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The Moderating Role of Psychological Contract Between Work-Life Balance and Counterproductive Behaviors Among Professionals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK)

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the moderating role of the psychological contract in the relationship between work-life balance and counterproductive behaviors among professionals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). A sample of 200 professionals, including doctors, police employees, IT services workers, and teachers, participated in the study. Data was collected using three questionnaires: Psychological Contract Breach Scale, Counterproductive Behavior Scale, and Work-Life Balance Scale. The collected data were analyzed using correlation analysis and moderated multiple regression in SPSS. The results revealed weak and non-significant correlations between psychological contract breach and counterproductive behaviors, between counterproductive behaviors and work-life balance, and between work-life balance and psychological contract breach. The moderated multiple regression analysis did not indicate any significant moderating effect of the psychological contract on the relationship between work-life balance and counterproductive behaviors. The findings suggest that among professionals in KPK, work-life balance, psychological contract breach, and counterproductive behaviors may not be strongly related to each other. However, the study highlights the importance of addressing work-life balance and maintaining positive psychological contracts in organizations to promote employee well-being and job satisfaction. Practical implications include awareness and training programs, psychological contract management, and counterproductive behaviors monitoring. The research contributes to the existing literature by exploring the unique context of professionals in KPK and provides a foundation for future investigations into the complexities of work-life balance, psychological contract breach, and counterproductive behaviors. Overall, understanding these dynamics can enhance workplace practices and foster a positive work environment for professionals in the region.

Introduction

Counterproductive behaviors in the workplace can have detrimental effects on both individuals and organizations. These behaviors, which encompass actions that undermine organizational goals, can range from minor acts of misconduct to more serious forms of sabotage or aggression. Counterproductive behaviors include absenteeism, presenteeism, tardiness, workplace deviance, aggression, and theft, among others. Such behaviors not only disrupt the smooth functioning of organizations but also contribute to decreased productivity, increased turnover, and compromised employee well-being. Several theories have been proposed to explain counterproductive behaviors in the workplace. Some of the prominent theories include: Social Exchange Theory posits that employees engage in counterproductive behaviors when they perceive an imbalance between the costs and rewards of their employment relationship. When individuals feel unfairly treated or undervalued, they may respond with counterproductive actions as a form of retaliation or seeking personal gains. This theory highlights the importance of maintaining a fair and equitable work environment to mitigate counterproductive behaviors. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model suggests that counterproductive behaviors can arise from imbalances between job demands and available resources. When individuals face excessive job demands without sufficient resources (e.g., time, support, autonomy), they may experience strain, which can lead to counterproductive behaviors as a coping mechanism. Organizations can address counterproductive behaviors by optimizing job resources and reducing excessive demands. The Psychological Contract Theory focuses on the mutual expectations and obligations between employees and employers. When the psychological contract is violated, where promises are broken or expectations are unmet, employees may engage in counterproductive behaviors as a response to perceived injustices. Understanding the psychological contract and managing it effectively can help mitigate counterproductive behaviors. The Frustration-Aggression Theory suggests that counterproductive behaviors can stem from accumulated frustration or perceived obstacles to goal attainment. When individuals experience frustration or perceive unfair treatment, they may resort to counterproductive actions as a way to express their dissatisfaction or retaliate against perceived injustices. Addressing the sources of frustration and providing constructive outlets can help reduce counterproductive behaviors. Some researches are mentioned in that context : Demsky, C. A., Ellis, A. M., & Fritz, C. (2014): This study investigated the relationship between work-life balance and counterproductive work behaviors. The findings revealed that higher levels of work-life balance were associated with lower engagement in counterproductive work behaviors. This suggests that when individuals perceive a better balance between their work and personal life, they are less likely to engage in behaviors that undermine organizational goals. Dalal, R. S. (2005): This meta-analysis demonstrated a positive correlation between organizational citizenship behavior and counterproductive work behavior, suggesting that individuals who engage in more counterproductive behaviors tend to exhibit fewer positive organizational behaviors.

Work-life balance refers to the state of equilibrium achieved when an individual effectively manages the demands and responsibilities of both their work and personal life domains (Clark, 2000). It is characterized by the ability to allocate time, energy, and attention to work-related activities, such as job tasks and career development, as well as to personal activities, including family, leisure, and self-care (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Role theory suggests that individuals have multiple roles in their lives (e.g., employee, spouse, parent) and that conflict or imbalance between these roles can lead to work-life imbalance. This theory emphasizes the importance of managing and integrating various roles to achieve worklife balance. Conservation of Resources (COR) theory posits that individuals strive to acquire, protect, and maintain resources, including those related to work and personal life. Imbalances in resource availability or depletion can lead to work-life conflict or imbalance. This theory highlights the role of resources in achieving and maintaining work-life balance.

Spillover theory suggests that experiences, emotions, and behaviors from one domain (e.g., work) can spill over into another domain (e.g., personal life). Positive spillover occurs when positive experiences or attitudes from one domain positively impact the other, while negative spillover refers to the negative influence or conflict between domains. Understanding spillover processes is crucial in managing work-life balance.

Boundary theory examines how individuals establish and manage boundaries between work and personal life domains. Effective boundary management involves setting clear boundaries, managing permeability between domains, and balancing demands and resources to achieve work-life balance. Research Study: Allen, T. D., Herst, D. E. L., Bruck, C. S., & Sutton, M. (2000). Consequences associated with work-to-family conflict: A review and agenda for future research. According to that research Women tend to experience higher levels of work-to-family conflict compared to men, likely due to societal expectations and traditional gender roles. Research Study: Carlson, D. S., Kacmar, K. M., & Williams, L. J. (2000). Construction and initial validation of a multidimensional measure of work-family conflict. According to that research Work-family conflict is positively correlated with job dissatisfaction, indicating that individuals with higher conflict levels experience lower job satisfaction. Research Study: Allen, T. D., Johnson, R. C., Kiburz, K. M., & Shockley, K. M. (2013). Work-family conflict and flexible work arrangements: Deconstructing flexibility. According to that research Access to flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting or flexible schedules, reduces work-family conflict and positively influences work-life balance. Psychological contract refers to the unwritten expectations, beliefs, and obligations that exist between employees and their organizations, influencing their mutual relationship and behavior. It represents the perceived reciprocal obligations, promises, and commitments that employees and employers believe they owe to each other beyond the formal employment contract. Here are some valid theories related to the psychological contract: Social exchange theory posits that individuals engage in relationships, including the employment relationship, based on the expectation of reciprocity and mutual benefits. It suggests that employees develop a psychological contract with their organizations based on the exchange of resources, rewards, and obligations. Expectancy theory proposes that individuals are motivated by their expectations of the outcomes they believe will result from their actions or efforts. In the context of the psychological contract, employees form expectations about the rewards, recognition, and opportunities they anticipate receiving from the organization in exchange for their work contributions. Equity theory suggests that individuals compare the inputs (e.g., effort, skills, time) they contribute to a relationship with the outcomes (e.g., rewards, recognition) they receive in return. If there is perceived inequity between the inputs and outcomes, it can affect the psychological contract by influencing employee attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of fairness. Social identity theory posits that individuals derive a sense of self and identity from the groups they belong to, such as their organization. The psychological contract is influenced by employees' identification with their organization, as it shapes their expectations, loyalty, and commitment to fulfilling their obligations. Research Study: Conway, N., & Briner, R. B. (2005). Understanding psychological contracts at work: A critical evaluation of theory and research. *Applied Psychology*, 54(4), 565-598. According to that research the study found limited evidence for gender differences in psychological contracts. However, it suggested that women may place greater importance on relational aspects of the psychological contract, such as support and work-life balance, compared to men.

Research Study: Rousseau, D. M. (2008). The "problem" of the psychological contract considered. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29(5), 699-706.

According to that research the study highlighted the correlation between breach of the psychological contract and negative employee attitudes and behaviors, such as reduced commitment, decreased job satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions. It emphasized the importance of fulfilling the terms of the psychological contract to maintain positive organizational outcomes. Research Study: Zhao, H., Wayne, S. J., Glibkowski, B. C., & Bravo, J. (2007). The impact of psychological contract breach on work-related outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 60(3), 647-680. According to that research the meta-analysis revealed that psychological contract breach was associated with negative work-related outcomes, including decreased job satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, increased turnover intentions, and reduced job performance. It suggested that psychological contract breach is a significant predictor of negative employee attitudes and behaviors. Research Study: Bal, P. M., & Rousseau, D. M. (2017). Psychological contracts and psychological

contract management. In D. M. Rousseau, J. Kurz, & R. R. Schalk (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of evidence-based management* (pp. 196-214). Oxford University Press. According to that research the study highlighted the relationship between organizational justice and the psychological contract. It suggested that fair treatment and perceived justice in employment relationships positively influence the formation and maintenance of a positive psychological contract, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee well-being. Hypothesis researches: A study by Restubog et al. (2008) found that psychological contract breach was associated with increased levels of CWB among employees who reported high levels of work-life imbalance. The researchers argued that psychological contract breach can lead to feelings of resentment and anger, which can motivate employees to engage in CWB as a way of retaliating against their employer.

Research Methodology

Objective:

The main objectives of this research were as follows:

To examine the moderating role of the psychological contract between work-life balance and counterproductive behaviors among professionals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

Research Design

The research design employed in this study was a cross-sectional survey. Data was collected at a specific point in time to explore the relationships and interactions among variables of interest. A self-report questionnaire-based approach was utilized to gather information from the participants.

Sample

The sample consisted of 50 doctors, 50 police employees, 50 employees of IT services (e.g., freelancers), and 50 teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). The participants were selected based on their professional affiliation and willingness to participate in the study. No specific age range was defined to include a diverse range of professionals from different age groups.

Instruments

Three questionnaires were used to collect data from the participants

- 1. Psychological Contract Breach:** Participants completed a questionnaire assessing the perceived breach of the psychological contract. The questionnaire consisted of items that captured the extent to which individuals felt that their organizations failed to fulfill their obligations or promises.
- 2. Counterproductive Behavior:** Participants responded to a questionnaire measuring counterproductive behaviors in the workplace. The questionnaire included items assessing behaviors such as theft, absenteeism, sabotage, and rule violations.
- 3. Work-Life Balance Scale:** Participants completed a scale that measured their perception of work-life balance. The scale included items assessing the extent to which individuals were able to effectively balance their work and personal life domains.

Data Collection

Data was collected through the administration of the three questionnaires to the participants. The questionnaires were distributed to the doctors, police employees, IT services employees, and teachers in KPK.

The participants were provided with clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaires. The data obtained from the questionnaires were then entered into statistical software, such as SPSS, for further analysis.

Data Analysis

Once the data was collected and entered into SPSS, appropriate statistical techniques were applied to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies, were computed to describe the characteristics of the sample and the variables of interest. To examine the relationships among psychological contract breach, work-life balance, and counterproductive behaviors, inferential statistics, such as correlation analysis and regression analysis, were employed.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the research process to ensure the privacy, confidentiality, and voluntary participation of the participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection.

Results

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of the sample

z	f	%
Gender		
Male	148	
Female	12	
Departments		
Education	40	
security	40	
Health	40	25.75
IT	40	
Total	160	
		25
		25
		25
		25
		100

Note: f=frequency, % =Percentage

Table 2

Regression

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.119 ^a	.014	.001	5.898

R square= How much variance in dependent variable due to independent variables

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	77.870	2	38.935	1.119	.329 ^b
Residual	5461.073	157	34.784		
Total	5538.944	159			

a. *Dependent Variable: CPBS(Counter productive behavior scale)*

b. *Predictors: (Constant), WLBS(Work life balance scale), PCBS(Psychological contract breach scale)*

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	25.897	3.294		7.863	.000
	TotalPCBS	-.098	.125	-.062	-.786	.433
	TotalWLBS	-.074	.059	-.100	-1.264	.208

a. *Dependent Variable: TotalCPBS(Counterproductive behaviour*

Table 3

Correlation Between PCBS and CPBS

		Total PCBS	Total CPBS
Total PCBS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.064
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.425
	N	160	160
TotalCPBS	Pearson Correlation	-.064	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.425	
	N	160	160

N= Frequency , CPBS(Counter productive behavior scale)

PCBS(Psychological contract breach scale)

Correlations Between CPBS and WLBS

TotalCPBS TotalWLBS

TotalCPBS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.101
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		.204
	<i>N</i>	160	160
TotalWLBS	Pearson Correlation	-.101	1
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.204	
	<i>N</i>	160	160

N= Frequency CPBS n (Counter productive behavior scale)
WLBS (Work life balance)

Correlations Between WLBS and PCBS

		Total WLBS	Total PCBS
TotalWLBS	Pearson Correlation	1	.012
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		.876
	<i>N</i>	160	160
TotalPCBS	Pearson Correlation	.012	1
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.876	
	<i>N</i>	160	160

N= Frequency , WLBS(Work life balance scale)
PCBS(Psychological contract breach scale)

Discussion

On the provided values from SPSS output, here's the interpretation of the results:

R-squared (R²): 0.14 Approximately 14% of the variance in Counterproductive Behaviors is explained by the combined effects of the predictors (Work-Life Balance and Psychological Contract Breach).

Adjusted R-squared: 0.001 The Adjusted R-squared is a very small value, indicating that the predictors (Work-Life Balance and Psychological Contract Breach) have limited explanatory power over Counterproductive Behaviors after adjusting for the number of predictors in the model.

Significance value (p-value) for the overall model (ANOVA): 0.329, The overall model (including both predictors) is not significant at the conventional significance level (typically $p < 0.05$). This suggests that the combination of Work-Life Balance and Psychological Contract Breach does not significantly predict Counterproductive Behaviors.

Significance values (p-values) for each predictor:

- Psychological Contract Breach (PCB): 0.433 (not significant)
- Work-Life Balance (WLBS): 0.208 (not significant)

Based on the provided correlation values:

The correlation between Total PCBS (Psychological Contract Breach Scale) and Total CPBS (Counterproductive Behavior Scale) is -0.06. This correlation is not significant ($p = 0.4$), suggesting a weak and non-significant relationship between psychological contract breach and counterproductive behaviors among the participants.

The correlation between Total CPBS and Total WLBS (Work-Life Balance Scale) is -0.1. This correlation is

not significant ($p = 0.2$), indicating a weak and non-significant relationship between counterproductive behaviors and work-life balance among the participants.

The correlation between Total WLBS and Total PCBS is 0.02. This correlation is not significant ($p = 0.8$), indicating a very weak and non-significant relationship between work-life balance and psychological contract breach among the participants.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis and findings, this research explored the relationships between work-life balance, psychological contract breach, and counterproductive behaviors among professionals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). The results revealed that there were no significant correlations between the variables studied. Specifically, the correlation analysis showed that there were weak and non-significant relationships between psychological contract breach and counterproductive behaviors, between counterproductive behaviors and work-life balance, and between work-life balance and psychological contract breach. The moderated multiple regression analysis did not indicate any significant moderating effect of the psychological contract on the relationship between work-life balance and counterproductive behaviors. Overall, the results suggest that among professionals in KPK, work-life balance, psychological contract breach, and counterproductive behaviors may not be strongly related to each other. It is essential to interpret these findings with caution and consider potential limitations of the study, such as the sample size, demographic characteristics, and measurement tools used.

Practical Implementations

Despite the lack of significant relationships between the studied variables, this research can provide valuable insights for practitioners and organizations in KPK:

1. **Awareness and Training Programs:** Organizations can implement awareness and training programs to help employees understand the importance of work-life balance and its potential impact on overall well-being and job performance. By providing resources and support for achieving work-life balance, employees may experience reduced stress and improved job satisfaction.
2. **Psychological Contract Management:** Managers and human resource professionals should be mindful of maintaining a positive psychological contract with employees. This can involve transparent communication, clarity in expectations, and fulfilling promises made to employees. A positive psychological contract can foster trust and commitment in the workplace.
3. **Counterproductive Behaviors Monitoring:** Although the study did not find a direct relationship between psychological contract breach and counterproductive behaviors, it is crucial for organizations to monitor and address any counterproductive behaviors among employees. Implementing policies and procedures to manage such behaviors can contribute to a healthier work environment.
4. **Further Research:** The current research provides a foundation for further investigations into the dynamics of work-life balance, psychological contract breach, and counterproductive behaviors in KPK. Future studies could explore additional factors that might influence these relationships and consider different populations or industries.

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