been found that revenge attitude strengthens the relationship of psychological contract breach and work place deviant behaviors.

**Keywords:** breach of psychological contracts, workplace deviant behaviors, self-control, revenge attitude.

### **1. Introduction**

The concept of using humans as an asset remained controversial in the past researches. According to Resource Based-View theory Human Resource can be taken as assets and these assets can become a competitive advantage for the organization as they are immutable, rare and valuable (Colbert, 2004). While contrast to it another research argues that they cannot be taken as an asset because they can easily quit to the competing firms may get demotivated or have high needs of good relationship with their supervisors, coworkers and peers for their best inputs (Coff, 1997).

The workplace relationships that an individual may develop significantly affect the behaviors of the employee at workplace. Out of these relationships, the supervisor-supervisee relationship is highly significant and mostly discussed in the literature. (Putney, *et al.*, 1992, Kadushin, 1974). Many factors like injustice, unfair treatment, and poor performance affect this relationship which results in creating many unwelcomed outcomes like Dissatisfaction from job, lack of commitment, abusive treatment, Psychological stress, intention to turnover, anxiety and revenge attitudes and many others (Ostroff & Cheri, 1992). Out of these factors trust is also an important factor that affects the supervisor-supervisee relationship. When a supervisor or supervisee start trusting to each other both calculated and affective then another concept comes in their relationship i-e, psychological contract.

Psychological contract is a step ahead of trust. Psychological contract is a contract comprising of a set of reciprocal expectations not necessarily agreed upon by the parties but in the mind of observer (Scholarios, *et al.*, 2008). As these expectations may not be written and may not be shared and also not an obligation for other party, so there is a chance that these expectations might not be fulfilled. When one party feels that the perceived promises and expectations are not fulfilled then it leads to the breach of psychological contracts (Rousseau, 1989). In order to compensate it employee/employer may get involve into certain negative behaviors that may be intentionally or unintentionally executed by them (Rosen, Chang & Johnson, 2009). It has been observed that workplace deviant behavior exists in much organization and its rate is very high, due to which the rate of termination among employees, absenteeism rates, customer complaints and other organizational results have also been increasing. To find the root cause of these workplace deviant behaviors, this study has been conducted. So that by minimizing these behaviors, higher job satisfaction, lower turnover, less stress, higher productivity, lower absenteeism and better customer service can be achieved.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate how self-control and revenge attitude moderate the relationship between psychological contract breach and workplace deviant behavior in the organization. Those behaviors that violate the norms, internal rules and policies of the organization are called Negative deviant workplace behaviors while those behaviors that violate them honorably are called positive deviant workplace behaviors. This research has explored some reasons that in organizations why people engage in such behaviors and psychological contract breach has been identified as one of those factors.

The research findings will be valuable to organizations with in Pakistan as well as other developing countries. Those organizations who want to overcome the value of negative workplace deviant behaviors occurring among their employees because of a breach of psychological contracts for the better performance of the organization. As this study indicates that breach of psychological contracts is positively related to work place deviant behaviors; revenge attitude strengthen this relationship and self-control weaken this relationship.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Breach of Psychological Contract*

The researcher highlighted the essential progressions regarding anticipation between the relationship of employer and employee in terms of psychological contract to guarantee a vigorous and broad-minded association for both parties (Lijo and Lyngdoh, 2016)

Breach of psychological contract is the observation that the organization has neglected to satisfy one or a greater amount of its commitments and has been recognized from violation, which catches the emotional reaction that may emerge from breach (Morrison and Robinson, 1997). Psychological contract breach catches employees' observations of the degree to which the employer has neglected to satisfy one or a greater amount of its obligations (Conway and Briner, 2005). The beauty of the concept is "in the simple idea that breach has a straightforward negative relationship with outcomes" (Conway and Briner, 2009).

According to Sebastian (2015) the psychological contract is give-and-take responsibilities for both employer and employee in terms of employment. As per the discussion of Agarwal (2014) the psychological contract denotes the employee and employer opportunities from each other which are indebted to each other.

Morrison and Robinson (2000) have been described breach of psychological contract as a process started by Reneging and Incongruence. Reneging is the condition when representative and manager feels a commitment exists however intentionally neglect to meet that commitment. Incongruence, additionally, is when the representative and superintendents have distinctive understandings about if a given commitment exists or about the way of a given commitment. Sometimes employees may also do a comparison about the extent to which his psychological contracts fulfilled by the organizations. All these conditions lead to perceive breach of contract, if still psychological contract has not been fulfilled it will ultimately lead to violation of psychological contract. (Morrison and Robinson, 2000, Zhao *et al.*, 2007)

### *2.2 Self-Control*

Self-Control is the capacity of a single person to prevent himself from motivations of instincts/wishes and avoid following up on them (Hofmann *et al.*, 2009). Three parts of Self-Control have been proposed (Baumeister and Heatherton, 1996) standard (an obviously characterized objective or coveted finish state), screening (a comparison of the true state to the wanted state), and operation (a methodology set in movement to change the true state to the wanted state). Shortcoming in the last segment seems, by all accounts, to be the cause of Manu failed attempts at self-control. Grasmick *et al.*, (1993) presented six dimensions for self-Control variable, including impulsivity, simple tasks; risk seeking, physical activities, self-centeredness, and temper.

### *2.3 Revenge Attitude*

Revenge attitude is defined as the aim of the victim of mischief to incur harm, injury, uneasiness, or punishment on the party who is responsible for making the mischief (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001). The cause of revenge might be coordinated at the organization, one's supervisor, or one's colleagues and it is regularly actuated via unjustifiable or unfair occasions (Jones, 2004, Bies, 1996). For example, Jones (2009) discovered that perceived interpersonal unfairness increases the employees' revenge attitude against their administrators, while perceived procedural unfairness upgrades their revenge attitude around the organization. The point when the sources of "trigger" occasions change, the target(s) of revenge may likewise change. Revenge process is a cognitive variable in light of the fact that people regularly consider and get ready for revenge identified behavior before they act (Bies and Tripp, 2001). In other words, revenge happens according to an absence of fairness or unfairness play coming about because of cognitive

handling of judging honesty, for example distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Bechwati, 2003).

#### *2.4 Workplace Deviant Behaviors*

Workplace deviant behaviors in the literature categorized into constructive (positive) and destructive (negative) deviances. According to Appelbaum *et al.* (2007), Those behaviors in which the employees had not assigned extra tasks or they are not ordered or asked to do but just to achieve the objectives of the organization, they do tasks by themselves and help other employees so that their job expectations can be accomplished are called constructive behaviors. In contrast, destructive deviant behavior involves those behaviors that as destructive in nature for the organizations like sabotage of equipment, harassing and other types of negative behaviors that bear adverse consequences to the organizations and its affiliates (Sims, 1996).

Deviance, in general means the beliefs, state of mind and conducts that are changing in nature from the accepted benchmarks. Most of the time, The perception of deviance is negative (Lucas and Friedrich, 2005). Huiras *et al.* (2000) states that deviation at work environment is equal to the dangerous issues of employee's absenteeism, turnover and absence of duty etc.

At work place employees confer a mixture of deviant acts. Robinson and Bennett (1995) have described these deviant behaviors into four diverse classes; property deviance, Production deviance, political deviance and individual deviance.

Psychological contract is a set of unwritten complementary desires between an employee and the organization (Schein, 1978; Conway and Briner, 2009). Robinson (1997) defined breach as the cognitive awareness or promise that has been received. Psychological contract breach is made through 3 sources. First one those specific promises made to them by organization prospective. Second, perception of organization culture and common practices and the last that their idealized expectations of how organization operates.

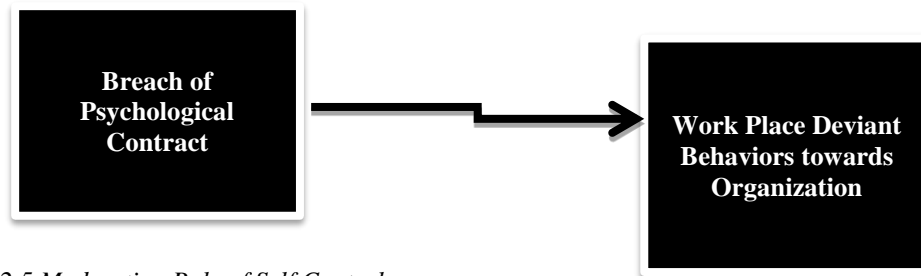
Psychological contract breach includes a representative's observation that one or more commitments of the supervisor are unfulfilled (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Zehao *et al.* (2007) Concluded that there is a negative relation between Psychological contract and job satisfaction. For the future explanation affective events theory is explained in this scenario that event (breach) has effective relation with affective reactions which in turn low the work attitude at job place and person will place dysfunctional behavior (Weiss & Cropanzano's, 1996). Emotion theory suggests that due to breach of his/her expectations, people became angry and that anger is associated with an action tendency and this hypothesis can be supported by Social interactions theory. The perception of Psychological Contract Breach not just prompts negative emotions about the unmet expectations connected with particular promises, and yet to additional general emotions about the employee-employer relationship as far as not being esteemed and regarded by the utilizing organizations (Coyle & Conway 2005). It could be concluded that the employees who are not committed may explain the organization negatively to others or outsiders, which inhibit the ability of the organization to hire the employees of high-quality (Mowday *et al.* 1982).

Fulfillment of psychological contract breach will affect organization citizenship behavior of an employee directed toward organization. Through violation of Psychological contract employee attitude toward organization is negative. By the longitudinal studies in the research it is indicated that the violation of Psychological Contract influences employee

perception of how much they own their organization (Robinson 1996, Robinson and Morison 1995, Robinson and Rousseau 1994) which in turn increase the turnover, reduce work performance reduce willingness to engage in Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

From all the arguments it is clear that the higher the Breach of Psychological Contract, higher will be the employee work place deviant behaviors toward organization. When the expectations of employee don't meet the level of satisfaction and breach occur then to overcome the anger deviant behaviors executed.

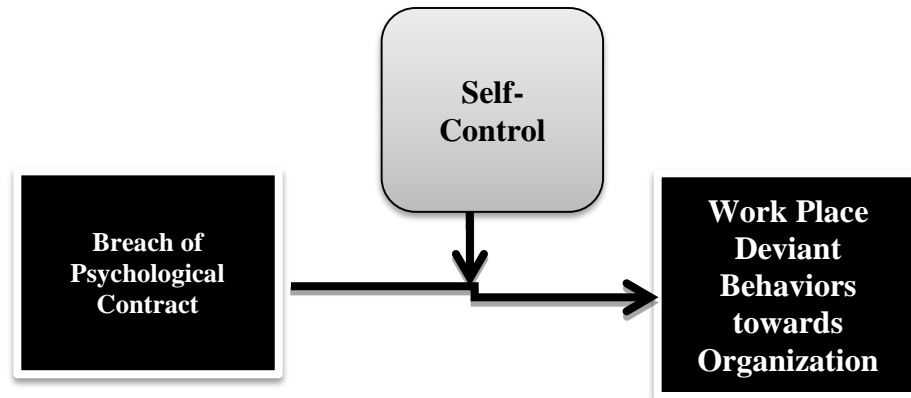
- **H1:** Positive Relation between Breach of Psychological Contract and Dysfunctional Behavior



### 2.5 Moderating Role of Self Control

Through self-control theory explains that deviant behavior and divergent person with the higher self-control can weaken the relation of psychological contract breach and deviant behaviors (Akers, 1991). Among these arguments, the present study focused only on whether self-control could be the moderator between psychological contract breach and deviant behavior.

- **H2:** Self-control weakens the relation of Breach of psychological contract and Work Place Deviant Behaviors towards organization.



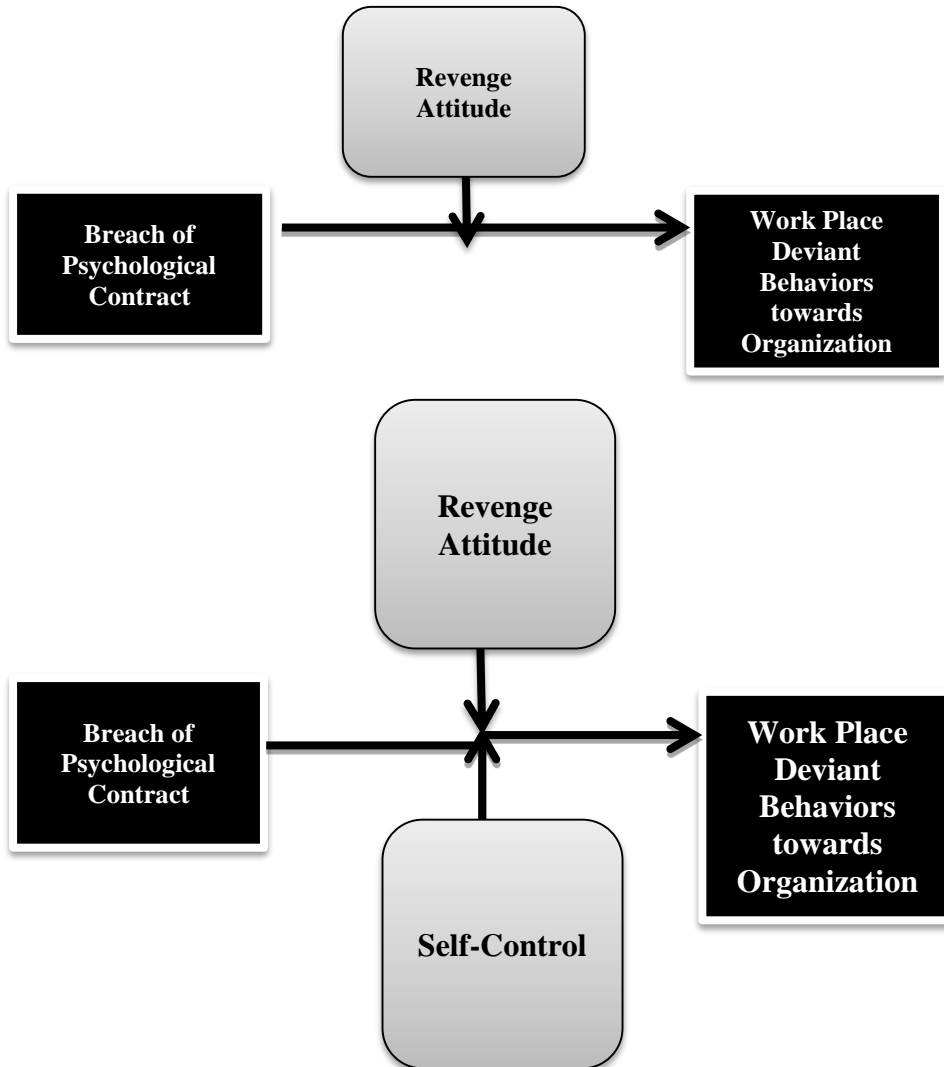
### 2.6 Moderating Role of Revenge Attitude

Contribution in this research is made by the present study which focused only on revenge attitude that moderate the relation of psychological contract breach and deviant behavior. Higher the revenge attitude higher and strong will be the relation of deviant behavior caused due to the breach of psychological contract. One reason for defaulting from contract is that the organization may be unwilling to fulfill the contract because it perceive that the

employees performance has fallen short and thus the organization is no longer indebted to follow (Morrison and Robinson, 1997). In this sense renegeing may resulted in creating revenge attitude within employees (Bies and Trip 1998).

Therefore, it is hypothesized that the breach of psychological contract results in workplace deviant behaviors and this relationship gets strengthen when the employees would be high on revenge attitude.

- **H<sub>3</sub>**: Revenge attitude strengthen the relation of Breach of psychological contract and Work Place Deviant Behaviors towards organization.



## **4. Methodology**

### *4.1 The Population and Sample*

In order to gain insight into the thoughts and views of the employees of the public organization regarding the occurrence of work place deviant behavior due to the breach of psychological contract from their organization and supervisor. A survey has been conducted from the employees of the Higher Education Commission Islamabad. The sample contains a total of 176 genuine responses after a distribution of 230 questionnaires which were distributed to the employees of the Higher Education Commission Islamabad.

The 230 questionnaires distributed among respondents brought back 193 completed questionnaires and of the 193 responses, 176 (aggregating a response rate of 76.5%) were found to be genuine and usable to carry out the study further. The random probability sampling technique has been used. For the privacy their names might not be asked and it will decidedly be specified that their reactions will be kept secret and the coming about information will be skimmed over on general foundation.

### *4.2 Data Processing and Analysis*

Data was processed through statistical tools, i.e. Simple tabulations were used to test the means, standard deviations, reliabilities and the inter correlation matrix test the problem of multicollinearity. In addition, Chronbach's alpha coefficient has been used to determine the internal reliability of the scales used in the questionnaire. Casual relations with correlation analysis and regression analysis were tested. There are two steps involved in the moderation analysis; first, the moderating variable and the independent variables were penetrated into the regression equation while in second step, the multiplicative term was penetrated in the regression equation. "The significant unstandardized regression coefficient of the multiplicative term confirmed the moderation effect between the independent and dependent variable (Cohen et al., 2003). Statistical software named Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for statistical computations.

### *4.3 Measures and Reliability Statistics*

#### *4.3.1 Breach of Psychological Contract*

Breach of Psychological Contract was measured by 5-item scale with 5 dimensions (1=strongly agree and 5= strongly disagree) Developed by Robinson and Morrison (2000). Question including direct questions like "My employer has broken many of its promises to me even though I've upheld my side of the deal" and also some reverse questions in order to get accurate results e.g., "Almost all the promises made by my employer during recruitment have been kept so far". Chronbach's Alpha calculated is 0.672 this shows that measure/scale is reliable while the reliability scale for the resource paper was 0.92.

#### *4.3.2 Self-Control*

Self-Control was measured with 4 item scale (1=strongly agree and 5= strongly disagree) developed by Grasmick *et al.* (1993). Question including direct questions like "When I am really angry, other people better stay away from me". Chronbach's Alpha calculated is 0.802 this shows that measure/scale is reliable.



## 4.3.3 Revenge Attitude

Revenge attitude was measured by 5-item scale (1=strongly agree and 5= strongly disagree) developed by Daunt including three questions like “I did deviant behavior to teach someone a lesson”. Chronbach's Alpha calculated is 0.765 this shows that measure/scale is reliable while the reliability scale for the resource paper was 0.98.

## 4.3.4 Workplace Deviant Behavior

Workplace Deviant Behavior was measured by 5-item scale (1=never and 5= very often) developed by Peterson (2002) including three questions like “I intentionally worked slower than other could have worked”. Chronbach's Alpha calculated is 0.910 this shows that measure/scale is reliable. According to Bartlett, (1954) the recommended value of validity is 0.6. In this study, the validity of all variable items was more than 0.6 except few items. Therefore, in this factor loading lowest value items has removed from data for refining this scale.

**Table 1: Correlation Analysis**

		Mean	SD	PCB	RA	SC	OD
<b>PCB</b>	Pearson Correlation	2.3920	0.490	(0.672)			
<b>RA</b>	Pearson Correlation	2.1307	0.726	-0.145	(0.765)		
<b>SC</b>	Pearson Correlation	1.8594	0.428	-0.231**	-0.157*	(0.802)	
<b>OD</b>	Pearson Correlation	1.7567	0.635	0.394**	-0.142	-0.012	(0.910)

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), Chronbach's Alpha is mentioned in parenthesis, N=176, OD=Workplace Deviance, PCB=Psychological Contract Breach, RA=Revenge Attitude, SC=Self Control

Table 1 presents the means, SDs, reliabilities, and correlations of the study variables. The correlation indicates a relatively significant positive relationship between psychological contract breach and workplace deviant behavior (0.394p<0.01), which is in accordance with the hypothesis. In addition, psychological contract breach is significantly correlated having negative relationship with self-control (-0.231). This again is in harmony with the proposed hypothesis. Furthermore, psychological contract breach is insignificantly correlated having positive relationship with revenge attitude (-0.145), which is in accordance with the hypothesis.

**Table 2: Work Place Deviance toward Organization**

	$\beta$	DF	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$
<b>Step 1</b>				
<i>Control Variables</i>			0.050	0.050
<b>Education</b>	-0.025	2,173		
<b>Experience</b>	-0.219	1,172		
<b>Step 2</b>				
<b>PCB</b>	0.396**		0.207	0.157

\*\* Regression is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),\* Regression is significant at the 0.05 level, N=176,

Predictors: (Constant), Education, Experience, PCB

Dependent Variable: OD

Table 2 presents the direct relationship of psychological contract breach with work place deviance toward organization. After analyzing the data it has been interpreted that demographic variable education and experience have impact on work place deviance toward organization but these variable have been controlled. After controlling these variables the results shows that Psychological Contract Breach has a significantly positive impact ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $\beta = 0.396$ ) on work place deviance towards organization. Moreover, psychological contract breach explains 20.7% variations in work place deviance toward organization. On the basis of the result we will accept the  $H_1$ .

**Table 3: Work Place Deviance towards Organization**

	$\beta$	DF	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$
<b>Step 1</b>				
<i>Control variables</i>		2,173	0.050	0.050
<b>Education</b>	-0.030			
<b>Experience</b>	-0.207***			
<b>Step 2</b>				
<b>PCB(Centric)</b>	0.730***	2,171	0.218	0.168
<b>RA(Centric)</b>	0.482			
<b>PCB*RA</b>	-0.647*	1,170	0.230	0.012

\*\*\* Regression is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), \*\* Regression is significant at the 0.05 level, \* Regression is significant at the 0.10 level, N=176, Predictors: (Constant), Education and Experience, PCBc, RAc, PCB\*RA, Dependent Variable: OD.

Table 3 presents the direct relationship of psychological contract breach with work place deviance toward organization with the moderating role of revenge attitude. After analyzing the data it has been interpreted that demographic variable education and experience have impact on work place deviance toward organization but these variables have been controlled. After controlling these variables the results shows that revenge attitude (Moderator) has a significant negative impact ( $p < 0.10$ ,  $\beta = -0.647$ ) on work place deviance toward organization. On the basis of the result we will accept the H<sub>3</sub>.

**Table 4: Work Place Deviance toward Organization**

	$\beta$	DF	R2	$\Delta R2$
<b>Step 1</b>				
<b>Control variables</b>		2,173	0.050	0.050
<b>Education</b>	-0.003			
<b>Experience</b>	-0.270**			
<b>Step 2</b>				
<b>PCB(centric)</b>	0.382**	2,171	0.208	0.158
<b>SC(centric)</b>	-1.806**			
<b>PCB*SC</b>	-1.795**	1,170	0.245	0.037

\*\* Regression is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),\* Regression is significant at the 0.05 level, N=176, Predictors: (Constant), Education, Experience, PCBc, SCc, PCB\*SC

Dependent Variable: OD

Table 4 presents the relationship of psychological contract breach with work place deviance toward organization with the moderating role of self-control. After analyzing the data it has been interpreted that demographic variable education and experience have impact on work place deviance toward organization but these variables have been controlled. After controlling these variables the results shows that self-control (Moderator) has a significant positive impact ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $\beta = -1.795$ ) on work place deviance toward organization. On the basis of the result we will accept the H<sub>2</sub>.

### 5. Discussions

Results obtained from the collected data shows that there is a positive and significant relation between Psychological contract breach and Work Place Deviance towards Organization. From the records of previous studies, it is clearly observed that the fulfillment of promises on the part of empowerment is positively related to employee's organization commitment. Through past research it is proved that psychological contract

breach negatively correlated with various work behaviors (Robinson and Rousseau 1994). According to the research made by Robinson and Rousseau (1994) 55% of MBA sample graduates indicated that psychological contract is violated within first 2 years of the employment. Psychological contract breach is significant at 0.01 which shows that there are only 1% changes of error with this relation. Through table 02 it is clear that Psychological contract breach has a relation with Work Place Deviance toward Organization.

Higher the Psychological Contract breach Higher will be the Work Place Deviance toward Organization.  $R^2$  of PCB shows value of 0.207 which means that Psychological Contract Breach explains 20.7% of Work Place Deviance toward Organization. 1 percent change in IV causes 39.6 percent changes in dependent variable. As figures mentioned in table 2. Robinson and Morrison (2000) have been described breach of psychological contract as a process started by Reneging and Incongruence. As psychological contract breach emerges according to human Behavior, Deviant behaviors are exhibited. Self-Control and Revenge attitude are the moderates

In the relationship between Psychological Contract breach and Work Place Deviance toward Organization, Self-Control is the ability of an individual to prevent himself from impulses of instincts/wishes and refrain from acting on them (Hofmann, Friese, & Strack, 2009). Higher the self-control less will be work place deviance toward organization. High ability to self-control will engages human in less work place deviance toward organization. According to the table 04, 1 unit change in self-control will causes 1.795 unit changes in Work Place Deviance toward Organization in the negative direction. Relation of Self-control and Work Place Deviance toward Organization is negatively correlated (With the  $R^2$  of 23 percent).

Revenge attitude is defined as the aim of the victim of mischief to incur harm, injury, uneasiness, or punishment on the party who is responsible for making the mischief. The cause of revenge might be coordinated at the organization, one's supervisor, or one's colleagues and it is regularly actuated via unjustifiable or unfair occasions (Jones, 2004). It is noted by Restubog, et al. (2010) data were collected from 162 sales executives and their supervisors. A correlation analysis test was conducted on the relationship between psychological contract and workplace deviant behavior which is found positive and significant relationship. As a result, the current study supported by previous study (Restubog, et al. (2010). The moderating role of revenge attitude and self-control on the relationship between psychological contract and workplace deviant behavior is supported by previous studies by (Restubog, et al. 2007) is the same with the current study.

As psychological contract breaches, employee will exhibit Work Place Deviance toward Organization. Higher the tendency of revenge attitude higher will be the Work Place Deviance toward Organization. But according to results grasped from the questionnaires there is only 10% significant level in this hypothesis. There could be different reasons due to which weak relationship is drawn between PCB and Work Place Deviance toward Organization in the presence of revenge attitude. One reason could be the economic condition of Pakistan due to which people having psychological contract breach not exhibit work place deviance toward organization.

In developing countries like Pakistan as people are more conscious about their job securities so they didn't fully express their revenge attitude. In the questionnaire we didn't

include their intentions about taking revenge instead we asked them whether they had exhibited deviant behaviors as revenge. So it would be the possibility that we didn't get the expected results but we have justified it through our literature. Job saturated market of Pakistan could also be the reason where people don't have other options for jobs and they work at the same place even after a contract breach without any revenge attitude.

## **6. Conclusion**

This research concludes that breach of psychological contracts is positively related to workplace deviant behaviors towards organization, while revenge attitude strengthens this relationship and self-control weakens this relationship. This research focused that not all individuals involved in behaving negatively on the breach of psychological contract. It depends on how much the revenge attitude an individual possesses or how much an individual has self-control. These two traits affect the relationship of breach of psychological contract and deviant behaviors. These findings will help the human resource management department of the organization to identify and understand those individuals who possess the attitude of taking revenge while hiring process and those individuals would not be selected, wherein the individuals who have the ability of self-control will be given preferably importance. This increased knowledge and understanding will help the managers to decrease the workplace deviant behaviors and promote the organizational commitment behavior in the organization.

## **7. Limitation of the Study**

This study incorporates many limitations in it. First study has been conducted by using cross-sectional data therefore the postulated relationship between variables cannot be interpreted casually. Second the sample selected to conduct my study is limited and not randomly selected from the entire population and this lacks the generalizability of my present findings. Also, the study has been conducted in Pakistan; it cannot be generalized to its international counterpart. Another limitation includes that data is purely self-report data, collected from the employees of public organization. Therefore, an element of biasness may affect the results.

The current study was framed as to examine the direct and moderating relations between the variables; more studies are required to fill the research procedural gap like mediating studies. Additionally, other variables like procedural justice, age groups, work motivation, regular feedback and empowerment practices may also be considered for future studies as moderators, other than big personality factors.

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