

Employee Behavioral Deviance: A consequence of Psychological Agreement Transgression

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ABSTRACT

This aim of this research was to study the effect of psychological contract breach (relational and transactional breach) on employee workplace deviant behavior (interpersonal and organizational deviance) at a dimensional level. The purpose of a contract being legally binding is so each party will have legal recourse in the event of a breach. The result (outcome) of psychological contract breach in this research was studied with the sample of 150 employees of different private and public sector organizations which are experiencing a technological shift. We used regression analysis in our study. Results indicate a positive relationship between psychological contract breach and deviant employee behavior. Relational breach shows a strengthened effect on organizational deviance than interpersonal deviance, the transactional breach is also positively related with organizational deviance but in less strengthened form than relational breach, but it shows no significant relationship with interpersonal deviance when it is measured in context of change. Many previous types of research on psychological contract breach have been done in individualist societies, but this research has focused on a social setting. Present research would help authenticate the other few types of researches in social relationships at workplace.

Keywords: Psychological contract breach, Deviant behavior, Cross dimensional effect; social response



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INTRODUCTION

The situation under study has always been previously discussed and supported by social exchange theory particularly. It focus on the exchange relationship between specific actors as an employee would behave in a particular way if and only he perceives the reward delivered (Blau 1964). Social exchange theory is a blend of economics, sociology, and psychology. The theory was forwarded to understand the behavior of human beings in an exchange relationship, initially aimed to study the monetary exchanges by Hormans (1958) but its scope was broadened to understand the non-monetary benefits as well. In an employment relationship employee and employer, both act accordingly to satisfy the give and take relationship and with the passage of time, thus creating mutual obligations. Monetary benefits include material

gains or financial gains, and non-monetary benefits included are social statuses and emotional comforts. In order to clarify more this situation there are some dimensions that will help us better to comprehend the types of psychological contract breach i.e relational and transactional. There has been a large study on psychological contract breach and its effects on different outcomes like deviance (Chiu and Peng, 2008), job attitudes (Matthijs Bal *et al.*, 2008) and job outcomes (Conway *et al.*, 2011). The outcomes of psychological contract breach focused on employee behaviors and job outcomes (Turnley and Feldman, 1999). But, recently psychological contract has also been studied between buyer and supplier (Hill *et al.*, 2009). In brief, we can still extract and raise some questions about the relationship between the psychological contract breach and the employee deviance because westerners had focused more on individualist societies rather than collectivist societies, little has been done in collectivist society and here we took example based in my country (Morocco) while many results extracted based on individualist societies (Matthijs Bal *et al.*, 2008), as overall culture does matter (Hofstede, G, 1983) but cultural understanding for realizing social responsibility is necessary (Farooq, Hao, & Liu, 2019) for determining the intensity and variations in psychological contract breach (Thomas *et al.*, 2003).

This research focuses on the collectivist society (Morocco) just like the research of Chiu and Peng (2008). Secondly this research can also be justified by Chiu & Peng (2008) "In order to clarify the various linkages between psychological contract types and employee deviance, future research may investigate the effects that breaches of different types of psychological contract have on employee deviance" (p-433).

The term psychological contract is developed by Denise Rousseau in her works, it is based on promises and not on expectations. It can be defined as the reciprocity of the actions that employee expects from employer and intentions for future actions (Rousseau, 1989). If the mutual expectations are not fulfilled by any of the parties then it leads to psychological contract breach. Psychological contract is normally seen as initiated from employee and psychological contract breach from employer perspective (Rousseau, 1989). Psychological contract is unilateral (promise perspective), illusory (promise category), depends on beliefs and perceptions (elements) optional, discretionary and indefinite (Characteristics of elements) and broad (Breadth). Meanwhile many aspects like local,

international competition and dynamics experiencing a continuous change even the employment relationships and contracts (Zhao *et al.*, 2007). So it varies from employee to employee (Suazo *et al.*, 2009). Worldwide we can see dramatic fluctuations between employer and an employee concerning the psychological contract. Urge to do some extra and competent and pressures from one-eighty degree has nipped out fairness, the element of respect and tradition from employment relationship which resulted in breakage of psychological contract typically named psychological contract breach (Turnley and Feldman, 1999).

In order to understand the psychological contract, we distinguish two types: 1) Relational and 2) Transactional contracts. Transactional contracts have a limited scope and are not that much strong and are embedded in the consciousness of employees because the reality of this relation lies in rewards like monetary benefits, while relational contracts are more reinforced than transactional. They have a wide and large scope, non economic, socio-emotional exchanges, and long term (Rousseau, 1990). Transactional contracts have in themselves short term orientation due to monetary benefits flow from employer to employee. This contract is characterized by limited personal job involvement; employees have a limit for the development of new skills (Rousseau, 1995). On the other hand relational contracts are characterized by interdependence of employee and organization, a personal involvement, development of company specific skills and employment tenure is long-term.

The Deviance in the employee behavior

Employee deviant behavior is defined as a conscious behaviors that are made in order to break the standards, harm and spoil the organizational and other employee's interests. Employee deviance is a category of employee's negative voluntary job behaviors, which has broader coverage than that of employee withdrawal behaviors (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Employee deviance has a positive effect on the organizational productivity by increasing costs and performances as has been demonstrated by the past research. But psychological contract breach is a role key to understand the employee deviant behavior which when occurs causes serious problems. According to the targets of behavior deviance is of two types, interpersonal deviance and organizational deviance (e.g., Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Interpersonal and organizational deviances are related differently with the psychological contract

breach (Chiu & Peng, 2008). The antecedents of interpersonal deviance are individual factors and for the organizational deviance are the organizational or contextual factors (Robinson and Bennett, 1995; Berry, Ones, and Sackett, 2007). The employee is aware that organizational factors have more effect than individual factors which can lead to a strengthened form of motivation with technological change (Farooq, Fu, Ahmad, Zhang, & Hao, 2019).

The prism of Social Exchange Theory for a better relationship comprehension

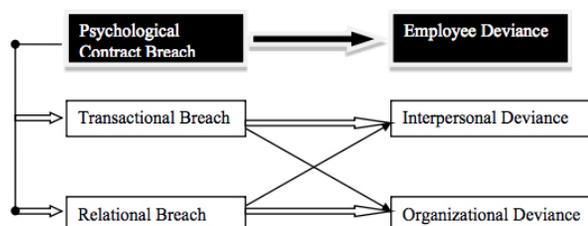
The psychological contract definition of Rousseau, as a prominent reference, pinpoints that when the employer fails to keep his promises (social, financial, economic...) toward his employees, a negative, and more likely, destructive exchange and reciprocity is bound to take place between the two protagonists, as a reaction to the failure of the employer to follow through. Thus, when the strength and the empowerment of the psychological contract is represented by the positive reciprocal behavior (due to commitment and fulfillment of the elaborated promises), the negative reciprocity is the main manifestation of the fracture within the psychological contract (when the employer fails to meet with the expectations and promises). The quintessential basis of this perceived social observation is ought to be conceived through social exchange theory, which explains that there is a fundamental similarity between rewards received by both the employee and the employer, regarding the nature of the adopted attitudes and behaviors. (Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2003). Expectations fulfillment by the employer for the benefit of its employees is considered to be a logical cause and effect relationship: I (employee) have delivered my services, and received what I have expected. Bilateral respect of the terms of the psychological agreement established between employer and employee is a key factor in reaching as far as citizenship behavior in its organizational aspect within the work field, and therefore, creating a positive systemic synergy for the ultimate benefit of the employer, more specifically. Nevertheless, it goes without saying that when a discrepancy happens to be perceived, the natural reaction of the employee goes into the direction of establishing a social power counterpart, and defining the new terms of balance, which shall be based, most generally, on negative behaviors. A complicated set of reactions which can includes: Possible harm of the organizational property, Limitation of the productivity, Procrastination, as well as social interference with

the teammates and co-workers. People choose to work either for the franchises with sole of social responsibility (Farooq, Liu, Ahmad, Fu, Awan, & Janet, 2019). All to install a balance between the employee and the organization, the two main components of the social system. (Levinson, 1965).

The employer's failure to fulfill his part of the psychological agreement can be perceived, by the employee, as an injustice laid upon him. He can consider himself to be a victim of a biased and wrong treatment, which leads, ultimately, to a professional relationship resentment, as the main cause to cognitive dissonance, as referred to by Rousseau (2004). The materialization of the cognitive shortcoming can be a vengeful retorting against the organization (Uhl-Bien & Maslyn 2003), in forms which are correlated with the employee attributes (Hao, Farooq, & Zhang, 2018), in order to achieve a balanced situation, either by positive behaviors refrainment, or the enhancement of deviant behaviors toward the organizational system. In reference to Zhao et al, (2007) "The rupture can be conceived as a perceptual event, whilst the noncognitive reactions (including the recognized violation and distrust toward management) represent it adjacent consequences" (p.669). The intensity of the tensions created from apprehension and wariness shall be the primary fuel to deviant behaviors, which can be cautionary and threatening for the organization.

1st Hypothesis: Effective correlation between the psychological agreement rupture and the deviant behaviors manifestation (i-e Interpersonal and organizational deviance).

The Layout



Transactional and relational agreement breaches are built with respect to employer. In case of breach, employee might be involved in disastrous activities that directly affect the organization i-e organizational deviance. Since the interpersonal factors are, in the thought process and psychological processing of the employee, less impactful than the

organizational ones, the uprising of deviant behaviors will most likely be on an organizational level, and in a more substantial fashion. The factors that are deeply rooted and widely held when are broken tend to generate more adverse reactions. This might be one of the reasons (Robinson and Bennett, 1995). Interpersonal deviance can be less associated with psychological agreement transgression in collectivist society because relations are more important.

2nd Hypothesis: The interpersonal deviance has a fragile link with transactional breach, compared to the one established with the organizational deviance.

3rd Hypothesis: The interpersonal deviance has a fragile link with relational breach, compared to the one established with the organizational deviance.

Statistical sampling procedures

The Moroccan economy stability, and growth rate are facing, nowadays, numerous issues, and impacting, drastically, the target population of this study, which has developed a series of negative and deviant behaviors, as a consequence to psychological contract rupture e-g Employees of the Second National Television 2M, la RAM (Royal Air Maroc), Société Générale (Banking sector), Averda, Derichebourg, the public hospitals interns and doctors, as well as the government schools teachers.

In order to control the plurality of variables which can be found in the study, we have chosen to use the convenience sampling technique, with the exclusion of the employees which represent higher emotional risks and psychological instabilities in terms of deviant behaviors, due to the existence of other personality flaw factors. The distribution of the surveys and questionnaires is accomplished using the self-administered method. We have opted for a sample size of 150, distributed, mainly to employees, as well as to HR and Operations Departments heads and directors, taking into consideration that, for every 10 employees, 1 supervisor is selected. The response rate was very low $(150/200)*100=75\%$.

The adopted measures for psychological contract breaches

For the purpose of the study, we considered six forms and types of contract breaches, which can be measured using eighteen elements and items. (Lester *et al.*, 2002). The contract breaches has concerned:

- The professional benefits (The benefits package

as well as the health care and retirement benefits provided).

- The earnings (An interesting, fair, competitive salary, tied to the employee's yield and efficiency results)
- Career Development (Growth opportunities, Career development possibilities & opportunities, promotions and rises)
- The work substance (Level of challenges, Responsibility, Intrinsic value and level of autonomy),
- Resource support (The material and human resources needed to fulfill the professional duty and to achieve the tasks),
- Employment relationship quality (Job security, Fair and Respectful treatments, and the working conditions).

The first three types of contract breaches (Professional benefits, Earnings & Career Development Opportunities) are used for the measurement of transactional breaches, whilst the final three (Work Substance, Resource Support & Employment relationship quality) are used in order to measure the relational breach. The cronbach's alpha reliability measured for all these items is 0.89 (Lester *et al.* 2002).

Bennet and Robinson (2000) used a total of nineteen items and elements in order to measure the seven points of the interpersonal deviant behaviors (toward the other employees), and the twelve points of the organizational one. Still, we noticed, on one hand, a difference between the organizational behavioral deviance alpha reliabilities, which are of 0.81, and those of the interpersonal deviance 0.78, and on the other hand, the 7- point likert scale has been used to evaluate the counterproductive work behavior. Former used with a little change that is "Played a mean prank on someone at work" has been simplified to "Played a practical joke on someone at work" in order to make it more understandable. Inspired by the work of Zottoli (2003), we have chosen to eliminate three items:

- 1- Falsification of external documents in order to get reimbursed for higher amounts.
- 2- Intentional decrease in productivity in order to reach the over-time part.
- 3- Illegal drug and alcohol consumption on the job.

The reasons behind these eliminations can be categorized into two main motives :

- Regarding the first two items, the employees are not willing to take any risks answering the two questions, due to the illegal and unethical aspect of the adopted deviant behaviors.
- The third item is quite rare, and the main link established with it is underlying within the fine compartment of the religious and cultural background and symbolism.

The Control and Checkpoints

Historically, the studies and the research has shown that education, age and gender have been able to establish a connection with the deviance, which explains the presence of those three (education, age and gender) as reliable demographic variables when questionnaires are being used.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the correlation and alpha reliability and table 2 shows the regression along with the adjusted R2 values. The reliability of PCB is close to the reliability calculated by Lester et al, (2002) that is 0.89. Alpha reliability of the organizational

deviance and interpersonal deviance is calculated to 0.887 and 0.888 as compared to the reliabilities calculated by Bennett and Robinson's (2000) as 0.81 and 0.78. PCB and deviance behavior both are positively correlated by 0.490. Hence the result is in compliance with first stated hypothesis ($\beta = 0.490$, $p < 0.01$). The total variation explained by PCB in DB is 0.229 (adj R2) and is significant.

2nd Hypothesis predicts that transactional breach has more of a strong link with the organizational deviance than the one established by interpersonal deviance. The total change explained in organizational deviance by transactional breach is positive, significant and considerable ($\beta = .354$, $p < 0.01$), but the second part of the hypothesis is not supported by the results as there is no significant relationship between transactional breach and interpersonal deviance. RPCB is also related positively, significantly and considerably ($\beta = 0.458$, $p < 0.01$) with organizational deviance. On the contrary RPCB explains little variation in interpersonal deviance ($\beta = .198$, $p < .05$); hence the third hypothesis also holds true that relational factor is also in a strong relationship with the organizational deviance than interpersonal deviance. The control variables which were thought to affect the deviant behavior did not have any significant impact on it.

Table 1

	Variables	Mean	S.D.	Edu	PCB	TPCB	RPCB	DB	IDB	ODB
4	PCB	2.2826	.43895		(0.859)	.715(**)	.886(**)	.490(**)	.126	.556(**)
5	TPCB	2.1317	.48093			(.751)	.647(**)	.286(**)	.107	.354(**)
6	RPCB	2.4253	.46807				(.791)	.412(**)	.198(**)	.458(**)
7	DB	4.4096	.60464					(.854)	.198(**)	.884(**)
8	IDB	2.8981	.78966						(.886)	.139
9	ODB	5.0252	.97971							(.887)

* correlation is significant at 0.01 level of significance; ** correlation is significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 2

Variable	Interpersonal Deviance				Organizational Deviance				Deviance Behavior			
	Beta	T-test	Signi	Adj R	Beta	T-test	Signi	Adj R ²	Beta	T-test	Signi	Adj R ²
PCB									0.490	6.840	.000	.235
TPCB	.107	1.308	.193	.005	.354	4.598	.000	.119				
RPCB	.198	2.453	.015	.033	.458	6.273	.000	.205				

DISCUSSION

The effect and direction of PCB on DB is proven by this study and the studies of the past as well second in this study the effect of each TPCB and RPCB has also been empirically studied on both IDB and ODB. Relational psychological contract breach accounted for more variance in organizational deviance than interpersonal deviance, on the other hand transactional breach accounted for lesser variance than relational breach in organizational deviance and showed no significant effect on interpersonal deviance. The demographic variables that are, age, gender and education showed no significant relationship with the deviance behavior and also at the dimensions i-e, interpersonal and organizational deviance.

In contrast to our expectations, transactional breach did not have any impact on interpersonal deviance, as it was expected that transactional breach explains the variation in interpersonal deviance less than organizational deviance, but it did not show any relationship. Keeping in view the displaced aggression theory in which the harm doer is not reciprocated with the revenge but the other individuals with lesser power are encountered with aggression (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939), fully explains the relationship between relational breach (with organization) and interpersonal deviance, in which the subordinates are targeted rather than superiors. On the contrary, the relationship of transactional breach and interpersonal deviance is not explained by displaced aggression theory only, as it describes only half of the phenomenon (the empirical results of this study) the second half can be explained by Hofstede (2009) in which he compared the individualist societies with collectivist societies by writing about the later "People are born into extended families or clans which protect them in exchange for loyalty", "Stress on belonging (with people)" and "Relationship prevails over task", hence if employees experience the feelings of betrayals in transaction they may take revenge from the organization while giving prestige to relations. Now the question arises here that in a society where relations are given prestige, why relational breach with organization has a significant impact on interpersonal deviance than transactional deviance which shows no significant relationship? The answer to this question lies in the nature and tenure of relational contract and transactional contract. Relational contract tends to be more long-term in which employee develops company specific

skills, socio- emotional elements and derives identity from the company and hence relational contract factors are deeply rooted in sub consciousness and unconsciousness of an employee. While transactional contract factors tend to be more short term with limited scope and limited involvement of the parties, hence are held in consciousness of employees (Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993). Therefore relational contract breach results are stronger than transactional contract breach (Raja *et al.*, 2011).

The results are not in congruence with the individualist societies and also with the results of other studies conducted in collectivist societies, as psychological contract breach considerably and significantly explains the variation in organizational deviance than interpersonal deviance ($\beta = 0.49$, $p < .05$). The limitation of this study is that theory and common sense does not support the insignificant effect of transactional breach on interpersonal deviance, this shortcoming in the study can be removed by increasing the sample size as in this case the response rate was very low $(150/200) \times 100 = 75\%$. To replicate and extend the findings in this research, I propose some suggestions for future research, (1) in determining the effects of psychological contract breach types on different deviant behaviors overall economic conditions must be taken into account, (2) relationship must be replicated in a collectivist but in developed societies.

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