



## Antecedents and Consequences of Employee's Greed: An Empirical Examination (Evidence from Pakistan)

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### Abstract

*The study aimed to analyze empirically the relationships among job strain, employee greed, and workplace deviance. The data is collected from 645 bank employees and analyzed by using structural equation modeling. The analysis reveals a significant impact of job strain on greed and workplace deviance. Moreover, in the relationship between job strain and workplace deviance, employee greed is a significant mediator. The study bridges the gap in the literature of greed theory by incorporating the mechanism of employee greed in job strain and workplace deviance. In the practical milieu, the study explains greed phenomenon in a novel cultural context, suggesting human resource managers to better understand employee psychology.*

**Key Words:** Employee Greed, Job Strain, Workplace Deviance

### Introduction

“Greed is as old as the hills” (Brassey & Barber, 2009). The roots of the concept “Greed” in the literature can be traced in the first literary work of humankind as in Homer’s comics and the epic of Gilgamesh. Greed thesis can also be found in different classics and the latest pieces of literature of the disciplines, such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, religion or theology, economics, finance, law, leadership and medical. However, in industrial psychology the concept is still under its progress. The scholars treat greed as a dispositional component (Haynes, Josefy, & Hitt, 2015).

In general, the dispositions are “indeed, alive and well”, these are psychological characteristics, not physical characteristics of individuals (e.g. gender, race). In other words, dispositions are the characteristics which cannot be measured objectively, these are basically the tendencies in response of a particular situation, under some situations these become the explanation of behavior and vary in their usefulness, temporal stability and their state of activation (House, Shane, & Herold, 1996). Dispositions captured the interest of scholars and practitioners for decades; personality researchers have been interested in studying the dispositions of the employees in the workplace. The main reason for the interest of the employee's dispositions is due to their deep impact on, attitude (Luthans, 2011, p. 150), and the variance in individual's behavior (House et al., 1996). In the personal dispositions array, greed is a new addition and the disposition are basically tendencies in response to the situation, so the situation/context should be incorporated into the conception and assessment of dispositions (Allport, 1937; Lewin, Heider, & Heider, 1936; Mischel, 1969, 1993). Therefore, this study is congruent with the same theme and investigates the dispositions (greed) with respect to the context (job strain).

In building the model this study gets help from contextual anomie and strain theory (CAST) which is a prominent theory of corporate crimes presented by (M. Robinson & Rogers, 2018). The theory describes the causes of greed and states that the strain in the managers promotes greed. The theory demonstrates that greed is generated by strain and in pursuit of greed the people engage in both legitimate and illegitimate means to satisfy their endless goals. Moreover, in describing the results of greed theory asserts that greed has both positive and negative outcomes. When people become greedy, they either improve their job performance or deviate from the organizational norms by innovating. The core theme of the contextual anomie theory is that employee deviances

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are stimulated by employee greed, and this greed is generated from strain (M. Robinson & Murphy, 2009, p. ix). This study is based on this theoretical perspective to investigate the antecedents and outcomes of greed.

The problem to be examined in the study is the antecedents and consequences of employee greed in the banks of Pakistan. Particularly, how do job strain effect employee greed, and in which way this greed influences the individual-level outcomes (workplace deviance), in banks of Pakistan?

The study has significant at both scholarly and practice levels. On the scholarly level, this study will contribute in two ways; firstly, this study investigates the phenomenon of greed based on contextual anomie/strain perspective. Secondly, this research develops and tests an integrated model for employee greed, which predicts the antecedents of greed and the outcomes of greed as well. On the practice level, this study has also significant and will develop a theory of greed in a novel cultural context so that human resource managers can use the findings in making the decision of their human resource practices in their typical socio-cultural context.

## **Literature Review**

### **Greed**

Greed is an old word and its roots can be found in old English word “grædig” of prehistory German origin, meaning, “an overwhelming desire to have more of something such as money than is actually needed”, (“Microsoft Encarta World English Dictionary,” 1987), “an overwhelming desire to have more of something such as money than is actually needed” (“Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary,” n.d.). The meaning of the word greed in old dictionaries cluster around “Consumption” and in the current dictionaries as “Material Consumption” (Robertson, 2001).

From far history, humans are in search of the things, which caused greed and what are the outcomes of greed. Therefore, this study has explored and tested the job strain as antecedents of greed and workplace deviance as an outcome of greed. According to (Brassey & Barber, 2009), greed is driving out grace and respect for others in the society, some argued that greed promotes envy, anger, and shame (Robertson, 2001) mutual distrust and leads humans to seek power forever (Frijters, 2013, p. 204). Parsimoniously, in the organizational settings job strain is found as a predictor of greed and workplace deviance as outcome of greed.

### **Job Strain**

Different perspectives had been found on the definition of the strain but there is a little agreed-upon definition among scholars (Barsky, Thoresen, Warren, & Kaplan, 2004). Psychological strain is a negative judgment about one’s self (anxiety, irritation, depression, dissatisfaction, and turnover intention) results of stressful force or factors known as stressors (role conflict, role ambiguity) (Barsky et al., 2004; Beehr, Jex, Stacy, & Murray, 2000). In other words, it can be said that psychological irritation is an instance of the psychological strain.

### **Workplace Deviance**

We can describe the deviance in organizational settings as, “voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both”(S. L. Robinson & Bennett, 1995). In organizational settings, employees become deviant because they don’t have the incentive to cope with the norms of the organization, so this behavior is volunteer in nature (Kaplan, 1975). Deviance is different from ethics; ethics are behaviors conforming to authorities or society’s norms and while deviance is not conforming to only organizational norms. That is why, the deviance is related to the norms of the organizations and its consequences are also effecting not only on individual level but also at organizational level as well (S. L. Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

Antecedents of these behaviors have been also studied in different contexts and aspects. Many researchers identified many variables, which contribute to deviance as, at individual level personality characteristics, and demographics had been considered as determinants of workplace deviance. At a social level, norms of deviance and unfair interpersonal treatment can cause deviance (S. L. Robinson & Greenberg, 1998). In this research the primary purpose is to study the deviance with respect to the dispositional components, as greed. Contextual

anomie/strain theory stated that greed promotes crimes and workplace deviance (M. Robinson & Murphy, 2009). David Hume in his *A Treatise of Human Nature* treat the greed (avarice) as the furious tempest which rests in the human breast and human are not acquainted with it and the consequence of greed is a loss for others (Hume, 2009). So, we can infer from these theories that greed promotes workplace deviance.

### Job Strain and Workplace Deviance

A general strain theory (GST) is thought of as a landmark in the explanation of deviance and extensively examined in the literature (Agnew, 1992, 2009). The primary focus of the research is, strain plays a vital role in crime, delinquency, and deviance. Moreover, the theory proposes that specific strains or stressors enhance the chance of deviance (Agnew, 2009). The center theme of GST is very basic: humans experiencing tensions regularly becomes disturbed and now and again adapt to deviance, crimes, and wrongdoings. Such people may take part in deviance to end or escape from their strains. As an example, any humans who need money may involve in stealing (Agnew, 2009). Another example of deviance, an employee may strike colleagues who are badgering him/her. This is due to the revenge people want to take from others due to stress or strain related to that person.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Job strain in employee positively and significantly influence workplace deviance.

### Job Strain and Employee Greed

Greed is as old as the mountains. From far history, humans are in search of things, which caused greed. In search of the determinants of greed, this study explored the literature and found so many determinants e.g. culture, policies, and strategies of the firm, incentive structure, fear of the sack and anxiety about retirement, security or status. According to CAST, job strain is a strong predictor of employee greed (M. Robinson & Murphy, 2009; M. Robinson & Rogers, 2018).

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Job strain in employee positively and significantly influence employee greed.

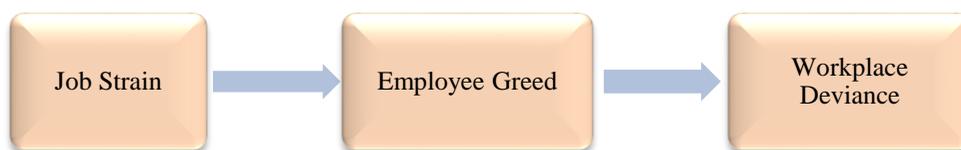
### Intervening Role of Greed in the Relationship of Job Strain and Workplace Deviance

Employee greed is an intervening variable in the relationship of job strain and workplace deviance just caught by contextual anomie and strain theory (CAST). CAST presented by (M. Robinson & Murphy, 2009) and Robinson & Rogers, (2018) and asserts that the employees become greedy due to job strain. Moreover, in describing the results of greed theory asserts that greed has both positive and negative outcomes. When people become greedy, they either improve their job performance or deviate from the organizational norms by innovating. The core theme of the CAST is that employee deviances are stimulated by employee greed, and this greed is generated from job strain (Robinson and Murphy, 2009; Robinson and Rogers, 2018). Theory successfully describes the greed phenomenon in organizational settings. Hence from this theoretical perspective it can be said that greed is a strong intervening variable in the relationship of job-related strain and workplace deviances.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Employee greed intervenes in the relationship between job-related strain and workplace deviance.

### Theoretical Framework

In the description of the greed phenomenon, the relationships of the variables with employee greed are arranged in a schematic diagram known as a theoretical framework and have been given below.



**Figure 1:** Theoretical Framework

## Research Methodology

Keeping in view the problem statement and identified different variables associated with greed in an integrated framework, this section describe the methods and techniques used for the selection of research design, data collection strategy, population, sample design, unit of analyses, data collection sources, instruments and analysis of data for the empirical testing of the hypothesized relationships.

### Aim of the Research

The premise of this research is to analytically examine the antecedents and outcomes of greed by testing the hypothesized relationships of different variables with greed so we can say that the study is causal-explanatory.

### Data Collection Strategy

This study is going to use the survey strategy because this study is designed to model the different variables and wants to answer the why and how questions (why do employees indulge in greed? and how does this greed influence individual level and organizational level outcomes?). This study is also concerned with the reason for the established relationships and wants to infer the results based on quantitative data, which can be economically collected from the sample and can be generalized over the population. Therefore, the best strategy for this study is the survey strategy.

### Data Collection Sources

For the purpose of overawed the common method, bias due to the collection of data about all the variables from the same source this study uses the multi-source data collection by using the two survey instruments. One instrument is designed to fill by the employees and the other instrument is designed to fill by the supervisors or bosses. Towards achieving the goal of integrity in the process of data collection, the questionnaires are numbered. The numbering scheme instead of using an employee's name is used to ensure the respondents about the anonymity. The numbering scheme is same for both questionnaires (employee reported, and supervisor reported). In this investigation, based on the problem statements the data will be collected and analyzed at just individual level (employees, supervisors).

### Measures

To measure the key variables under study, the following instruments, which are already published in well-reputed journals and having good reliabilities and a good model of fit, are used. In order to avoid the common scale anchors bias which is the repetitive use of the same anchors for all the variables in the questionnaire (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) the different variables are measured by using different anchors.

**Table 1.** Measuring Instruments

Variable	Instrument	Author	Items	Reporting	Alpha Value
Job Strain	Psychological Strain in Work Contexts	(Mohr, Müller, Rigotti, Aycan, & Tschan, 2006)	8	Self-Reporting	0.84
Employee Greed	Dispositional Greed Scale	(Krekels & Pandelaere, 2015)	6	Self-Reporting	0.81
Workplace Deviance	A Non-Self-Report Measure of Workplace Deviance	(Stewart, Bing, Davison, Woehr, & McIntyre, 2009)	15	Supervisor Reporting	0.89

To measure the job strain, this study uses the 3 items, self-reported, cognitive irritation subscale of irritation scale aligned with previous studies (Widmer, Semmer, Kälin, Jacobshagen, & Meier, 2012) to measure psychological strain in organizational settings. The overall reliability of the measure is 0.84. With the purpose of measuring the employee's tendency towards greed, this study uses the six-item employee greed scale. In the

scale, 6 items are adapted from self-reported greed scale (Krekels & Pandelaere, 2015). The reliability of the scale is 0.81. The current study slightly modified the questions from “their” to “his/her”, of a questionnaire used by (Stewart et al., 2009). This non-self-reported scale was developed for multiple employees and this study’s focus is on single employees. The answers of the respondents are caught by a five-point Likert scale.

**Population and Sample**

Greed prevails in both the private and public sectors (Frijters, 2013, p. 303). It has also been observed that greedy individuals are not only at the top level of the state sector but also in the private sector because of its wealth creation ability and degree of freedom within it (Frijters, 2013, p. 302). So, the questionnaires were sent to banks of all regions through mail, courier, fax and by personal visit where possible. Due to multi-source and time-lagged data collection, this study uses convenience sampling. The sample size of the study is consisting of six hundred and eighty-one elements.

**Results and Findings**

**Demographic Properties of Respondents**

In Pakistani culture, women are discouraged to go out of home and specifically to work. Therefore, a total no of 513 respondents 79.5% are male and remaining are females (132, 20.5%). The majority of the respondents (333, 52%) are between the age group of 26-30, only 15 respondents are of age above 45. Most of the respondents (237, 37%) are getting salary less than 30000, and 5 respondents’ salaries above 110,000 Pakistani Rupees. Education is measured in years and it is observed here only 2, (0.3%) respondents are of Ph.D. degree, 53 respondents (8.2%) are of 18 years of education, majority are of 16 years of education (298, 46%) or 14 years of education (250, 39%) and remaining (42, 6.5%) are of 12 years of education.

**Table 2.** Respondent’s Characteristics

<b>Description</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gender	Male	513	79.5
	Female	132	20.5
Age	26-30	333	51.6
	31-35	200	31.0
	36-40	65	10.1
	41-45	32	5.0
	Above 45	15	2.3
Monthly Pay	Less Than 30000	237	36.7
	30001-40000	208	32.2
	40001-50000	109	16.9
	50001-60000	40	6.2
	60001-70000	11	1.7
	70001-80000	16	2.5
	80001-90000	7	1.1
	90001-100,000	7	1.1
	100,001-120,000	5	.8
	120,001 or Above	5	.8
Qualification	12 Year	42	6.5
	14 Year	250	38.8
	16 Year	298	46.2
	18 Year	53	8.2
	PhD	2	.3

**Correlation Analysis**

Table 5 represents the bivariate correlation analysis of the variables. The values of the correlation describe the association of the variables with each other. The dependent variable, workplace deviance is positively and significantly associated with greed ( $r = 0.277, p < .01$ ) and strain ( $r = 0.558, p < .01$ ). The mediating variable of greed is significantly and positively associated with the independent variable job strain ( $r = .558, p < .01$ ).

**Table 3.** Correlation Matrix

	WD	Greed	Strain
WD	1		
Greed	.277**	1	
Strain	.558**	.410**	1

**Regression Analysis**

To test the mediation model for the hypothesis, a series of regressions along with 5000 bootstrap samples on 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals, are fitted and analyzed. The analysis is consisting of several steps presented in subsequent sentences and the output of statistical results is presented in the table. In the first step, the direct effect of predicting variable job strain on consequent variable workplace deviance is analyzed and found positively significant ( $B = .017, p < .05$ ). In the second step, the direct effect of independent variable job strain on mediating variable employee greed is examined and found positively significant ( $B = .016, p < .05$ ). In the third step, the direct effect of mediating variable employee greed on dependent variable workplace deviance is tested and found positively significant ( $B = .020, p < .05$ ). In the final step, the indirect effect (mediated effect) of explanatory variable job strain on outcome variable workplace deviance through mediating variable employee greed is examined and the indirect effect is positively insignificant ( $B = .0003, p > .05$ ) which lies between  $-.0071$  and  $.0017$ , where zero is present in 95% confidence interval. It provides clear evidence of the existence of mediation. Moreover, from all this it can be inferred that hypothesis H: Employee greed mediate the relationship of job strain and workplace deviance is accepted.

**Table 4.** Regression Analysis

Structural Path	B	S. E	t-value	p-value
Job Strain → Workplace Deviance	.017	.007	2.429	.015
Job Strain → Employee Greed	.026	.010	2.601	.009
Employee Greed → Workplace Deviance	.020	.005	3.999	.000
Bootstrap Results for Indirect Effect	Indirect Effect	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	p-value
Job Strain → Employee Greed → Workplace Deviance	.0003	-.0071	.0017	.4921

*B = regression coefficients, S.E = Standard Error. \*\*\* =  $p < 0.001$ .*

**Discussion**

This research is an endeavor to study the relationship between strain and workplace deviance and it is found positively significant. It means when employees suffer from job strain, they deviate from organizational norms. These findings accept the hypothesis no 1, job strain in employee positively and significantly influence workplace deviance. Furthermore, this research examines the relationship between job strain and greed. Moreover, it is also originating that the job strain has a significant and positive influence on the intervening variable of employee greed. It means when employees suffer from job strain, they indulge in greedy tendencies. These findings support the acceptance of the hypothesis no 2, job strain in employee positively and significantly influence employee

greed. Finally, the study attempts to discover the indirect relationship of job strain to workplace deviance through greed. The simultaneous equation modeling is used to assess the mediating or indirect phenomenon of greed in the relationship between job strain and deviance. The results support the hypothesis no 3, job strain is positively and significantly predicting the workplace deviance in the employees through employee greed. These findings are parallel with the CAST (M. Robinson & Murphy, 2009; M. Robinson & Rogers, 2018).

## **Conclusion**

In an effort to analytically analyzing the relationships among psychological strain, employee greed, and workplace deviance. The data containing four hundred and eighty-one responses were gathered from the banking sector of Pakistan. The survey consisted of thirty questions to measure the variables under study framework. Data screening was performed to test the direct and indirect effects. The findings of this research originate that the job strain promotes workplace deviance. It means when employees become stressed, they involve in workplace deviance. Furthermore, the study found that job strain is a strong predictor of employee greed. When employees having job strain, they also indulge in greed. Moreover, the mediation analysis revealed that employees having high job strain are also having high workplace deviance through greedy tendencies. It means employee greed is a significant intervening variable in the relationship between job strain and workplace deviance. These findings contribute to the literature of strain, greed and workplace deviance in novel cultural context. It enhances the understanding of human resource practitioners while deterring the issues emerging from employee greed.

This study has some limitations, in reporting, data collection, sampling and time frame, further studies should incorporate these recommendations. Two variables in the study (job strain and employee greed) are based on self-reporting and further studies should examine the said relationships of variables on the other's reporting measures. The data was collected from for-profit and service sector organizations further studies should collect data from not-for-profit organizations and from manufacturing or other types of organizations to validate the results.

Moreover, the data is collected from just one country due to the limitations of the study, further studies should examine the said relationship based on some cross-cultural data.

This study has implications for human resource managers. These human resource managers should develop an environment in the organization to reduce the strain on the employees. In this manner employee tendencies of greed can be minimized, and the organizations can escape the losses due to workplace deviances. Because the workplace deviance has a significant cost for the organizations.

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