

## DO THE HUMOUR SKILLS OF AN EMPLOYEE HELP? ROLE OF EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION AT THE WORKPLACE

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### ABSTRACT

The research analyzes the effect of Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) on Organization Citizenship Behavior (OCB) with the help of Emotional Exhaustion (EE) taken as a mediating variable. Humour Skills has been taken as the moderator between the relationship of PCB with EE, and EE with OCB. The Snowball sampling method has been opted in this research. The results highlighted that PCB effected OCB both directly and indirectly through EE, which has been found to be partially mediating the relationship. Through moderation, the impact of Humor Skills on the association between PCB and EE has not been found. This effect might not have been established as several local, and multi-national companies in Pakistan are downsizing due to the adverse impact of COVID-19 on the global economy. Hence, it has become increasingly difficult for employees to deal with the extra pressure on the job using humour skills. However, humour skills were acting as a moderator, weakening the relationship between EE and employee's citizenship behaviour which tells us that humour skills help the employee counter the harmful effects of emotional exhaustion.

**Key words:** Psychological Contract Breach; Organizational Citizenship Behavior; Emotional Exhaustion; Humor Skills; COVID-19

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### Introduction

In the contemporary world, firms have downsized, restructured and failed to meet employees' expectation (Howard & Frink, 1996; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Turnley & Feldman, 1998). The psychological contract breach (PCB) has proved detrimental for the workforce, possibly causing stress and tension (Maslach et al., 2001). A psychological contract can be defined as the level of confidence that the workforce holds about the rules and specifications of their job relationship with the firm (Rousseau, 1995). In other words, a psychological contract is a mental

representation of the shared responsibilities of the groups to the job relationship in which the workers accept to perform their duty for the reward in terms of organization's promises. When a worker perceives that the firm has failed to fulfil the stated promises, psychological contract breach (PCB) occurs (Rousseau, 1995). PCB produces unconstructive outcomes for the firm and the workers (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Kickul & Lester, 2001; Restubog et al., 2007; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Turnley & Feldman, 2000; Zagenczyk et al., 2008; Zhao et al., 2007). Similarly, another well-studied negative result of PCB is its impact on the employees making them reluctant to engage in organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) (Restubog & Bordia, 2006; Restubog et al., 2006, 2007; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Turnley et al., 2003; Turnley & Feldman, 2000). Social exchange theory is generally used to describe the adverse effects of psychological contract breach (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2004). Following this approach, it can be said that the workforce is greatly motivated by the influential thought linked to 'give and take' amid the person and the group.

Research in this domain has shown that high job expectations, probably with the mixture of the absence of control and social support, lead to exhaustion and displeasure (Burke & Richardson, 2000; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Etzion & Westman, 1994; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Emotional Exhaustion (EE) has been used excessively with household complications, depression, mental issues and overall interruption in the feeling of togetherness (Kahill, 1988; Maslach & Leiter, 2008). The importance of focusing on EE can be understood from the above statement. Furthermore, literature has shown that EE can have negative results for the organizations too. In this regard, it is understood that EE reduces the commitment of employees and leads them to look for another job (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Another possible adverse effect of EE that this study will focus on is the decrease in an employee's OCB.

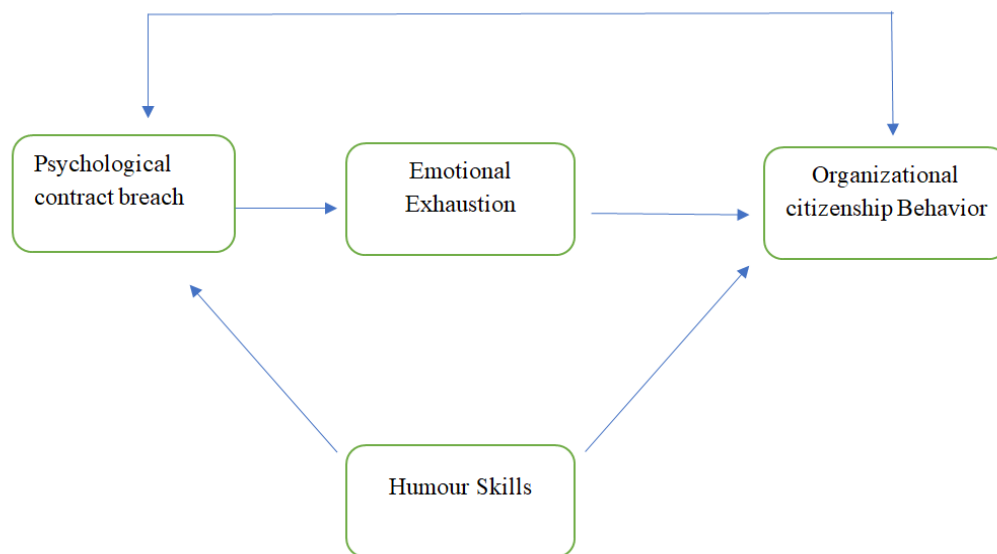
In the past, literature mainly focused on employee burnout on OCB (SESEN et al., 2011). Emotional exhaustion, which is one of the three dimensions of burnout, has not been studied in isolation except for a few studies. In this way, the study intends to highlight and further explore the impact of psychological contract breach on Emotional Exhaustion in emerging economies such as Pakistan. Secondly, to increase the understanding of EE's effect, it is used as a mediator between PCB and OCB. This relationship has only been tested in one study before with the

moderation of forgiveness and revenge cognition using COR theory (Costa & Neves, 2017). The focus of our study is to test the moderation of humour skills of employees. Humour skills operate by helping employees remain optimistic about problematic situations at the workplace, leading them to share jokes, connect with other organizational members, and exhibit an overall sense of relativism (Lehmann-Willenbrock & Allen, 2014; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). This personal skill may buffer the positive relationship between PCB and EE, and the antagonistic relation between EE and OCB. It will provide a comprehensive understanding of how the mediation of emotional exhaustion operates in the presence of an employee's humour skill.

### ***Contributions:***

- The first study to test the mediation of emotional exhaustion between psychological contract breach and Organization citizenship behaviour, using Social exchange theory.
- It is the first study to test the moderation of humour skills on the relationship.
- It contributes to the limited literature available on the effect of emotional exhaustion on OCB.

Study's Model



## **Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development**

### ***Social Exchange Theory***

Following the social exchange theory, the groups involved in a relationship should follow specific rules of exchange as these rules are considered as antecedents for building constructive relationships (P. M. Blau, 1964). This exchange can be either economic (funds, products and assistance) or social (providing details to others, counselling and constructive appraisal). If the workers feel that they are not getting the right reward for their work or the organization is demanding more and giving them less than the promised reward, the workers will try to deliver less to match their performance with the given reward. Example of this act includes involving in unconstructive, pulling out or damaging behaviour. Based on this theory, we base our model, which is, when the employee's experience PCB, it will reduce their OCB.

### **1. PCB's effect on OCB**

Authors like Lind and Tyler (1988) have stated that only focusing on the firm's resources is insufficient to satisfy workers' productive outcomes related to the job. The much-awaited expectation has equal significance in order to decide the degree of these outcomes. As the employees engage with the managers and observe the rules and regulation of the firm, they build a perception about their duties to the firm and how the firm should reward them for their performance (Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993) . But the firm may sometimes be unable to fulfil its promise of giving the desired rewards causing employees to develop a perception of PCB. "Psychological contract (PC) is an implicit contract between an individual and his organization which specifies what each expects to give and receive from each other in their relationship" (Kotter, 1973). As the employees develop the perception that the firm is incapable of delivering on the reward, PCB is developed which ultimately impacts the social exchange relationship (Rigotti, 2009).

The violation of psychological contract impacts OCB. Organ's explanation of OCB is popular, which defines it as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and in the aggregate promotes the organization's efficient and effective functioning (Organ, 1988)".

Ample research has been done on the impact of PCB on OCB (Restubog et al., 2008; Suazo, 2009). Other researchers like Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000) stated that when contract contravention occurs, the employees' may drop their commitment and show reluctance to carry

as they try to look for the solution disparity in their connection with their firm. Empirical research by Atabay (2007) surveyed 122 workers, which highlighted that the greater the extent of PCB, the fewer the chances of workers participating in OCB. Thus, both variables can be said to have a reciprocal relationship. Many studies have taken place to highlight the positive connection between the firm belief of observing PC and decreased degree of OCB (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002; Turnley et al., 2003). In other words, one can say that if the workers perceive that the firm has failed to deliver on the promised rewards, then they would not engage in OCB. Thus, the first hypothesis will be:

*H1: Psychological contract breach and Organizational Citizen Behavior have opposite relation, such as when PCB increases, OCB decreases.*

## **2. PCB's effect on Emotional exhaustion**

In a work environment, Psychological contract and the worker's perception about shared responsibilities that he hopes to be satisfied, serve as the base of the exchange (Rousseau, 1995; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993; Shore & Tetrick, 1994). At any time if the employee feels that there is a violation in the fulfilment of the PC, he/she may consider that the alliance between him/her and his/her employer has been affected (Azam, 2020; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robbins et al., 2012; Rousseau, 1995). This employee's observation may lead to destructive consequences if it is coupled with the powerful emotions of injustice (Noblet & Rodwell, 2009). Perceived Injustice along with PCB, which highlights the impartiality, specifically, are viewed as stressor at the job (Robbins et al., 2012), as they produce certain circumstances which serve as the foundation of stress in a person (Kahn & Byosiére, 1992). Likewise, if the employee perceives that the reciprocal promises are violated, he/she may face lack of control and decreased predictability which eventually paves the way for strain in the person (Shore & Tetrick, 1994; Sutton & Kahn, 1986). In the literature, it is considered that the increased strain eventually leads to emotional exhaustion (Kahn & Byosiére, 1992; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Maslach et al., 2001). Hence, it can be said that the firm's inability to realize their part of the reciprocal promises, which produces strain in the person and eventually, the person feels emotionally exhausted.

*H2: PCB can increase emotional exhaustion in the workplace.*

## **3. Mediation of Emotional exhaustion**

Workers who face strain at work in the shape of, e.g. PCB are expected to face emotional exhaustion (De Croon et al., 2004; Sonnentag et al., 2010). The literature on Emotional Exhaustion reveals that EE is an essential antecedent of burnout (Cropanzano et al., 2003; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 1996; Maslach et al., 2001). Maslach and Jackson (1981) described burnout in these words “being a syndrome including emotional exhaustion, feeling of depersonalization and low personal accomplishment”. An essential component of burnout, emotional exhaustion, can be called emotional fatigue and tiredness caused by someone else (Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001).

As emotional strength declines, the workers develop the urge not to fulfil their position as their emotional strength declines. Only a few empirical types of research have shown the association between emotional exhaustion and OCB. However, social exchange theory demonstrates that weak working connection will impact the OCB for a firm (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Organ & ORGAN, 1990). Using the recommendation of Williams and Anderson (1991), Cropanzano et al. (2003) used two different aspects of OCB. Their study concluded that emotional exhaustion had an inverse impact on OCBO ( $\beta=-.19$ ;  $p<.01$ ) while it had no impact on OCBI. Costa and Neves (2017) empirically showed that emotional exhaustion mediates the link between PCB and OCB. As previously noted, emotional exhaustion is the main component of burnout and mental stress caused by other people's action. We can believe that emotional exhaustion would make employees stressful, and they would exert less effort and showcase less urge to be helpful towards other individuals. Hence, we can say that emotional exhaustion in employees impacts their OCBs. This study will test the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion between the negative link between PCB and OCBs.

*H3: The third hypothesis of our study will be Emotional exhaustion has an inverse association with Organizational citizenship behaviour.*

*H4: The fourth hypothesis of the study is that Emotional Exhaustion mediates the link between PCB and OCB.*

#### **4. Moderation of humour skills of employee**

Humour is used as a tool to reduce stress. As humour can assist a person, both psychologically and physiologically, it is said to have gained much attention (Martin, 2001). Humour is explained as the ability to recognize, value, or exhibit humorous, entertaining, or

laughable (Humormatters.com Accessed September 5, 2009). Workers' Humor skill is known to lessen the effect of PCB on Emotional Exhaustion and Emotional Exhaustion impact on OCB. Workers who possess humour are found to be more open and better at discussing any situation with group members, possibly by being funny (Lehmann-Willenbrock & Allen, 2014; Pouthier, 2017). The discussion might be funny, but it increases the flow of knowledge exchange and enables the workers to understand the reason behind the firm's inability to fulfil the promises (Robinson & Wolfe Morrison, 2000). In this way, employees prefer to share their experience with their colleagues who possess humour skills (Mahmood & Shafaat, 2020; Pouthier, 2017; Smith & Khojasteh, 2014). This knowledge sharing reduces the emotional exhaustion among workers to understand the reason behind the unfulfillment of promises by their employer (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2000) which is why this study predicts that employee's humour skill will reduce the effect of PCB on employee's emotional exhaustion.

Besides, workers' humour nature may enable them to pass through the unfavourable circumstances and make the firm's executives rethink about the handling of workers in a better way (Romero & Cruthirds, 2006). Deep negative thoughts and rage easily influence workers who lack humour skills due to unfavourable situation related to the job (Arain et al., 2012; Restubog et al., 2007). On the other hand, workers who possess humour skills can deal with hardship and look forward to identifying and solving the problems related to contract breach (Lyttle, 2007; Romero & Cruthirds, 2006) which is why the study also predicts that an employee who possesses humour skill will be able to deal with emotional exhaustion and reduce its effect on OCB. Therefore, this study would like to test the moderating effect of humour skills between the link between PCB, emotional exhaustion and OCB.

*H5: Humor skills will moderate the impact of PCB on Emotional Exhaustion such as in the presence of humour skills, the relationship weakens*

*H6: Humor skills will moderate the impact of Emotional Exhaustion on OCB, such as in the presence of humour skills; the relationship will weaken.*

## **Research Methods**

### **Participants and procedure**

The data was collected from middle-level employees. Due to the ongoing pandemic of Covid-19, the data was collected using an online form as the traditional method of pencil paper survey was deemed unsafe. The item response theory was chosen, and a total number of items (26) were multiplied by 10 (Hambleton & Swaminathan, 2013). The data was collected using the snowball sampling method. Twenty-six participants were asked to forward the form to ten colleagues working at the same level. In this way, data was collected from employees in similar positions in the organization. Since the data was collected only using an online survey in a limited amount of time, the number of respondents was low. Data was collected from 212 respondents from which two responses were submitted empty, and nine outliers were identified. Therefore, data from 199 respondents were used for the final analysis. The forms that were distributed had the explanation about the study's intent, and they were well assured about the confidentiality of the results.

## **Measures**

This study, utilizing an adapted questionnaire, conducted responses about the perceived psychological breach, emotional exhaustion, organizational citizenship behaviour and humour skills using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree".

### ***Perceived psychological breach***

This study opted the 5 item scale of Robinson and Wolfe Morrison (2000) of which three items were considered fit to measure PCB after analyzing factor loadings. A reverse coded sample item includes, "Almost all the promises made by my employer during recruitment have been kept so far".

### ***Emotional exhaustion***

The study measured nine items from Maslach et al. (1986) to measure emotional exhaustion. After analyzing factor loadings, six items were chosen for the final analysis. A sample item of which includes, "I feel emotionally drained from my work."

### ***Organizational Citizenship Behavior***



This study used 8 item scale of Lee and Allen (2002) to measure OCB from which five items were selected for final analysis. A sample item of which includes, "I defend the organization when other employees criticize it."

### *Humour Skills*

This study used a 4 item scale of adaptive humour validated by Jose et al. (2007) to measure employees' humour skills that they might use for buffering the negative effect of PCB and Emotional exhaustion. Three items from this scale proved to be significant for the final analysis. A sample item of which includes, "The use of humour helps to put me at ease".

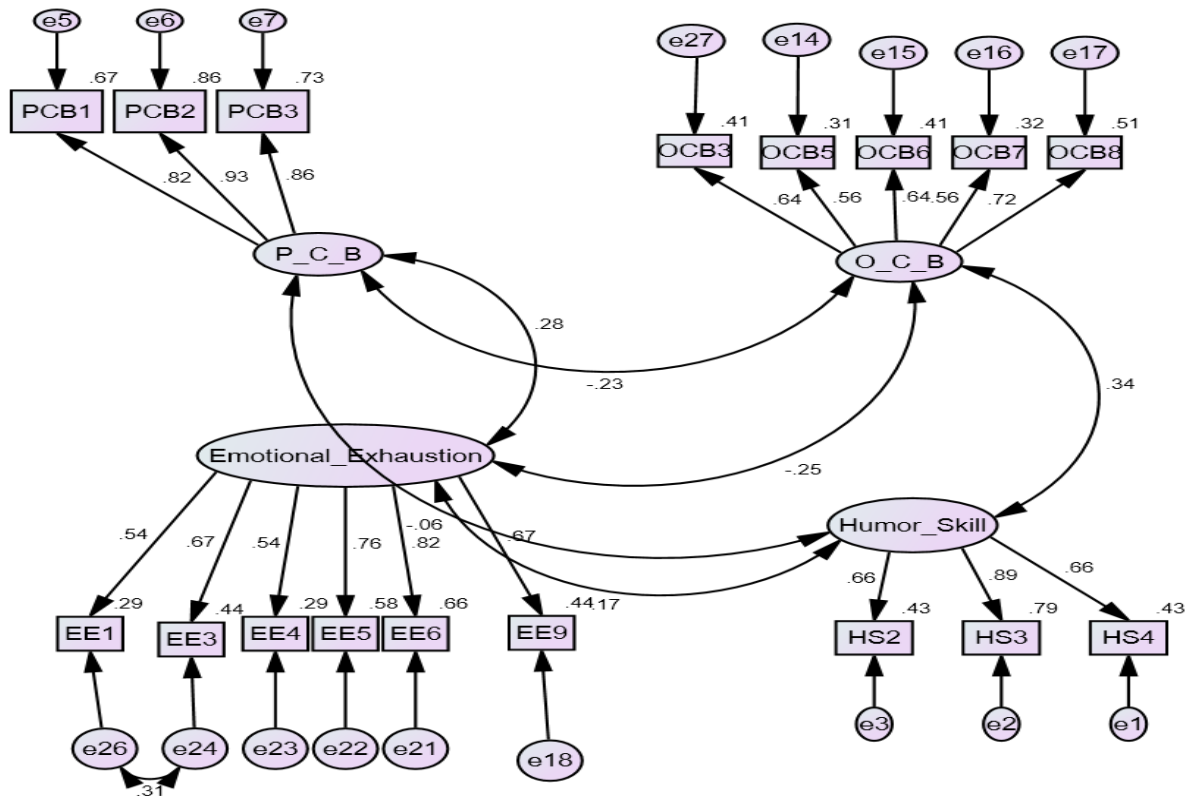
## **Results**

Firstly, the data was analyzed to check for missing values, outliers and data normality on SPSS 21. Using Kline (2011) guidelines, the data was tested and was found to be distributed normally. The skewness value calculated of items resulted between  $-/+ 3$  and for kurtosis, the value resulted between  $-/+10$ . The method of nearby means was opted to replace missing values. By applying "Mahalanobis distance test at  $p < 0.000$ ," the study identified the outliers present in the data (Kline, 2005) and made the data free of outliers by deleting nine responses. Afterwards, the research model was tested for acceptable factor loading and model fitness before moving on to hypothesis testing. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Confirmatory (CFA) was attempted with the assistance of AMOS 20. The model contained the following variables: Psychological Contract Breach (PCB), Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Organization Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Humor Skills.

For Step two, we used Amos 20 to examine the factor loading value of the indicators and model fitness indices. The values which were considered to be appropriate were of 0.5 or higher (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Following the suggestion, ten items having the factor loading score lower than 0.5 were deleted. The model fitness values of  $\chi^2$ , CFI, CMIN/DF, RMSEA, GFI, TLI and IFI showed satisfactory results ( $\chi^2 = 197.280$ , CMIN/DF = 1.731, CFI = 0.934, RMSEA = 0.061, GFI = 0.895, TLI = 0.921 and IFI = 0.935). Hair et al. (2010) and Markus (2012) argue that the values of IFI, CFI and TLI should be equal or above the mark of 0.9 and the value of RMSEA

should be less than 0.08 (Awang, 2012). Our final model's values displayed value of TLI and CFI greater than 0.9 and RMSEA lower than 0.08. Hence, we deem our model to be fit for hypothesis estimation. Figure 1 shows the value of factor loadings and covariances between the constructs.

**Figure 1**



In step 3, the study checks the variables were tested for multicollinearity, internal consistency, Mean and SD of the variable and value of R. The results are shown in Table 1. Using the guidelines from the study of Tabachnick et al. (2007), variables were tested to identify multicollinearity.

It was found that the correlation between the variables was not more than 0.85, so the problem of multicollinearity does not exist. To check the variables' internal consistency, values of Cronbach's alpha and Construct Reliability (CR) were obtained. Cronbach's alpha of all variables was above 0.7 and the CR values for all variables were greater than 0.5 (OCB = 0.762, Humor Skill = 0.783, PCB = 0.901, and Emotional Exhaustion = 0.828). Looking at the correlation values in table 1, PCB was found to be positively related to employee's emotional

exhaustion ( $r=0.246$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and negatively related to OCB ( $r=-0.19$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Employee's emotional exhaustion was also negatively affecting the OCB ( $r= 0.173$ ,  $p<0.05$ )

**Table 1**

Variables	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	CR
1. Psychological contract breach	1				2.74	0.90	0.81	0.9
2. Emotional Exhaustion	0.246**	1			2.83	0.80	0.85	0.82
3. Organizational Citizenship Behavior	-0.190**	-0.173*	1		3.87	0.55	0.70	0.76
4. Humor skills	-0.072	-0.186**	0.273**	1	3.79	0.718	0.77	0.78

In the fourth step, path analysis was run to test our hypotheses, and we choose the value of standardized direct paths. The results are shown in Table 2. For hypothesis 1, PCB's direct effect on OCB was significant (path co-efficient=  $-0.178$ ,  $p <0.05$ ), hence we accept that PCB negatively affects OCB. For Hypothesis 2, we checked the direct effect of PCB on EE. The results indicated that the direct path between PCB and Emotional Exhaustion was significant (path co-efficient=  $0.279$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), leading towards the acceptance of H2. For Hypothesis three, the effect of Emotional Exhaustion on OCB was evaluated, the direct path was significant (path co-efficient=  $-0.192$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), leading to acceptance of H3.

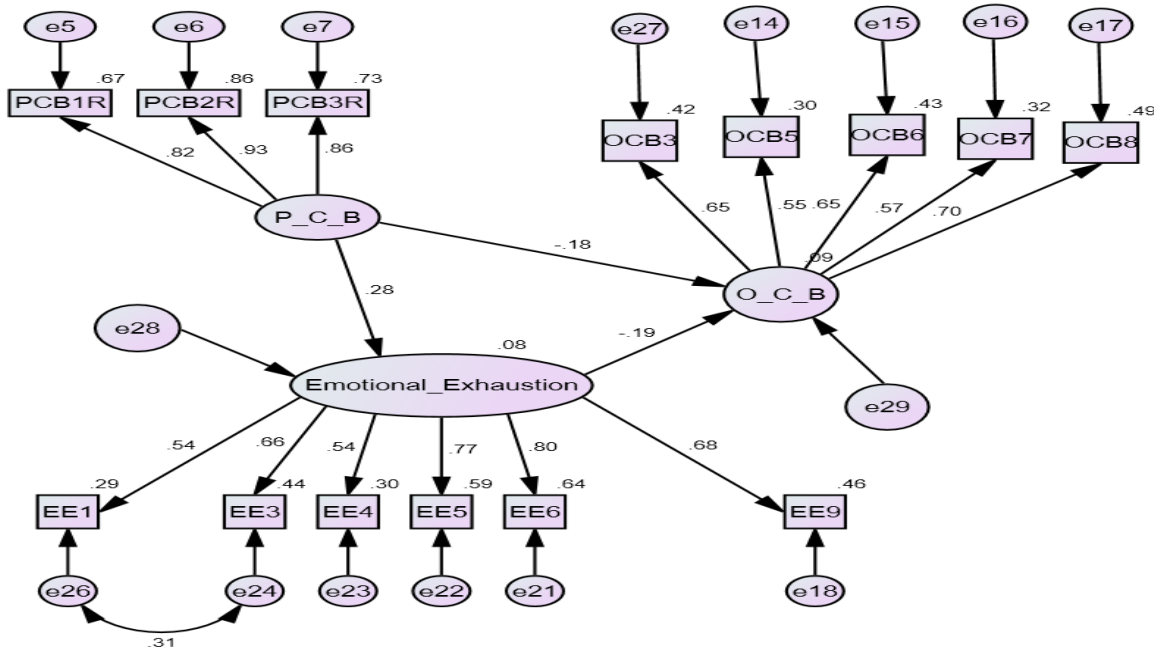
**Tables 2**

Parameters	$\beta$	P	Results
PCB to OCB	-0.178	$p<0.05$	supported
PCB to EE	0.279	$p<0.01$	supported
EE TO OCB	-0.192	$p<0.05$	supported

For Hypothesis 4, the mediating effect of PCB on OCB through Emotional Exhaustion was to be checked, for that EE must negatively affect OCB (H3). The analysis showed that Emotional Exhaustion directly impacted OCB (path co-efficient= $-0.162$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), leading us to accept the H3. To check the mediating role of EE between PCB and OCB's relationship, we had to examine the direct and indirect path. The analyses highlighted that all the estimates were significant which fulfils our criteria of mediation according to (Hayes & Rockwood, 2020). The value of indirect path co-efficient was reported at (Indirect path=  $-0.54$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) which is lower

than the direct path (path co-efficient= -0.178,  $p < 0.05$ ) between PCB and OCB previously reported. Following the rule, we conclude that EE partially mediates the link between PCB and OCB (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Standardized Estimates (Mediation)**



Lastly, we will check the moderating impact of Humor Skill on the link between PCB and EE using Hayes process macro (model 1) developed by (Hayes, 2012). The confidence interval of 95% was selected, and 1000 bootstrapping samples were chosen. The results indicated that the p-value for PCB ( $\beta = 0.47$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and Interaction term (PCBxHS) to be insignificant ( $\beta = -0.66$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) in the model which proves that Humor skill does not impact the relationship between PCB and OCB, therefore we reject our Hypothesis 4.

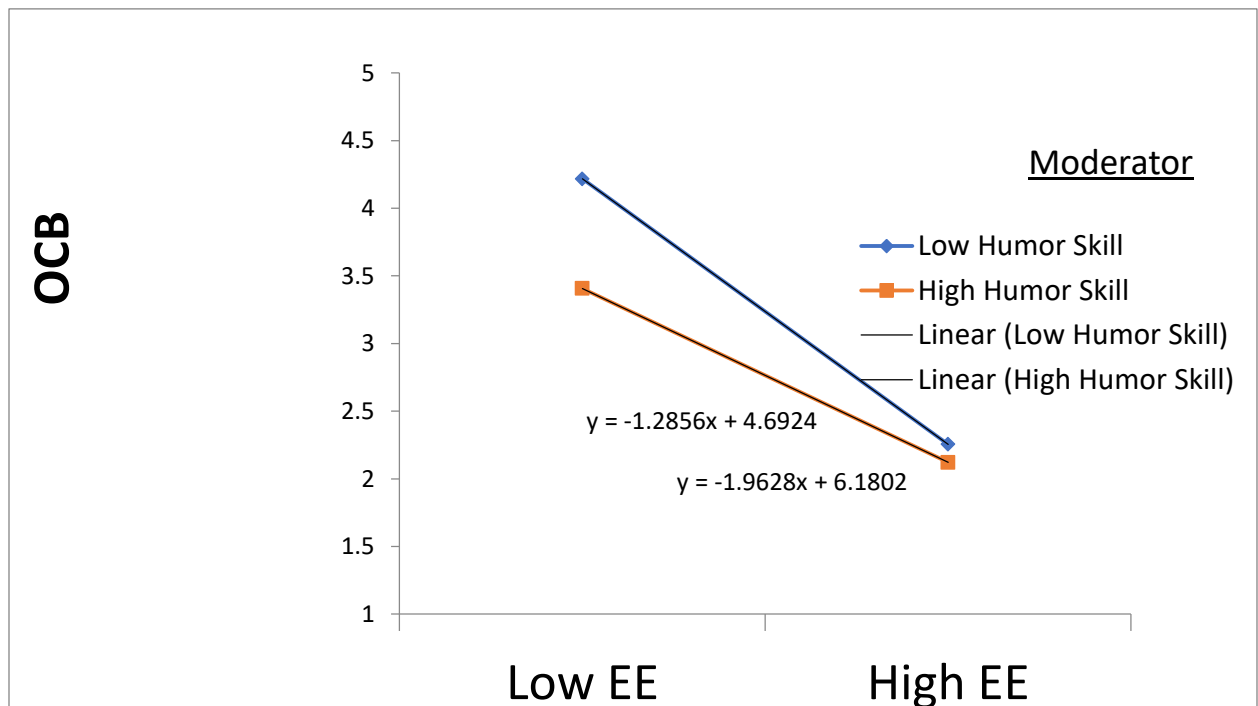
While using Hypothesis 5, the moderating effect of Humor Skill on the relationship between Emotional Exhaustion and OCB was tested. The moderation effect was again tested

with Hayes Process macro (model 1) (Hayes, 2012). Bootstrapping sample of 1000 was selected with a confidence interval of 95%. The interaction term (EExHS) and Emotional Exhaustion turned out to be significant with an Interaction term ( $\beta= 0.1693$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and Emotional Exhaustion ( $\beta= -0.8121$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) respectively. The two-way interaction chart (Figure 3) verifies humour skill's dampening effect on the relationship of Emotional Exhaustion and OCB. Hence, we accept our Hypothesis 5 and conclude that Humor Skills of a person lowers down the negative effect of Emotional Exhaustion on OCB.

**Table 3 (Moderation)**

	M1 ( $\beta$ )	M2( $\beta$ )
<b>Step 1</b>		
Emotional Exhaustion	-0.812**	
Humour Skills	-0.236*	
R square	0.149	
<b>Step 2</b>		
EexHS		0.169**
change in r square		0.030

**Figure 3. (Moderation Chart)**



### **Discussion and Implications**

This study aims at finding the mediating role of EE, which is a dimension of burnout, between the well-established relationship of PCB and OCB (Restubog et al., 2007; Suazo, 2009). The relationship was based on social exchange theory (P. Blau, 1964). The theory states that reciprocal relationships are essential in any organizational setting. If the employee feels that the organization is not fulfilling its promises, he will not engage in organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). This research is the first study to test the mediation of emotional exhaustion in the presence of the employee's potential buffering role of humour skills. Our results show that humour skills did not weaken the relationship between PCB and EE.

On the other hand, humour skills were found to be weakening the link between EE and OCB. This result signifies that employees' humour skills do not help them adapt to work in an environment where their promises are not kept. However, humour skills help them cope with the emotional exhaustion and stress they face because of the contract breaches. This way, an employee who possesses humour skills will become emotionally exhausted when working with an organization that has broken its promises, but he will not let the exhaustion affect his organizational citizenship behaviour.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This study focused on the isolated effect of emotional exhaustion on OCB, which has been done only in limited studies before (SESEN et al., 2011). To further extend the understanding of this phenomenon, it acted as a mediator. This study found that emotional exhaustion also partially mediates the relationship between PCB and OCB, along with negatively affecting the OCB of an employee. The study also sheds light on the role of personal skills and humour skills in this case. This study further extends the work done on the effect of personal factors by Costa and Neves (2017), who studied the buffering role of forgiveness cognition on the same relationship.

Overall, this study's result gave a comprehensive understanding of PCB's negative impact on OCB via emotional exhaustion and humour skills' ability to buffer this adverse effect.

The finding adds to the limited literature available on the effect of PCB on emotional exhaustion and the interplay of humour skills on this relationship.

### **Practical Implications**

Investigating the joint role of PCB, EE and humour skills on employee's OCB, will help guide managers in practice. When an organization fails to fulfil the promises, it has made the employees' it causes negative results and makes the workers emotionally exhausted; this results in workers taking a step back from participating in citizenship behaviour. It can be understood that they will not connect with an organization if they are not keeping its word. To make sure this does not happen, organizations much go out of their way to make sure such negative feelings does not prevail in their employees. Organizations should make keeping the promises it has made in the past, a priority. However, it is not always possible, as the internal ups and downs and external competitions make it challenging to do so (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). For such organizations, if the employees possess humour skill, they can counter the emotional exhaustion.

Finding out that employees are frustrated and stressed due breached promises becomes a difficult task for the organization. The employees tend to keep their true feelings because they do not want to appear "whiny" which might lower the present situation (Robinson & Wolfe Morrison, 2000). Therefore, it becomes the firms' responsibility that they take notice of the negative feelings experienced by the employees and work towards solving the problem. One way to resolve this problem is to be transparent with employees and tell them about the situation and the reasons behind the decision-making processes. In this way, employees will be better able to deal with broken promises. Such an organization, which knows that contract breaches are unavoidable, should provide tailored training programs that teach employees how to achieve their goals amidst broken promises.

Along with such training programs, organization should assist its employees on how to develop humour skills. To work on their humour skills, organizations should emphasize the importance of relating to situations and using their skill and resources to tackle disappointing situations to put them in perspective (Romero & Cruthirds, 2006).



### **Limitations and Future Directions**

The study has several limitations which may give directions to various future research. Firstly, the study opted for self-reported questionnaires. Due to the unfavorable economic situation and high employment downsizing, the employees might have been influenced while affecting the research's generalizability through adequate instruction was provided in the questionnaire. Secondly, the study was based on cross-sectional data; this may lead to speculation and does not provide space to the researcher to establish causality among variables. Longitudinal data is known to unknot cause and effect. Hence, future studies should use the same model but work on longitudinal data for research. Thirdly, the present study focused on middle-level employees of various sectors in Pakistan, an underdeveloped country. For generalizability, any future research could focus on a specific sector using the same model in a developed country to obtain different results. Lastly, the study used a non-random sampling technique as it was conducted during a pandemic situation. For future studies, the research should use random data and should study the model on a specific organization.

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