

# IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CYNICISM AND ABUSIVE SUPERVISOR BEHAVIOR ON WORK PLACE DEVIANCE

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship of organizational cynicism and abusive supervision on workplace deviance in call centers of Pakistan. Data will be collected through questionnaire based survey, and collected from those employees who are working as call center agents and full time permanent employees e.g. Jazz, Ufone, Zong, Telenor and PTCL in Lahore region head offices. The response rate was 170. Researcher interference was minimal with non-contrived environment and cross sectional study. After a comprehensive study, the result reveals that the abusive supervisor behavior and organizational cynicism positively affect the work place deviance with major predictor and as  $p > 0.05$ . The study will be helpful for the top level management of call centers in Pakistan; they can reduce turnover with their polite and decent behavior that can retain their employees for the long time for the success and benefits of the organization. The findings make a significant contribution in highlighting the impact of organizational cynicism and abusive supervision on workplace deviance specifically with respect to call centers in Pakistan. Pinpointing issues that are persistent in the call center industry and the impact that it is making with respect to workplace deviance. The result stated above can be applied by the managers to decrease abusive supervision and devise HR policies that might lead to a decline in organizational cynicism among the call center agents.*

**Keywords:** Organizational Cynicism, Abusive Supervision Behavior, Work Place Deviance.

## INTRODUCTION

When discussing all forms of workplace deviance, it is estimated that the cost associated with taking preventive and corrective measures for it is in billions (Bennett & Robinson, 2000) and a total loss accounts for 50 billion dollars annually in the U.S. An estimated figure states that 95% of organizations in the U.S. experience employee theft (Case, 2000), talking about third world countries like Pakistan, the case might be worse if not similar. The astonishing statistics show that workplace deviance causes a serious dent to productivity and profitability of an organization, and the reasons need to be addressed by the researchers (Hastings & Finegan, 2011). In the past several years, such behavior at work has been under severe consideration by the critics and media (Kidwell & Martin, 2005). Fagbohunbe et al. (2012) in his research, done and cited from past research, states that workplace deviance has been a neglected topic in organizational research (Greenberg & Scott, 1996). Workplace Deviance Behavior ensues in an organization due to several negative reasons

one of them being illegal behavior of man managers (abusive supervisor behavior) that hampers the rank and file workers financial (Fagbohunge et al., 2012) quoted by numerous authors which supervisors are engaged verbal and non-verbal behavior to sustained discipline, in which not included the physical or transactional contacts (Millward & Hopkins, 1998; Tepper, 2000) is a primary cause of organizational deviance (Tepper et al., 2009). The researches done have paid more emphasizes on variables like organizational citizenship behavior and contextual behavior that lead to a positive outcome in an organization, however there is a shift of research towards finding the negatively related behaviors that impact an organization destructively, workplace deviance (WPD) being one of them (Fagbohunge et al., 2012).

Organizational Cynicism (OC) is gaining attention of the theorists a lot and has been professed as a new notion in organizational behavior topics (Mete, 2013). Various disciplines in social sciences have integrated OC as a subject mainly being religion, psychology, management, political science (Ince & Turan, 2011). Many organizations in US have had cynicism as a norm and might also be a case in Egypt and other countries; a non-Arab environment has been subject of interest in large number of researchers (Nafei, 2013b). Wide ranges of reasons are mentioned by researches that cause deviant workplace behavior one of them being organizational cynicism (Lee & Allen, 2002). The employees that are cynical have a tendency towards badmouthing for the organization (WPD) and remain with negative emotions and beliefs are associated with the behavior and attitude (Wilkerson et al., 2008). An estimate tells that between 10 percent and 16 percent workers of American get affected by abusive supervision behaviors (Tepper, 2007). Pertaining a cost of 24 billion dollars is due to abusive supervision behavior annually (Tepper et al., 2006). Abusive supervision should be persistently studied in organizations (Tepper, 2007). Many researches done have focused on leadership predictors that emphasize on effectiveness and success (Harris et al., 2007). In the recent times the dark side of leadership (AS) has gained greater attention (Hoel et al., 2010).

The extensive literature undergone pin pointed some realistic gaps. Firstly, limited study is done on role of job satisfaction, supervisory support, organizational commitment stress, and job stressors in perspective of call centers of Pakistan (Malik et al., 2013). Secondly, Standardized patterns of work in call centers create relatively uniform and repetitious activities focusing on economies of scale and consistent quality of service at same time, Weakening the employee autonomy and enhancing the potential of management/supervisory control (Subbarayalu, 2013) if the management is abusive a severe negative impact is evident that might lead to work place deviance. Thirdly, Employees incline to be subject of role conflict where they have to .at the same time work; providing quality to customers and also fulfill the performance indicators forcing them in making as many calls as possible. Role conflict is highly associated with OC (Dean Jr et al., 1998). The research done will help in filling the gap that is persistent as mentioned above. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship of organizational cynicism and abusive supervision on workplace deviance in call centers of Pakistan (Ezeh et al., 2018). The astonishing stats that workplace deviance causes a serious dent to productivity and profitability of an organization and the reasons need to be addressed by the researchers. Promote the ethical organizational culture, ethical leadership in role models. Training programs, personal selection e.g. background check, honesty test, interviews, promoting the pro-social behavior like organizational citizenship behavior, whistle blowing, social responsibility and ethical courses in organization (Jiang et al., 2017). Moreover, one of the study has dicussed about the control of employees through different manager's practices these are called as developmental HR pactices for the employee outcomes. When supervisor telling a lie with its subordinates some

psychological contracts with the employees are also breach because all the employees having some abilities to do work in a transparent manners but the attitude and the behaviour of the supervisor e.g. abusive can be the cancelled or breach the psychological contracts as well with the subordinate employees and trust building will destroy too. Organizational cynicism is the environmental change in the working environment this is also divert the attention of individual from the work and deviance from work place emerged some as predictor to control of abusiveness of manager in the working environment (Ali et al., 2020).

## **Problem Statement**

In the telecom industries like Jazz, Ufone, Zong, Telenor and PTCL services sectors play a vital role to provide customer services through call centers and this work place had supervised through floor managers. This study will deeply investigate the supervisor behaviors on employees at work place deviance. Most of the time call centers jobs has been made a strict environmental work place for the employees because of different type of cultural and cast related customers on calls. Supervisors want to make their services perfect in front of their customers due to this reason they shows aggressive and bullish behaviors with the employees to make the services better in face of call center customers. Every telecommunication organization wants better competitive advantage from one another, for this purpose that has to prove his technical and staff skills and competencies and for customer satisfaction can be the better predictor to evaluate impact of organizational cynicism and abusive supervisor behavior on work place deviance. Therefore, this study contributes in the service sector of telecommunication organizations with research and development in Pakistan.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

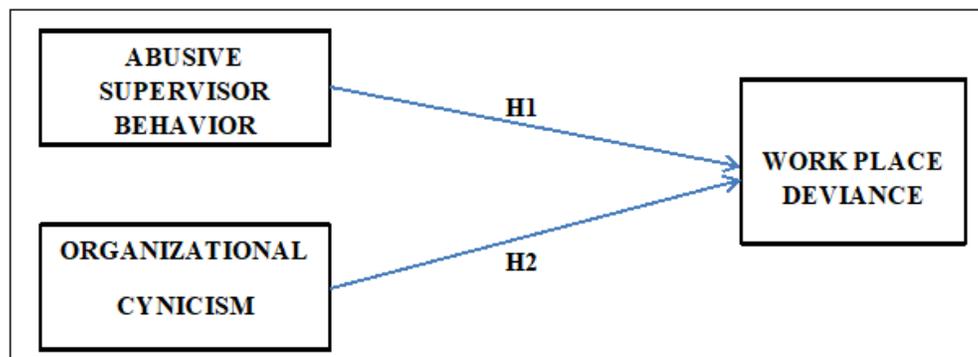
Work Place deviant Behavior generally refers to negating the norms and values devised by the organization through voluntary behaviors; ultimately harming the organization and the individuals working in it (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Complement definition can be stated as causing harm to an organization through deliberate and intentional desires (Omar et al., 2011) under Work Place Deviance. An attitude in which an employee shows unfriendliness towards the organization due to a perception that organization lacks righteousness and always tends to fool employees working in it (Nair & Kamalanabhan, 2010). Individual having negative feeling about the organization and staff such as dissatisfaction, disturbance and hopelessness elaborate the context of OC in unpretentious manner (Özler & Atalay, 2011). OC in an employee happens as a result that his organization lacks honesty. Moreover, the expectations of justice, morality and honesty are violated (Nafei, 2013a). Studies have found that the reasons for organizational cynicism are breaching of psychological contract and organizational justice (Ozgener et al., 2008), acquiring organizational policies that aids one's own interest rather than standing on actuality and uprightness (Davis & Gardner, 2004). Not having the actual support of management and lack of intimate participation in decision making (Fleming, 2005) behaving humbly and sincerely but with a fear of falling on stony ground (Fleming & Spicer, 2002). Decline in quality of employee's leader interaction (Breux, 2010). Organizational cynicism leads to decrease in performance, organizational citizenship behavior, commitment and role conflict, absenteeism and employee turnover becomes formidable (Wanous et al., 2000). Ridiculing and humiliating subordinates publicly, improperly blaming them, and invading subordinates privacy defines the context of abusive supervision (Tepper, 2007). Eliciting

negative reciprocity due to representation of negative exchange from the supervisor (Harris et al., 2007). Abusive supervision can be divided in two parts hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors with their subordinates. Abusiveness is not in the sense that any person abuse to any other in the working environment. Abusive supervisor behavior e.g. abusive supervising is telling a lie with their subordinate employees, blaming, yelling at, together with taking credit for subordinates, belittling, and mistakes they didn't create, telling subordinates' thoughts and feelings are stupid, and conversation regarding subordinates with different staff (Breux, 2010). Antecedents of abusive supervision mentioned in previous studies come up to same conclusion, expatriate hostility or aggression is practiced on innocent subordinates one of the reason being the supervisor cannot take out on the direct cause of their frustration (McFarlane-Ossmann, 2011). The study has the positively impac on work place behaviour with mediatiing effects of organizational cynicism (Jiang et al., 2017). Whereas, one qualitative study shows the variation in human resource management connection with the employees with talent management practices. The talaent management are rarely play a virtual role to commit the employees wih in the organizatioin for long time period, they can reduce the abbusivness of supervisor behaviour through use of talented managemnt (Ali & Muqqadas, 2018).

## Research Question

Base on critically view and the scholarly related studies this paper creates two major aims (Figure 1) in current research and development with organization's environmental related issues.

1. Does the Organizational Cynicism have an impact on Work Place Deviance?
2. Does the Abusive Supervisor Behavior have an impact on Work Place Deviance?



**FIGURE 1**  
**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

## Hypotheses Development

According to Qin et al. (2019) this study will critically discuss about the organizational cynicism and abusiveness of supervisor at work place. Due the bullish behavior of supervisor employees has intention to quit from the current organization or can say that work place deviance of the individual from the organization. A good learning atmosphere can increase the performances of employees as well organization's performances also level of satisfaction about each customer. However, supervisor wants to provide an opportunity for individual employee through providing them internal and external couching, and environment movement programs by

this concept any organization can lead to enhance his reputed of organizations have satisfied with the help of coaching methodology and the care of every individual affective by increase their ability and motivation to perform for the company success (Raza et al., 2019).

- H<sub>1</sub> Abusive supervisor behavior has direct and positive impact on work place deviance; such that more the abusive supervision high will be the work place deviance.*
- H<sub>2</sub> Organizational cynicism has moderate relationship between abusive supervisor behavior and work place deviance; such that more the organizational cynicism high will be the work place deviance.*

## METHODOLOGY

Instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. Data is collected from Call center agents of 5 call centers of Lahore Pakistan, who were qualified enough to epitomize the population at a single point of time. The research was quantitative study and sampling method was convenience sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The sample size of 220 was taken from four call centers located in Lahore, Pakistan. The responses were received at the 77.27% response rate. Method of the study is premeditating in an explanatory research paradigm. Validity and reliability analysis of scale has been done. T-tests, multiple regression analysis, correlation and ANOVA have been tested for the results. To examined the date of this study Statistical Package of Social Science SPSS 20.0 has been used as software. Questionnaire was entailing of 32 statements adopted to investigate from which thirteen (13) questions' statement belongs to abusive supervision behavior (Tepper, 2000) an example is "*My supervisor blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment*". In-addition, organizational cynicism also measured by using seven (7) questions from (Dean Jr et al., 1998). Finally, twelve (12) questions' statement related workplace deviance such as "*I neglected to follow your boss's instructions*" (Bennett & Robinson, 2000) measured by using 5-point Likert scale. To check the internal consistency of each variable the cronbach's alpha has used to check the internal consistency of each construct range from 0.84 to 0.92. The items removed for the reliability statistics and maintain the internal consistency Table 1, the items were less than 0.40 in factor loading has removed (Hair et al., 1998; Straub et al., 2004).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To evaluate the association between structured hypotheses exploratory factor analysis used to calculate the construct validity. In this instant, principal component analysis with varimax technique was used for factor analysis. In the given below Table 1, the value of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity having a significant relationship to proceed the further factor analysis. Furthermore, KMO indicates the appropriateness of these factors. Moreover, KMO Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and P-value is showing the P-values<0.05 is significant values factor analysis has performed (Medsker et al., 1994). AS9 and OC7 have removed for the analysis because its values are less than 0.40. In the KMO Bartlett's Test of Sphericity all the values of KMO measure sample of adequacy are acceptable because all the values of sample adequacy should be above 0.60 (Straub et al., 2004). The KMO measure of sampling adequacy value for items was 0.901 indicating sufficient inter-correlations with Bartlett test of sphericity was also found to be significant (chi-square value=3413.296; significant vale=0.000, p-value<0.001). Eigen values>1 are considered to present for principal component as a construct all the Eigen

values of each component are greater than one Eigen-value $>1$ , with respect to abusive supervisor behavior=Eigen-value $3.104>1$ , organizational cynicism=Eigen-value $2.948>1$ , WPD=Eigen-Value $2.729>1$ . A study with strong analysis related with current study analysis suggested that the competitive edge can be achieved only with the supervisor lenient behavior and strong relative environment with the customers to get the sustainable competitive edge and the study shows the positive relations (Hussain et al., 2020).

| <b>Principal component analysis with varimax</b> |  | <b>AS</b> | <b>WPD</b> | <b>OC</b> |
|--|--|-----------|------------|-----------|
| AS8  | <i>"My supervisor blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment"</i>                                 | 0.803     |            |           |
| AS12   | <i>"My supervisor is rude to me"</i>   | 0.758     |            |           |
| AS10   | <i>"My supervisor expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason"</i>                     | 0.756     |            |           |
| AS4  | <i>"My supervisor puts me down in front of others"</i>   | 0.751     |            |           |
| AS5  | <i>"My supervisor Invades my privacy"</i>  | 0.744     |            |           |
| AS11   | <i>"My supervisor makes negative comments about me to others"</i>                                      | 0.724     |            |           |
| AS6  | <i>"My supervisor reminds me of my past mistakes and failures"</i>                                     | 0.698     |            |           |
| AS7  | <i>"My supervisor does not give me credit for jibs requiring a lot of effort"</i>                      | 0.671     |            |           |
| AS2  | <i>"My supervisor tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid"</i>                                     | 0.634     |            |           |
| AS13   | <i>"My supervisor does not allow me to interact with my co-workers"</i>                                | 0.589     |            |           |
| AS3  | <i>"My supervisor gives me the silent treatment"</i>   | 0.586     |            |           |
| AS1  | <i>"My supervisor ridiculed me"</i>  | 0.539     | 0.495      |           |
| WPD2   | <i>"I spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working"</i>                           |           | 0.760      |           |
| WPD8   | <i>"I intentionally work slower than I could have worked"</i>  |           | 0.728      |           |
| WPD3   | <i>"I falsified a receipt to get reimbursed for more money than you spent on business expenses"</i>    |           | 0.722      |           |
| WPD6   | <i>"I littered my work environment"</i>  |           | 0.658      |           |
| WPD12  | <i>"I dragged out work in order to get overtime"</i>   |           | 0.634      |           |
| WPD7   | <i>"I neglected to follow your boss's instructions"</i>  |           | 0.60       | 0.402     |
| WPD1   | <i>"I took property from work without permission"</i>  |           | 0.572      |           |
| WPD11  | <i>"I put little effort into my work"</i>  |           | 0.528      |           |
| WPD10  | <i>"I used an illegal drug or consumed alcohol on the job"</i>   |           | 0.522      |           |
| WPD4   | <i>"I take an additional or longer break than is acceptable at my workplace"</i>                       |           | 0.508      |           |
| WPD5   | <i>"I come in late to work without permission"</i>   |           | 0.498      | 0.445     |
| WPD9   | <i>"I discussed confidential company information with an unauthorized person"</i>                      |           | 0.435      | 0.791     |
| OC1  | <i>"Any efforts to make things better in organization are likely to succeed"</i>                       |           |            | 0.757     |
| OC2  | <i>"Company management is good at running improvement programs or changing things in our business"</i> |           |            | 0.756     |
| OC5  | <i>"Suggestions on how to solve problems around here won't produce much real change"</i>               |           |            | 0.736     |
| OC6  | <i>"My company meets my expectations for quality of work life"</i>                                     |           |            | 0.668     |
| OC4  | <i>"My company pulls its fair share of the weight in its relationship with its employees"</i>          |           |            | 0.597     |
| OC3  | <i>"Overall, I expect more success than disappointment in working with this company"</i>               |           |            | 0.535     |
| Eigen Value                                      |  | 7.016     | 6.011      | 3.452     |
| Percent of Variance                              |  | 53.966    | 50.091     | 49.317    |

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| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. |
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## Descriptive Statistics

Customer care representatives in the call centers of Pakistan consider Abusive Supervision (M=2.2481, SD=0.83491) effect on workplace deviance to be positive while organizational cynicism (M=1.9902, SD=0.8675) as moderate practices. The standard deviations were quite low indicating the dispersion in closely spread distribution.

All the items met out cut-off criteria revealed by exploratory factor analysis. Means, Standard deviation, bivariate correlations, number of items in scale and reliability estimates are shown as below in Table 2.

| Table 2                            |        |                |        |        |                 |        |                      |                       |               |        |        |    |
|------------------------------------|--------|----------------|--------|--------|-----------------|--------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------|--------|----|
| PEARSON CORRELATION                |        |                |        |        |                 |        |                      |                       |               |        |        |    |
|                                    | Means  | Std. Deviation | Gender | Status | Education Level | Age    | Current Organization | Previous Organization | Hiring Status | WPD    | AS     | OC |
| Gender                             | 1.39   | 0.49           | -      |        |                 |        |                      |                       |               |        |        |    |
| Status                             | 1.24   | 0.429          | -0.033 | -      |                 |        |                      |                       |               |        |        |    |
| Education Level                    | 4.11   | 0.596          | .160*  | 0.061  | -               |        |                      |                       |               |        |        |    |
| Age                                | 1.56   | 0.585          | -0.141 | .397** | 0.065           | -      |                      |                       |               |        |        |    |
| Current Organization               | 1.82   | 0.694          | 0.056  | .288** | 0.147           | .153*  | -                    |                       |               |        |        |    |
| Previous Organization              | 1.54   | 0.672          | -.159* | 0.042  | 0.005           | .325** | .160*                | -                     |               |        |        |    |
| Hiring Status                      | 1.64   | 0.483          | -0.014 | -.173* | -0.05           | -0.146 | -0.094               | .186*                 | -             |        |        |    |
| WPD                                | 1.7123 | 0.66184        | -0.141 | 0.041  | -0.029          | 0.098  | 0.076                | -0.024                | -.239**       | -      |        |    |
| AS                                 | 2.2481 | 0.83491        | -0.122 | 0.08   | -0.035          | .268** | -0.047               | -0.06                 | -.230**       | .567** | -      |    |
| OC                                 | 1.9902 | 0.80675        | -0.133 | 0.02   | -0.055          | 0.029  | -0.018               | 0.014                 | -0.057        | .577** | .343** | -  |
| * 2-tailed level of Sig. at 0.05.  |        |                |        |        |                 |        |                      |                       |               |        |        |    |
| ** 2-tailed level of Sig. at 0.01. |        |                |        |        |                 |        |                      |                       |               |        |        |    |

## Correlation and Regression Analysis

| Table 3      |                             |            |                           |       |      |                    |           |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|--------------------|-----------|
| ANOVA T-Test |                             |            |                           |       |      |                    |           |
| Model        | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig. | Multi-Collinearity |           |
|              | B                           | Std. Error | $\beta$                   |       |      | Tolerance          | VIF Value |
| Constant     | 0.525                       | 0.109      |                           | 4.831 | 0    |                    |           |
| AS           | 0.332                       | 0.047      | 0.419                     | 7.063 | 0    | 0.883              | 1.133     |
| OC           | 1.675                       | 0.23       | 0.432                     | 7.283 | 0    | 0.883              | 1.133     |

Note: a. Dependent Variable: Work Place Deviance

Relationship between the variables is shown in Table 3 indicates that AS and OC were positively correlated with WPD. There is correlation between AS and WPD ( $r=0.567$ ,  $n=170$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Correlation between OC and WPD is moderate too ( $r=0.577$ ,  $n=170$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). F-Value is 78.299 and its significant value is below 0.05 which means overall model is valid. The outcomes indicate no multi-collinearity problems (the multi-collinearity statistics shows that the tolerance indicator for AS and OC both are greater than 0.1 and VIF value is below 10 which means there is no collinearity between independent variables. This directs that there is a statistically significant relationship between independent variables (AS and OC) and dependent

variable (WPD). Durbin Watson value tells about autocorrelation, the value of model 1.559 which is within the range of 1.5-2.5. Adjusted R-square is 0.479 which shows that the 47.9% variation in WPD is due to AS and OC. The results also signposted that AS and OC are positively associated with WPD. T-value shows that both Independent variables are significant and their discrete contribution to the model.

## CONCLUSION

The present study tested the relationship of abusive supervision and organizational cynicism on work place deviance with respect to call centers of Pakistan. The results indicated a significant relationships among variables and prove that workplace deviance has caused a serious dent to call centers of Pakistan, organizational cynicism and abusive supervision are two of the antecedents leading to work place deviance. The research backs the findings of Tepper & Fagbohunge that abusive supervision do leads to workplace deviance. Moreover, Wilkerson et al. (2008) has discussed the relationship amongst the organizational cynicism and workplace deviance present research backs that relationship too. Telecommunication organizations are the key driver of economic growth and customers are at stakeholders of these organizations. In business management the HRM managers must focus on the practices of his supervisor with their subordinates, because they can make cause of high turnover intention. Employees are the important part to maintain the quality of work with subordinates and customers as well. Therefore, employee satisfaction from the organization can enhance the commitment by utilizing the best HR practice in this organization. For call centers managers; the results suggest that abusive supervision is persistent and is leading to work place deviance, the behavior of supervisors, on the back end might have caused serious dent and that might be in millions as discussed above. Managers should focus on the behavioral aspects of supervisors and staff and should address them properly with full attention. Moreover organizational cynicism and its impacts are too leading to workplace deviance. Organizational Cynicism is directly related to the Human Resource Policies and devising such policies that can decrease organizational cynicism has become inevitable for the managers. If supervisors can play a leadership role; providing social and morale support to call center agents than the talent that they have might be utilized to its best and can boost the overall financial performance of the organization.

## Limitations and Future Directions

This study has three limitations, first is: study has taken only into consideration call center service sector which may confine the generalizability of results to this particular sector, second is the geographical limitations as the data assortment was done from the call centers from Lahore Punjab, Pakistan only and third is the small sample size due to lack of time and resources the sample size was confined to 170. Scope for doing qualitative research through interview etc. is still there. Only Call center agents were taken as the sample, same can be done with managers and supervisors to have a controlling effect. A longitudinal study should also be conducted as the organizations have changes in their culture and working, the experiences might not be the same at each instance. Same can be done with the various call centers located in other cities and that have differences in demographic locations and psychograph. Moreover, the same study can be conducted on other sectors of Pakistan.

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