

DOES PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT BREACH LEAD TO PROCRASTINATION AT WORK? THE MEDIATION FUNCTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CYNICISM

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at exploring the psychological contract breach's impact on procrastination at work. Besides, the present study examines whether organizational cynicism mediates this impact. Drawing on social exchange and affective events theory, this study hypothesized that the psychological contract breach would increase procrastination at work, and organizational cynicism would mediate the link between psychological contract breach and procrastination at work. We gathered data from 237 employees by adopting the survey method for testing the hypotheses. All analyses were conducted using quantitative research methods. Findings indicated that psychological contract breach significantly increased work procrastination. In addition, organizational cynicism had a full mediation role. Several implications were proposed based on the findings.

Keywords: Psychological Contract Breach, Procrastination At Work, Organizational Cynicism.

Jel Codes: L20, M10, M12.

1. INTRODUCTION

Procrastination is a very prevalent behavior in many domains of life and at work (Liu, 2023). It refers to an avoidance behavior that includes the abstention from performing of intended action (Van Eerde, 2003:422). It is mostly correlated with losses and negative outcomes such as deterioration of well-being, health and wealth (He, Wu, Wu and Fu, 2021; Hen, Goroshit and Viengarten, 2021; Abbasi and Alghamdi, 2015). Existing research on procrastination behavior has mainly focused on general and academic procrastination (Metin, Taris and Peeters, 2016). However, procrastination at work has been mostly ignored compared to other domains (Metin et al., 2016; Van Eerde and Venus, 2018). The small number of studies on work procrastination presents evidence that it has negative outcomes such as lower engagement and performance (Metin, Peeters and Taris, 2018; Metin et al., 2016). Moreover, the limited research on work procrastination has mostly investigated the effect of individual differences such as personality and demographics (Prem, Scheel, Weigelt, Hoffmann and Korunka, 2018). Accordingly, it is important to explore other determinants of procrastination at work to prevent it. At this point, we

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Makale Geçmiři/Article History

Başvuru Tarihi / Date of Application : 18 Ocak / January 2023

Düzeltilme Tarihi / Revision Date : 21 Şubat / February 2023

Kabul Tarihi / Acceptance Date : 14 Mart / March 2023

believe that employees' perceptions and beliefs regarding their organization may affect their procrastination behavior at work.

In this paper, we first aim at investigating the psychological contract breach as a possible determinant of work procrastination. From the employee's perception, a psychological contract involves reciprocal responsibilities between the organization and the employee (Rousseau, 1989). A psychological contract breach is a perception of employees indicating the organization became insufficient in accomplishing its promised obligation (Convey, Guest and Trenberth, 2011). Existing research on psychological contract breach has revealed that it leads to negative work outcomes such as emotional exhaustion, strain, turnover intention, psychological withdrawal behavior and low levels of job performance, job satisfaction, work commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Gakovic and Tetrick, 2003; Bal, De Lange, Jansen and Van Der Velde, 2008; Lo and Aryee, 2003; Chen, Tsui and Zhong, 2008). However, little is known about how it is related to work procrastination. Since it is related to several negative work outcomes, it can be expected that it may also predict work procrastination. Social exchange theory posits that when the initial action of an organizational actor is negative, the target reciprocates this treatment with unfavorable behavior (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels and Hall, 2017). In line with the theoretical assumptions, it is expected that the psychological contract breach may result in work procrastination.

The second goal of the current study is to unearth the mediation effect of organizational cynicism on the association between psychological contract breach and work procrastination. Organizational cynicism refers to an unfavorable attitude indicating that employees have negative beliefs and sentiments toward their organization (Dean, Brandes and Dharwadkar, 1998). It involves rage, desperation, disappointment and disbelief regarding the organization (Andersson, 1996). To sum up, it leads to powerful negative emotional reactions resulting in negative work outcomes (Abraham, 2000). The affective events theory posits that; affective work experiences lead to emotional reactions in employees, and these reactions have an impact on their work outcomes (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Drawing on the affective events theory, it is contended that the breach of the psychological contract may cause organizational cynicism, which, in turn, results in work procrastination.

The following ways that the current study adds to the literature on organizational behavior. First, procrastination at work still is in the nascent stage compared to other work behaviors. Accordingly, this study provides empirical evidence to fill this gap. Metin and colleagues (2016) suggested that it is important to explore determinants of work procrastination with comprehensive models to gain better insight into this understudied concept. We respond to this research call by examining the impact of psychological contract breach and organizational cynicism on procrastination at work. Secondly, to date, organizational cynicism's mediating function in the association between psychological contract breach and work procrastination has not been discovered. Since it provides evidence in favor of the fundamental principles of the affective events theory, it is crucial to investigate this mediating role. Therefore, we

extend this line of research by explaining work procrastination in the framework of affective events theory.

2. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Psychological Contract Breach and Work Procrastination

In work life, procrastination is a prevalent and chronic behavior (Ngunyen, Steel and Ferrari, 2013). Procrastination is described as an irrational behavior including voluntarily delaying an intended action (Steel, 2007; Yao et al., 2023). Procrastination behavior appears when the task is aversive or less attractive than the alternatives (Van Eerde, 2016). It includes failure to self-regulate and self-control for fulfilling an intended action (Sirois and Pychyl, 2013). Procrastinators mostly engage in other tasks than they are supposed to accomplish (Davis, Flett and Besser, 2002). In addition, high procrastinators mostly have difficulties fulfilling the given tasks in time (Zhang, Zhang, Liu and Chen, 2022). Zarick and Stonebraker (2009) posited that the initial costs of an action, task aversion and uncertainty lay the rationale of procrastination.

Procrastination at work can be categorized into two sub-dimensions: soldiering and cyberslacking. Soldiering refers to a work-avoiding behavior including the restriction action of employees regarding their output such as daydreaming and engaging in more vivid activities rather than work tasks (Metin et al., 2016). Cyberslacking refers to engaging in online activities such as online shopping, checking social media, or gaming rather than working (Metin et al., 2016). Two types of procrastination could be considered harmful to organizations since they create high costs.

Early studies mostly considered procrastination as a personal behavioral trait or a response to the characteristics of the task to be completed (Weymann, 1988). However, situational or organizational factors may be effective in forming procrastination (Loneragan and Maher, 2000). Most research on procrastination has focused on student procrastination and ignored workplace procrastination (Van Eerde, 2016). However, it is a very common behavior employees engage in work settings. Therefore, it is clearly important to identify the determinants causing procrastination at work. For this purpose, we first investigate whether the psychological contract breach affects procrastination at work.

The psychological contract is one of the key components in employment relationships to cope with the ambiguous business environment (Karani Mehta, Purohit, Trivedi and Panda, 2023; Jones, Abeita, Murray and Bell, 2023). It is described as a personal belief about the mutual obligation between employees and the organization including a reciprocity norm (Rousseau, 1989). The breach of the psychological contract refers to the failure of an organization in actualizing its obligations (Conway and Briner, 2005). The psychological contract breach differs from a written contract since it is perceived as less formal by employees and includes more nuances than a written contract (Gong and Sims, 2023).

Obligations to be assured may be high salaries, promotions, career progress, job security, and adequate power (Robinson, 1996: 576). Robinson and Morrison (2000) exemplified the psychological contract breach as a recruiter promises a new employee a promotion in three years but it does not happen. According to research on psychological contract breach, it causes a number of unfavorable work attitudes and behaviors (Coyle-Shapiro, Pereira Costa, Doden and Chang, 2019; Deery, Iverson and Walsh, 2006; Gakovic and Terrick, 2003). The breach of the psychological contract causes employees to alter their performance and commitment level in a negative way and also generates intentions to leave the organization (Peirce et al., 2012).

For enlightening the nexus between psychological contract breach and procrastination at work, we utilize social exchange theory. According to social exchange theory, there is a reciprocal relation between employees and the organization, which is shaped by mutual obligations (Gouldner, 1960). Blau (1964) stated that individuals involve social interactions by performing voluntary actions to have the expectation of return in the future. Homans (1961) posited that the main stimulus in social exchange is mutual reinforcement. Social relations could end when mutual reinforcement is not succeeded by one of the parties. In social exchange relations, actors reciprocate something of value to the other (Lawler and Thye, 1999). Moreover, the initial action of a party is crucial in social exchange relationships. When the initial action is positive, the reciprocating responses are also positive, whereas if the initial action is negative, the other party reciprocates negatively (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Put differently, when one of the actors in the exchange relationship harms the other, a low-quality exchange relationship appears, which, in turn, results in the target's harming action toward the actor (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Accordingly, if one of the parties believes or perceives negativity in reciprocal action, the response is likely to be negative. Therefore, negative employee attitudes and behaviors can be outcomes of the perception of the organization's negative treatment (Gibney, Zagenczyk and Masters, 2009).

Drawing on the social exchange theory, it can be speculated that the deficiency of the organization in accomplishing its responsibility under the psychological contract may be depicted as a negative action by its employees. Therefore, they may react to their organization with negative behavior (Abbas and Al Hasnawi, 2020). In social exchange relationships, when employees perceive an imbalance in the output-input ratio, they try to rebalance the relationship by adjusting their inputs (Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski and Bravo, 2007). Accordingly, it is postulated that the psychological contract breach as a negative action may lead to work procrastination which can be considered as a negative reciprocating response to the organization. Put differently, when the organization does not meet the expectations due to the breach, the employee may react to this breach with work procrastination. Consequently, we propose the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Psychological contract breach is positively associated with procrastination at work.

2.2. Psychological Contract Breach and Organizational Cynicism

Organizational cynicism refers to an unfavorable belief regarding the idea that the organization is untrustworthy (Dean et al., 1998). It appears when employees are exposed to repeated mismanaged change efforts (Wanous, Reichers and Austin, 1994). Cynic employees tend to criticize and mistrust their organization and have sarcastic thoughts about it (Wilkerson, Evans and Davis, 2008). Moreover, organizational cynicism develops when people experience desperate and unjust work events (Wilkerson et al., 2008).

Cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions are the components of organizational cynicism. The cognitive component reflects the belief in the organization's dishonesty; the affective component includes the negative affect regarding the organization; and the behavioral component indicates taking unfavorable actions as a response to the cognitive and affective components (Dean et al., 1998).

According to social exchange theory, psychological contracts are considered general guidelines shaping the reciprocity between employees and the organization (Rousseau, 1989). When the organization does not succeed to actualize its obligation, this can be perceived as negative treatment by employees. Accordingly, the breach of the psychological contract can generate intense affective and attitudinal responses in employees such as anger, frustration and distrust (Rousseau, 1989). Based on the arguments, it can be assumed that employees have negative reciprocation by having cynic beliefs towards their organization as a consequence of the perception of negative experience and treatment due to the breach of the psychological contract.

Past studies also noted that psychological contract breach is an important predictor of organizational cynicism. Both Sarikaya and Kok (2017) and Johnson and O'Leary-Kelly (2003) discovered a positive link between psychological contract breach and organizational cynicism. In line with the existing findings, we contend that there is a positive nexus between psychological contract breach and organizational cynicism. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2: Psychological contract breach is positively associated with organizational cynicism.

2.3. Organizational Cynicism and Work Procrastination

Affective events theory mainly focuses on how emotional experiences impact work attitudes and behaviors (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Affective experiences regarding work can influence the employees' judgments of the job (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Moreover, affective reactions lead to affect-driven behaviors (Glaso, Vie, Holmdal and Einarsen, 2011). With regard to theoretical assumptions, we expect that organizational cynicism, which includes negative affect on the organization, may lead to negative work behavior such as work procrastination.

High cynic employees have negative emotions including nervousness, humiliation, disillusionment and anger toward their organization (Naseer, Raja, Syed and Baig, 2021; Soomro, Saraih and Tunku Ahmad, 2022). These negative emotions can create prejudice toward the work tasks which may result in employees' reluctance to complete the tasks on time (Cingöz and Öztürk, 2020). Accordingly, to express these negative emotions, employees may engage in work procrastination. These negative emotions may hinder employees to engage in their primary work tasks. In other words, they may lose their focus and attraction to the work tasks since they have negative feelings toward their organization. Therefore, these negative emotions may lead employees to procrastinate their work tasks. Based on the arguments, hypothesis 3 is postulated as:

Hypothesis 3: Organizational cynicism is positively associated with procrastination at work.

2.4. Mediation Effect of Organizational Cynicism

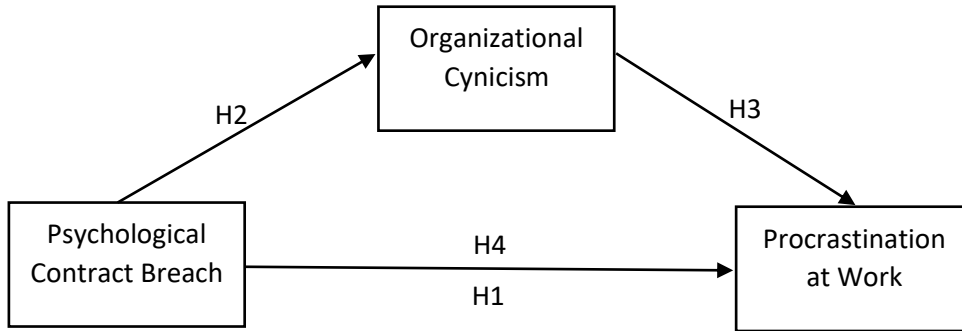
Affective events theory assumes that affective responses/reactions can have a mediation function in the association between work events/experiences and work outcomes (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Therefore, in the present study, we also investigate the organizational cynicism's mediating role in the link between psychological contract breach and procrastination at work. Perception regarding the breach of the psychological contract can be assessed as an experience of a negative work event (Zhao et al., 2007). Furthermore, organizational cynicism may be considered an emotional reaction to negative work events (Brown and Cregan, 2008). Affective events theory alleges that there is a connection between work events/experiences and emotional reactions (Weiss and Beal, 2005). In other words, work events shape emotional responses and reactions (Bal et al., 2008). Moreover, affective events/experiences generate emotional reactions in employees, which, in turn, impact their work attitudes and behaviors (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Based on this assumption, we believe that the psychological contract breach will trigger organizational cynicism; and organizational cynicism will pave the way for work procrastination as a negative work behavior. Briefly, it is contended that the psychological contract breach may accelerate organizational cynicism, which, in turn, results in work procrastination.

Hypothesis 4: Organizational cynicism mediates the link between psychological contract breach and procrastination at work.

3. METHODS AND ANALYSIS

The hypotheses and the research model of the present study are presented in Figure 1. We adopted a quantitative research methodology to examine the hypotheses. In the analysis process, we conducted descriptive analysis, common method bias test, reliability and validity tests for the constructs and hypotheses test.

Figure 1. Hypotheses and Research Model



3.1. Participants

We obtained the data from employees in a variety of sectors including health, tourism, energy, finance, education, communication and sales by adopting the convenience and snowball sampling methods. For this purpose, online questionnaire forms were sent via e-mail. Initially, we sent 500 online questionnaires and got 242 responses. Due to the incomplete data, we excluded 5 of them and the sample of the study definitely consisted of 237 employees (response rate 47.4%). The goal of the study was explained to each participant. The questionnaire included demographic characteristics and measurement instruments. Based on descriptive analysis, the sample consisted of 58.9% male and 41.1% female. A descriptive analysis of the age of the participants demonstrated that 40.5% of participants are between 18–25, 28.3% are between 26–35, 30.4% are between 36–55 and 0.8% are 56 and above. Lastly, we examined the education level of the participants. 21.1% of them had a high school degree, 6.3% had a vocational school degree, 48.9% had a bachelor’s degree, 16.5% had a master’s degree and 7.2% had a Ph.D. degree. Table 1 shows the descriptive characteristics of the sample.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

Demographics	Items	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	58.9%
	Female	41.1%
Age	18–25	40.5%
	26–35	28.3%
	36–55	30.4%
	56 and above	0.8%
Education	High school	21.1%
	Vocational school	6.3%
	Bachelor	48.9%
	Master	16.5%
	Doctorate	7.2%

3.2. Measurement Instruments

3.2.1. The Scale of Psychological Contract Breach

Psychological contract breach was evaluated with Robinson and Rousseau's (1994) scale. Çetinkaya and Özkara (2014) conducted the Turkish adaptation of the construct. The scale consists of nine items with one factor. We asked respondents to assess the items by using a five-point Likert scale (1-completely disagree, 5- completely agree). *"I feel extremely frustrated by how I have been treated by my organization"* and *"I have not received everything promised to me in exchange for my contributions"* are examples of the items. Cronbach's Alpha for the original scale was found 0.78. Cronbach's Alpha was 0.92 in this study. We also conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The resulting indices suggested a proper fit ($\chi^2/sd = 2.384$, CFI = 0.95, GFI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.067).

3.2.2. The Scale of Organizational Cynicism

We used the scale of Brandes (1997) to evaluate organizational cynicism. It was adapted to Turkish by Erdost, Karacaoğlu and Reyhanoğlu (2007). The scale has fourteen items that represent the cognitive, affective, and behavioral subdimensions. We used a five-point Likert scale for the assessment (1- completely disagree, 5- completely agree). *"My organization expects one thing of its employees, but it rewards another"* and *"I complain about how things happen in my organization to friends outside the organization"* are examples of items. Brandes (1997) reported that Cronbach's Alpha was 0.91. We calculated 0.94. In addition, CFA results revealed that the construct had a reasonable fit ($\chi^2/sd = 2.169$, CFI = 0.93, GFI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.064).

3.2.3. The Scale of Work Procrastination

Work procrastination was measured with the scale developed by Metin and colleagues (2016). The Turkish translation of the scale was conducted in the same study by Metin and colleagues (2016). The scale has twelve items, which fall under two sub-dimensions: soldiering and cyberloafing. Respondents were asked to select how often they exhibit the behaviors at work by using a 5-point scale (1-never, 5- always). *"I give priority to the lesser tasks, even if there is something important I should do at work"* and *"I do online shopping during working hours"* are the sample items. Metin and colleagues (2016) calculated Cronbach's Alpha as 0.83 for the Dutch sample and 0.85 for the Turkish sample. We calculated Cronbach's Alpha as 0.89. Moreover, CFA revealed that the construct has a favorable fit ($\chi^2/sd = 3.394$, CFI = 0.91, GFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.076).

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Common Method Bias

Since we collected the data to test the hypotheses via a single online questionnaire, we checked for common method bias by using two techniques. Based on the suggestions of Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff (2003), we first ran Harman's single-factor test. For this purpose, we loaded all the variables into an exploratory factor analysis. The total variance extracted explained by the first main factor was 39.3%. As it is lower than the advised 50% threshold (Podsakoff et al., 2003), common method bias is not a serious issue for the current study. Secondly, we examined the correlations among constructs. If the correlations among the variables are greater than 0.90, it indicates that common method bias can be an obstacle to the study (Özkara, Özmen and Kim, 2016). As the highest correlation among the variables in the present study was 0.71, common method bias was not a crucial issue.

4.2. Reliability and Validity of Measurement Model

Although our study approached all the variables as higher-order components in the conceptualization, to assess their reliability and validity detailed, we examined all the subfactors of constructs. For this intention, we first computed standardized item loadings, Cronbach's Alpha values, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) (Table 2). The factor loading of each item was greater than 0.60. Cronbach's Alpha values of each construct were higher than 0.70. As recommended by Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins and Kuppelwieser (2014), each construct's AVE was higher than 0.50 in the present study, which indicates that convergent validity was ensured. Moreover, the composite reliability values of all the constructs were greater than 0.70, which can be regarded as satisfactory (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

Table 2. Reliability and Validity of Measurement Model

Construct	Item	Factor Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Psychological Contract Breach	PCB1	0.717	0.617	0.935	0.92
	PCB2	0.803			
	PCB3	0.777			
	PCB4	0.698			
	PCB5	0.838			
	PCB6	0.757			
	PCB7	0.804			
	PCB8	0.864			
	PCB9	0.799			
Cognitive Cynicism*	OC1	0.862	0.697	0.919	0.90
	OC2	0.885			
	OC3	0.875			
	OC4	0.863			
	OC5	0.672			
Affective Cynicism*	OC6	0.769	0.660	0.920	0.91
	OC7	0.853			
	OC8	0.759			
	OC9	0.894			
	OC10	0.901			
	OC11	0.676			
Behavioral Cynicism*	OC12	0.728	0.623	0.832	0.74
	OC13	0.838			
	OC14	0.799			
Soldiering**	WP1	0.810	0.621	0.928	0.89
	WP2	0.790			
	WP3	0.881			
	WP4	0.700			
	WP5	0.836			
	WP6	0.857			
	WP7	0.720			
	WP11	0.686			
Cyberslacking**	WP8	0.781	0.626	0.870	0.78
	WP9	0.791			
	WP10	0.798			
	WP12	0.795			

* The subfactors of organizational cynicism

**The subfactors of work procrastination

We also assessed the discriminant validity. For ensuring the discriminant validity, each construct's square root of the AVE must be higher than its highest correlation with any other latent construct (Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2011). Based on the assessment, discriminant validity was provided. Table 3 presents the square root of AVE and constructs' correlation coefficients.

Table 3. The square root of AVE and construct correlation coefficients

Constructs	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Psychological Contract Breach	2.41	1.02	<i>0.785</i>					
2. Cognitive Cynicism	2.58	1.18	0.712*	<i>0.835</i>				
3. Affective Cynicism	2.26	1.14	0.656*	0.693*	<i>0.812</i>			
4. Behavioral Cynicism	2.97	1.11	0.452*	0.517*	0.605*	<i>0.789</i>		
5. Soldiering	2.01	0.87	0.378*	0.421*	0.527*	0.363*	<i>0.788</i>	
6. Cyberslacking	2.47	0.97	0.257*	0.264*	0.331*	0.313*	0.527*	<i>0.791</i>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
 (The square root of AVE is shown as bold and italic at the diagonal)

4.3. Hypotheses Test

To test the hypotheses, we used SPSS and PROCESS macro. Based on the results, hypothesis 1 indicating that psychological contract breach was positively related to work procrastination was supported ($\beta = 0.297$, $SD = 0.04$, $p < 0.05$). Hypothesis 2 stating that psychological contract breach was positively related to organizational cynicism was also supported ($\beta = 0.698$, $SD = 0.03$, $p < 0.05$). For hypothesis 3, the relationship between organizational cynicism and work procrastination was analyzed. The results revealed that organizational cynicism was positively associated with work procrastination ($\beta = 0.465$, $SD = 0.04$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, hypothesis 3 was also confirmed. Lastly, we conducted the mediation analysis (Table 4). The results indicated that organizational cynicism fully mediated the link between psychological contract breach and procrastination at work because the direct effect of psychological contract breach on work procrastination turned out insignificant in the model ($\beta = 0.08$, $SD = 0.07$, $p > 0.05$). Consequently, hypothesis 4 was confirmed as well.

Table 4. Mediation Analysis

Effects	β	p	LLCI	ULCI
<i>Direct Effects</i>				
Psychological contract breach-Organizational cynicism	0.698	0.000	0.7486	0.8977
Organizational cynicism-Work procrastination	0.465	0.000	0.3155	0.6154
Psychological contract breach-Work procrastination	0.086	0.2633	-0.076	0.195
<i>Indirect Effect</i>				
Psychological contract breach-Organizational cynicism- Work procrastination	0.383	0.000	0.2438	0.5378

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Key Findings

In the present study, we examined the link between psychological contract breach and procrastination at work. Besides, we explored the mediation function of organizational cynicism in this association by utilizing social exchange and affective events theories. In the support of the first hypothesis, test results revealed that psychological contract breach increases procrastination at work. The number of research investigating the impact of psychological contract breach and work procrastination is very limited. We could only find one empirical research examining this association to compare our results. Consistent with our findings, Abbas and Al Hasnawi (2020) also found a positive link between psychological contract breach and procrastination at work. Our finding indicates that when employees think that their organization does not actualize given promises, they reciprocate this treatment with work procrastination.

The findings regarding the second hypothesis revealed that psychological contract breach increases organizational cynicism. This finding is parallel with the findings in existing studies. For example, Johnson and O'Leary-Kelly (2003), Sarikaya and Kok (2017), Li and Chen (2018) and Bashir and Nasir (2013) also found that there is a positive link between psychological contract breach and organizational cynicism. Our finding reveals that the perception of unmet promises and expectations regarding the organization stimulates the cynic beliefs of employees toward their organization.

The findings for the third hypothesis showed that there is a positive link between organizational cynicism and procrastination at work. In the existing literature, research examining this relation is very scarce. Only two studies were found to explore this relationship (Özkan and Akdemir, 2017; Cingöz and Öztürk, 2020). While our results are consistent with the findings of Cingöz and Öztürk (2020); Özkan and Akdemir (2017) stated that they could not obtain a significant relationship between organizational cynicism and procrastination at work. Our results show that when employees develop negative beliefs and feelings toward their organization, they procrastinate their work tasks.

Our fourth hypothesis contended that there is a mediating function of organizational cynicism in the link between psychological contract breach and procrastination at work. Our findings supported this assumption. To our knowledge, this is the first investigation into the mediating role organizational cynicism plays in this relationship. The finding reveals that when employees perceive that their organization does not accomplish its obligations, it triggers the cynic beliefs of employees, which, in turn, leads to work procrastination.

5.2. Theoretical and Managerial Implications

The finding indicating that psychological contract breach is positively linked to work procrastination presents empirical evidence for the negative reciprocity in the social exchange relations

as stated by Cropanzano and colleagues (2017). Employees perceive the psychological contract breach as a negative treatment and reciprocate it with work procrastination as a negative work behavior. Therefore, we believe that this finding provides a valuable contribution to the organizational behavior field by extending the contemporary understanding of the social exchange approach.

In addition, the findings of the current study verify the theoretical assumptions of affective events theory. We discovered that psychological contract breach leads to organizational cynicism, which in turn, results in work procrastination. This finding provides empirical evidence that affective events/experiences cause emotional responses in employees, which in turn, influences employees' work behavior (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Accordingly, this study presents support for the paradigm of affective events theory by emphasizing the roles of affective experience and influence in work behaviors.

Next, this study extends the existing research on procrastination by exploring two antecedents of work procrastination. Few studies examined procrastination in the work context (Baran et al., 2016). We also responded to the research call of Baran and colleagues (2016) via the current study by providing a comprehensive model for a deep understanding of the determinants of work procrastination. Lastly, since the work procrastination scale (Baran et al., 2016) is relatively a new construct, we verified that the scale assesses the work procrastination concept well.

Finally, our findings demonstrate that psychological contract breach leads to work procrastination. Organizations should be aware that when they don't fulfill their obligations and promises, employees are prone to work procrastination. Moreover, organizations should avoid breaches since these breaches also create negative attitudes (e.g. organizational cynicism). Therefore, organizations should implement necessary human resources policies and practices by eliminating the breach of the psychological contract to prevent negative job attitudes and behaviors.

6. LIMITATIONS

Several limitations can be addressed in the current study. First, the nature of the cross-sectional data that we collected via questionnaire creates a limitation. Secondly, we only used convenience and snowball sampling methods which may hinder reaching more accurate results. Third, our sample consisted of 237 employees, which may also be assessed as a limitation due to the size of the sample. Fourth, self-reporting scales, the characteristics of the sample and social desirability tendencies are the obstacles to generalizing the results. Lastly, we could not focus on a specific sector, which may be considered as a limitation.

7. FURTHER RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

Further studies may conduct longitudinal or experimental research to produce causal inferences and more generalizable results. To gain better insight into the relationships among the variables, future

studies may combine quantitative and qualitative research methods. Moreover, sector-based research on work procrastination may be conducted to detect the differences from sector to sector.

Since the concept of work procrastination has been mostly ignored in the existing literature, more studies are needed to address and investigate its determinants in the workplace context. In particular, further research could investigate the associations between determinants and the sub-dimensions of work procrastination as soldiering and cyberslacking. By doing so, future studies can provide a deeper understanding of the nature of work procrastination. Lastly, future studies may focus on other negative factors such as abusive supervision, dark leadership, ostracism and workplace incivility as antecedents of procrastination at work.

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Hakem Değerlendirmesi: Dış bağımsız.

Çıkar Çatışması: Yazar çıkar çatışması bildirmemiştir.

Finansal Destek: Yazar bu çalışma için finansal destek almadığını beyan etmiştir.

Teşekkür: -

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Conflict of Interest: The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

Grant Support: The author declared that this study has received no financial support.

Acknowledgement: -
