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Psychological Contract Breach, Behavioural Work Outcomes, Organisational Identification, and Islamic Work Ethics: A Moderated Mediation Study

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Abstract:

We investigated how organisational identification (OID) mediates the influences of psychological contract breach (PCB) on two work outcomes [organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and counterproductive work behaviour (CWB)], and how Islamic work ethics (IWE) moderated the PCB–OID relationship. We collected data from 256 Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries using a self-report questionnaire; we employed Structural Equation Modelling in analysing the data using Smart PLS. Our findings reveal that OID mediates between PCB and the two work outcomes. Further, we show that IWE has no moderating influence on the PCB–OID relationship. Finally, the influence of PCB on the two work outcomes is insignificant.

Keywords: Psychological Contract Breach, Organisational Citizenship

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Behaviour, Counterproductive Behaviour, Organisational Identification, Islamic Work Ethics.

JEL Codes: M5, L21.

1. Introduction

We explored what happens to employees' sense of organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and its antithesis (counterproductive work behaviour, CWB) when they experience a breach of psychological contract (PCB) in their workplaces. Employees' behaviours that contribute to organisational effectiveness are known as job performance. Job performance is a multidimensional construct comprising various behaviours, including OCB and CWBs (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). Positive organisational behaviour depends on positive psychology and vice versa (Dannhauser, 2007). The psychological contract is an essential framework for understanding the diverse forms of employment relationships (Zhao et al., 2007). In connection with the current study, the researchers intend to include two domains of behavioural work outcomes, OCB as positive outcomes and CWB as a negative one.

Although the importance of behavioural work outcomes such as OCB and CWB have been rarely investigated in the Palestinian public sector, the Palestinian context is considered a unique context due to the volatility in the operating environment. Recently, the public sector in Palestine has been experiencing greater challenges and pressures in delivering services. Particularly in the Gaza Strip, the southern part of Palestine, this is due to a political situation that has put Gaza under blockade for over a decade. Consequently, this situation has affected the ability of the Gaza government to meet its obligations toward public sector employees. Employees working in the Gaza government have not received salaries for years, which means the compensation system for the Gaza government is not stable. Rousseau (1990) stressed the importance of the compensation system in shaping psychological contract and its effects on employees' perceptions of mutual obligations. Similarly, Turnley and Feldman (1999) concentrated on those most frequently used elements: the amount of pay and merit pay as the main factors that may affect PCB. However, although public sector managers in the Palestinian ministries have not received salaries for a long time, they have still been delivering services to the public, which provides an avenue to examine the relationship between PCB and behavioural work outcomes among managers working in the Palestinian ministries.

However, it is worth mentioning that the Gaza government is Islamic and has controlled Gaza since 2007. It is considered the first Islamic government that adopted the Islamic ideology and tried to implement Islamic rules in all aspects of human life. As Sayigh (2010) pointed out, the Gaza government upholds Islamist social ideology as its core principle. Religious beliefs could make a significant difference in employee behaviour and performance. The study of Osman et al. (2013) revealed that religiosity has a significant positive relationship with employee performance. The religion of Islam provides a comprehensive system of life rooted in ethics. Islamic work ethics (IWE) guides Muslims' attitudes and behaviour in the workplace and contributes to the welfare of societies (Rokhman & Hassan, 2012). An employee with a high work ethic tends to view hard work as normal (Mudrack & Mason, 2010). Therefore, based on the above argument, it is important to observe the potential moderating role of IWE on employee attitudes when PCB occurs.

Besides that, organisational identification (OID) is considered one of the most important factors to reflect the psychological state of the employee within the organisation and may be a crucial variable for explaining behavioural outcomes (Edwards, 2005). Oakes (1987) pointed out that the more psychologically significant the group membership will be, the more notable the identity and the more psychologically affected the behaviour. OID considers a psychological state that reflects the strength of the connection between employees and the organisation. Previous studies have reported that behaviours such as an increase in role and extra-role behaviour and a decreased turnover are positively related to high OID and influence organisational performance (Peters et al., 2010; Riketta, 2005; Van Dick et al., 2006). Chen et al. (2013) found a positive relationship between OID and OCB.

Moreover, Demir (2015) pointed out that, until recently, OID has received little attention as a research topic within organisations. AlAtwi and Bakir (2014) revealed that the mediation role of OID is still unclear and needs more investigation. The authors also implied that the relationship between OID and negative behaviour, such as CWB, is still unexplored. A study conducted by Epitropaki (2013) reported that the association between breaching psychological contract and job performance through OID has rarely been examined. The above discussion demonstrated the existing theoretical gap that calls for intensive study to examine the mediating role of OID between PCB and behavioural work outcomes.

However, the traditional perspective on the influence of PCB on

employees' attitudinal and behavioural outcomes is based on the social exchange theory (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003). Social exchange theory postulates that employment is an exchange of material and socio-emotional benefits and that employees and employers enter into contractual relationships to maximise benefits (Blau, 1964). Social exchange theory has been widely employed to explain employees' potential reactions as a response to breaching or fulfilling the psychological contract (Lester et al., 2002; Turnley et al., 2003). Therefore, in this study, social exchange theory was advanced to explain the effects of PCB on work attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. Furthermore, the researchers draw a perspective from social exchange theory to examine OCB directed toward organisation. This theory posits that employees reciprocate their efforts with the source they receive benefits. Thus, it is expected that managers may mutually exchange their attitudes and behaviour with the organisation as a reciprocate with their salaries. Hence, the conceptual study framework was developed based on the above argument.

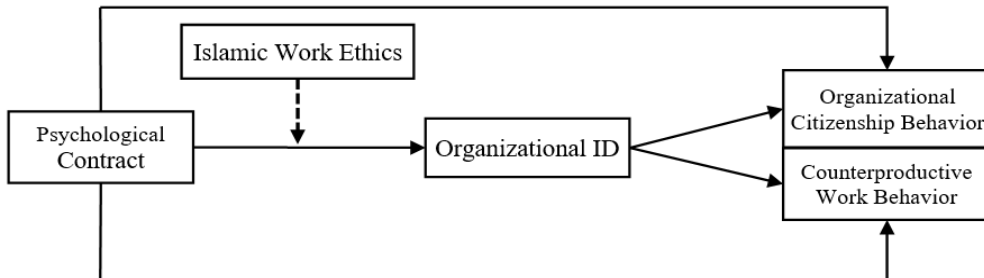


Figure 1. Research model

2. Literature review and hypothesis formulation

2.1. PCB and the two behavioural work outcomes

The crucial employee behaviour that derives from the effect of psychological contract is OCB (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 1989). A recent study by Yang et al. (2020) revealed that psychological contract under fulfilment is negatively related to OCB. Wright and Cropanzano (2004) found that psychological well-being significantly predicted employee performance. OCB has been considered an important factor in enhancing organisational

performance (Podsakoff et al., 2009) and employee performance (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012). Previous research has reported that PCB negatively affects work outcomes, task performance and OCB (Lee et al., 2014; Shih & Chuang, 2012; Suazo, 2009).

However, understanding individual psychological processes has long been argued as the best way to explain unethical behaviour in organisations (Barsky, 2011). CWB or workplace deviance is deviant behaviour that harms the organisation (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Tomprou and Nikolaou (2011) reported that when an employee apprehends their employer's failure to perform his expected obligations, the PCB is likely to occur, leading to workplace deviance.

Previous studies have widely reported consistent results that PCB is negatively associated with positive behaviour, such as OCB. In contrast, the relationship between PCB and negative work behaviour, such as CWB, is still unclear. Although few empirical studies investigate the relationship between PCB and CWB, the majority have a positive association between PCB and CWB. The study by Manzoor et al. (2015) reported that PCB is positively related to CWB.

Additionally, most previous studies were conducted in developed countries, and none has empirically investigated this relationship in the Palestinian public sector. Therefore, this study advanced a conceptual framework to investigate the relationship between PCB and behavioural work outcomes (i.e. OCB and CWB) in the Palestinian context. Consistent with the previous findings, it is predicted that PCB is negatively related to OCB while will positively associate with CWB among Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries. Hence, the following hypotheses can be posited as follow:

H_{1a}: PCB will negatively affect OCB among Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries.

H_{1b}: PCB will positively affect CWB among Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries.

2.2. PCB and OID

PCB is more strongly related to attitudes than behaviour (Conway & Briner, 2009). OID implies a psychological connection and a sense of oneness with the organisation (Mann, 2010). Compared with many organisational behaviour concepts, little attention has been paid to the OID construct (Demir,

2015). Reviewed literature shows that very few studies examined the association between PCB and OID, and none were conducted in the public sector (Epitropaki, 2013; Li et al., 2016; Restubog et al., 2008). More importantly, none of the previous studies has been conducted in one of the developing countries, such as Palestine. Therefore, the current study will empirically investigate the influence of PCB on OID among managers in the public sector in Palestine. When PCB occurs, it is expected to affect OID negatively. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H₂: PCB will negatively affect OID among Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries.

2.3. OID and the two behavioural work outcomes

According to Oakes (1987), the more psychologically significant the group membership will be, the more notable the identity and the more psychologically affect the behaviour. Zhang et al. (2011) stated that employees who strongly identify with their organisations are more willing to present extra-role performance. The study by Li et al. (2016) revealed that OID could be a significant predictor of job performance. The literature review found that very few studies have examined the effects of OID on OCB (Demir, 2015; Jiang, 2010; Wu & Wu, 2010). Moreover, all of these studies reported the significant positive effects of OID on OCB and were conducted in developed countries' contexts.

Concerning CWB, the study of AlAtwi and Bakir (2014) found that OID negatively affects CWB; the researchers also reported inconclusive outcomes on the relationship between OID and negative behaviour such as CWB. Furthermore, most previous studies were conducted in developed countries, and little attention has been paid to developing Islamic countries. Therefore, the current study will empirically investigate the effect of OID on behavioural work outcomes (OCB and CWB) among public sector managers in Palestine. Based on the above arguments, it is expected that OID will positively correlate with OCB while it will negatively associate with CWB. Hence, the following hypotheses were advanced:

H_{3a}: OID will positively affect OCB among Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries.

H_{3b}: OID will negatively affect work CWB among Palestinian

managers in Gaza Strip ministries.

Literature review shows that OID may mediate the relationship between PCB and behavioural work outcomes. Additionally, previous studies show that the mediating role of OID between the association of PCB with behavioural work outcomes is still unclear and needs more investigation (AlAtwi & Bakir, 2014; Epitropaki, 2013). Therefore, the researchers intend to examine the mediating effect of OID on the relationship between PCB and behavioural work outcomes (i.e., OCB and CWB). Consequently, the following hypotheses can be posited.

H_{4a}: OID will be a significant mediator between PCB and OCB among Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries.

H_{4b}: OID will be a significant mediator between PCB and CWB among Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries.

2.4. IWE as a moderator between PCB and OID

The concept of work ethic refers to the values, beliefs, intentions and objectives people apply to their work (Clarke, 1983). The Islamic work ethic guides Muslim attitudes and behaviour in the workplace and contributes to the welfare of societies (Rokhman & Hassan, 2012). Individuals with high work ethics tend to view hard work and sacrifice as normal work ethics (Mudrack & Mason, 2010). However, by reviewing the literature, it is found that several variables have the potential to moderate the effects on the PCB and work outcomes relationship. For instance, Agarwal and Bhargava (2013) found that educational level moderates the association between PCB and affective commitment. Shih and Chuang (2013) found that self-esteem moderates the relationship between PCB and OCB.

Furthermore, Bavik and Bavik (2014) revealed that moral identity moderates the link between PCB and incivility behaviour. Bordia et al. (2008) reported that self-control moderates the relationship between PCB and CWB. In contrast, Ahmed et al. (2019) found a positive relationship between IWE and OCB. However, from the previous discussion, it can be seen that many variables could moderate the effects of PCB on work attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. In contrast, none of these variables reflects the Islamic perspective. This indicates that the potential moderating role of IWE is still unexplored. Thus, observing the potential moderating effects of IWE on the relationship between PCB and OID is empirically significant.

Additionally, most previous research has been conducted in Western economies; these countries follow different cultures and hold different religions. The culture of these countries is individualistic and non-Islamic. This study is one of few studies conducted in developing Arab and Muslim countries, specifically Palestine. Unlike Western and European countries, Palestine considers a unique context that holds a collectivist culture and follows Islam as the main religion. Therefore, the uniqueness of the Palestinian context provides a potential research opportunity to fill the observed theoretical and contextual gap. Hence, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H₅: IWE moderate the relationship between PCB and OID, whereas high IWE will weaken the effects of PCB on OID.

3. Methodology

This study employed the quantitative approach to examine the relationships between variables. The study's target population is 900 managers distributed among 15 ministries located in different areas in Gaza Strip. A sample of 270 was randomly selected from the target population (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970; Saunders et al., 2012). A total of 300 self-administered questionnaires were distributed, and 280 questionnaires were returned, representing a 93% rate of return. By checking the missing data, a sum of 7 questionnaires was removed because of uncompleted answers. After checking the missing data, 273 completed questionnaires were entered into SPSS version 24 to screen data statistically. A total of 17 cases were identified as multivariate outliers and were deleted because they could result in non-normality of the data, which could, in turn, influence statistical results (Hair et al., 2010). However, after removing the outliers, the remaining 256 usable cases were retained to proceed to the following data analysis stage.

This study adopted the most commonly used scale developed by Robinson and Morrison (2000) to measure PCB. This scale has five items with reliability Cronbach's alpha of 0.92. The reliability in this study is high, as evidenced by the findings of Cronbach's alpha 0.788, composite reliability 0.855 and AVE 0.543. To measure IWE, the researchers adopted the 17 items scale developed by (Ali, 2005). The reliability of this scale Cronbach alpha was 0.89. in the current study, it is found that this scale has high reliability and validity with 0.861, 0.886 and 0.531 for Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability and AVE, respectively. Mael and Ashforth (1992) adopted the

widely used scale to measure OID. The scale includes six items, and the reported coefficient alpha was 0.87. This study found that the scale has the acceptable and required level of validity and reliability with values of 0.86, 0.896 and 0.59 for Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and AVE, respectively. The seven-item scale developed by Williams and Anderson (1991) was employed to measure OCB. The coefficient alpha is 0.72.

Concerning the current study, the scale has an acceptable level of validity and reliability with values of 0.623, 0.798 and 0.569 for Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and AVE, respectively. Bennett and Robinson (2000) developed a scale to measure CWB. The scale consists of 12 items to assess organisational deviance toward the organisation. In this study, the scale has high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.8 and Composite reliability of 0.858. in addition, the construct validity found AVE is 0.503.

4. Data analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 24 for the window was utilised to log in and clean the data. Then, SEM-PLS software (SmartPLS) was employed to test the relationships among variables.

5. Findings

H₁ proposed that PCB will significantly affect work outcomes (OCB and CWB). It is found that ($\beta = -0.112$, $t = 1.764$, $p = 0.078$) for the effects of PCB on OCB and ($\beta = 0.042$, $t = 0.471$, $p = 0.638$) for the effects on CWB. These results reveal the insignificant effects of PCB on both behavioural outcomes included in this study. Thus, it can be said that H_{1a} and H_{1b} are not supported. H₂ stated that PCB would negatively affect OID. It is found ($\beta = -0.318$, $t = 4.98$, $p = 0.000$, which is less than 0.05), which supports this hypothesis. H₃ stated that OID would significantly affect work outcomes (OCB and CWB). The findings reveal that ($\beta = 0.246$, $t = 2.62$, $p = 0.009$, which is less than $p < 0.05$) for the effects on OCB and ($\beta = -0.284$, $t = 2.869$, $p = 0.004$, which is less than $p < 0.05$) for the relationship with CWB which provide support to H₃. Table 1 summarises the results of this study.

Table 1. The result of hypothesis testing

H. No.	Path	(β)	T-statistics	P-values	Result
H _{1a}	PCB -> OCB	-0.112	1.764	0.078	Not supported
H _{1b}	PCB -> CWB	0.042	0.471	0.638	Not supported
H ₂	PCB -> OID	-0.318	4.980	0.000	Supported
H _{3a}	OID -> OCB	0.246	2.620	0.009	Supported
H _{3b}	OID -> CWB	-0.284	2.869	0.004	Supported

On the other hand, the mediating role of OID between the PCB and work outcomes (OCB and CWB) was stated in H₄. Table 2 shows the findings of the mediation hypothesis. The results show the significant relationship for this hypothesis as ($\beta = -0.078$, $t = 2.076$, $p = 0.038$, which is less than $p < 0.05$) for OCB and ($\beta = 0.090$, $t = 2.185$, $p = 0.029$ which is less than $p < 0.05$) for CWB, which provide support for this hypothesis, suggesting that OID function as a mediator between the association of PCB and work outcomes (OCB and CWB).

Table 2. The findings of the mediation hypothesis

H. No.	Path	(β)	T-statistics	P-values	Result
H _{4a}	PCB -> OID -> OCB	-0.078	2.075	0.038	Supported
H _{4b}	PCB -> OID -> CWB	0.090	2.185	0.029	Supported

As can be seen from the above Table, it can be said that OID significantly mediates the relationship between PCB and both OCB and CWB.

Table 3. The result of the moderation hypothesis

Path	(β)	T-statistics	P-values	Result
H ₅ : IWEs*PCB-> OID	0.159	1.349	0.178	Not supported

Finally, hypothesis H₅ tests the moderating influence of IWE on the PCB–OID relationship. The findings reveal that ($\beta = 0.159$, $t = 1.349$; $p = 0.178$, greater than $p > 0.05$). However, the P-value is still above the significance level, indicating that H₅ is not supported. It can be said that IWE do not moderate the effects of PCB on OID. Table 3 shows the result of the moderation hypothesis.

6. Discussion

The first hypothesis stated that there is a significant relationship between PCB and behavioural work outcomes (OCB and CWB). Previous research has reported that PCB negatively affects work outcomes such as OCB (Lee et al., 2014; Shih & Chuang, 2012; Suazo, 2009) and is positively related to CWB (Manzoor et al., 2015). Surprisingly, the current study's findings did not support the findings of previous studies. There is no significant relationship between PCB and both constructs of work behaviour (OCB and CWB).

However, the findings from the present study are consistent with those (Schaupp, 2012), who found no significant relationships between PCB and work outcomes (OCB and CWB). Guo (2016) provided similar findings and found no significant relationship between the five dimensions of PCB and extra-role performance. Concerning these findings, Conway and Briner (2009) pointed out that PCB correlates more strongly with work attitudes than actual behaviour. Furthermore, Morrison and Robinson (1997) established that breach refers to the cognitive evaluation, while violation represents a mental state of readiness for action, which can lead to negative behavioural responses.

The results may be attributed to the recognition of Palestinian managers in Gaza Strip ministries that the reason behind breaching the psychological contract is out of government control. Therefore, managers serving in the Gaza government may have believed the government did not play a big role in breaching the psychological contract; they believed it was breached due to external forces. However, managers may resist external political forces and support the government. Moreover, another alternative explanation to these is that the entire study population is Muslim and holds Islamic values. As mentioned earlier in this study, ethical Islamic values can be a source of action guides and a source of personality building as well.

The Prophet (SAW) describes the core characteristics of the Muslim character. He (SAW) said: "A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands." (Sahih al-Bukhari hadith no. 10). Therefore, Islamic values promote producing positive behaviour. They further prevent Muslims from providing negative behaviour, such as CWB. The second hypothesis proposed that PCB will negatively affect OCB. Like the western context, the findings of this study confirmed that PCB is negatively associated with OCB. This result is in line with the previous studies (Epitropaki, 2013; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Li et al., 2016; Restubog et al.,

2008). The similarity of findings in both Palestine and western contexts allows the generalisation of the negative relationship between PCB and OID. However, all the previous studies were conducted in UAS, Philippines, Greek, and China, and none of them was conducted in eastern societies. This provides additional empirical evidence from a non-western, different and phenomenal context, Palestine. This finding is also consistent with social exchange theory which has been widely employed to explain employees' potential reactions as a response to breaching the psychological contract. This result indicates that when managers perceive the PCB is taking place, they will decrease OID toward their ministries.

The third hypothesis stated that OID would significantly be associated with behavioural work outcomes (OCB and CWB). It is found that OID is significantly and positively related to OCB. Contrarily, it is negatively correlated to CWB. These results align with the findings of AlAtwi and Bakir (2014); (Demir, 2015; Jiang, 2010; Wu & Wu, 2010), who show that OID has a significant positive relationship with OCB while negatively correlated with CWB. These results are consistent with social exchange theory, in accordance with the view of (Dasgupta et al., 2012; Harrison et al., 2006), who argued that positive work attitudes lead to well-adjusted behaviours and vice versa. The results might be attributed to the fact that study respondents are completely aware of the difficulties and obstacles faced by the Palestinian ministries for a decade. Thus, they protect and support their ministries in this difficult situation by reducing the negative behaviour and saving properties of their ministries, regardless of their respective ministries.

The fourth hypothesis proposed that OID significantly mediates the association between PCB and behavioural work outcomes (OCB and CWB). The results show that OID significantly mediates the relationship between PCB and behavioural work outcomes. These findings confirm that when a psychological contract takes place, employees who strongly identify themselves with their organisations are more willing to present positive behaviour, such as OCB and less willing to do unwholesome actions, such as CWB.

The last hypothesis examined the moderating role of IWE on the relationship between PCB and OID. The findings showed that IWE insignificantly moderates the effects of PCB on OID. In other words, the interaction between IWE and PCB does not affect OID. A possible explanation for this insignificant moderating effect is the strong negative impact of breaching the psychological contract on managers' OID. According

to Baron and Kenny (1986), the moderating variable is introduced when there is a weak or inconsistent relation between the predictor and the criterion variable. Therefore, it can be said that the identification of managers at the Palestinian ministries will be negatively affected when PCB occurs, regardless of whether the level of IWE is high or low.

7. Conclusion

The results of this study could, in part, contribute to the literature by providing new insights into the effects of PCB on behavioural work outcomes. Additionally, this study extended the knowledge in PCB and organisational behaviour literature by introducing job OID as a mediator. More importantly, the study contributes to the literature by including IWE as a moderator variable. Therefore, this study provides the needed empirical evidence on moderating role of IWE. The results provide more understanding of the interrelationships investigated in the current research model by achieving research objectives and answering research questions. The findings revealed that the influence of PCB on behavioural work outcomes (OCB and CWB) was insignificant while negatively affecting OID. The results confirm the mediating role of OID between PCB and behavioural work outcomes (OCB and CWB). Moreover, the findings show that IWE does not moderate the relationship between PCB and OID.

Future research can include in-role performance as one of the behavioural work outcomes. Additionally, the current research model focuses on OCB from a general view. It may be valuable if future studies focus on a more specific perspective, including OCB, from an Islamic perspective. Moreover, this research model concentrates more on the outcomes of perceived PCB; this provides an opportunity to investigate the antecedents and the factors that lead to PCB. Future research could also employ the qualitative research methodology to gain an in-depth understanding of employee organisation relationships. Finally, examining the research model in other contexts outside Palestine would be a promising area for further research.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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