

## THE IMPACT OF MANAGERIALS' UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST

Puspaningrum A., Thongsri N., Prabandari S.P.\*

**Abstract:** The aim linked with the present study is to investigate the mediating role of experience of psychological contract violation on the relationship between unethical behaviors and trust. For this purpose, the study utilized the data of 179 operational managers of manufacturing industry of Thailand. The study applies structural educational modelling (SEM) approach for investigating the empirical results. Results of the study show that experience of psychological contract violation significantly mediates the negative relationship between unethical behaviors and trust. Formation of intentional relationships which increase the organizational restrictions has confirmed a challenging struggle for managers. There are some other problems faced by an organization, including the problems of trust, psychological contracts and the ethics and emerging area for researchers. Generally, there are some incidences in the organization for the study that is unwritten but exciting on the significant performance variables. Organization's commitment regarding the contentment of their promises, known as a psychological contract, is one of the classifications that should be examined.

**Key words:** management unethical behavior, organizational trust, manufacturing industry.

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### Introduction

Inter-organizational supportive behaviors, i.e., collective arrangements, are strongly linked with the supplier's trust. Alternatively, the unethical business performs negatively affects this trust and disturb the long-term business dealings because unethical behaviors encourage unfavorable promotion, considerable penalties and eventually decreased sales and revenue (Rungsithong, Meyer & Roath, 2017). When the trust of supplier damage due to the unethical behavior of the buyers, then supplier start searching another business opportunity and start conversing negative information about buying firm with other suppliers (Van et al.,

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2016). Ho et al. (2018) indicated that orally commended penalty is not organized by a party holding control because control is resulting from the society.

Formation of intentional relationships which increase the organizational restrictions has confirmed a challenging struggle for managers (Lee & Ha, 2018). The corporation survey of supply chain revealed that the offender of firm communicates the most undersized area of their supply chain which shows beyond the problems of coordination and structure, some other problems are face by an organization, including the problems of the trusty, psychological contracts and the ethics. All these problems are considered as main features of buyer and seller relationships and provide a basis of the present study.

Existing studies investigated the psychological and cognitive characteristics of handling the buyer-supplier relationship (Davis, Jefferies & Ke., 2017). The area of buyer and seller relationship still under the discussion of researchers as they were less focused on those activities which break down the trust (Bi., 2019). The psychological contract is another reason of trust break down which is defined as the emotional experience of dissatisfaction, prevention and annoyance, attached with feelings of dissatisfaction (Boylu & Yildirim, 2018; Chugh et al., 2005). In a buyer-seller relationship, the seller endorses regular expectations from the buying firm. Similarly, buying firm also has some expectations from the supplier; which results in dissension between parties if not full fill and thus leads to the violation of psychological contracts (Davis, Jefferies & Ke, 2017). Psychological contract violation is an emotional experience, and if occurs, then parties do not want to be in the contract as it breaks the trust among the buyer-seller relationship (Deng, Coyle-Shapiro & Yang, 2018; Robinson & Morrison, 2000)

This paper, therefore, contributes to the existing literature by examining the violation of the psychological contract between a buyer and a supplier. The study used psychological contract violation as a mediating variable for examining the effects of unethical behavior on the trust within a partnership. The author defines trust as a dependence of firm on the other entities that are engaged to willingly recognize their moralities (Rungsithong, Meyer, & Roath, 2017), which suggests that psychological contract survives between the buyer and supplier and supposed destruction of psychological contract occur by obvious unethical acts that fail to defend the right of others (Paillé & Raineri, 2016). The present study, therefore, examined these occurrences, and pursue to define the role of psychological contract violation on the relationship between ethics and trust.

The remaining paper is arranged as follow: section two shows the review of existing literature and construction of hypotheses, section three is about data and methodology, section four represent empirical findings of the data, section five is about the conclusion and discussion of the study.

### Literature review

The literature revealed many studies which investigated the empirical relationship between ethical behavior and trust of consumers. Elahee, Kirby & Nasif (2002) examined the relationship between ethical behavior of managers and the trust of customers. For this purpose, the study utilized the data from Mexico, Canada and the US. Results of the study revealed the positive influence of manager's ethical behavior on building the trust of consumers. Akker et al. (2009) examined the influence of ethical leadership behaviors on the trust of the followers. For this purpose, the study utilized the data from 547 employees of European Business Corporation and revealed the positive relationship between ethical leadership behavior and the trust of followers. Caldwell et al. (2008) also found a positive association between ethical leadership and the trust of consumers. In the literature of buyer and seller relationship, ethical disputes are regularly investigated from the perspective of purchasing management. Singh, Iglesias & Batista-Foguet (2012) examined the impact of sellers' ethical behavior on buyer's trust. The study revealed the positive relationship between these two variables. Similarly, Al-Khatib, Stanton & Rawwas (2005) also showed the positive association between sellers' ethical behavior and buyers' trust. Tuan (2012) investigated the relationship between business ethics and the trust of clients. For this purpose, the study utilized the data of manufacturing industry of Nigeria. The study indicated the positive influence of business ethics on the trust of clients. Xo, Lui and Ngo (2016) indicated that unethical business behavior is very common among managers to show deceitfulness in their behavior so for earning the profit. This behavior negatively affects the trust of customers. Yip & Schweitzer (2015) worked on the UEB and showed the negative influence of UEB on the trust of customers. In the summary of the above literature, it is proposed that most of the studies focused on ethical behavior. Unethical behavior is still under the discussion of researchers. However, after reviewing the above literature, it is proposed that:

H1: "There is a negative relationship between unethical behavior and trust."

Salin & Notelaers (2018) examined the influence of UEB on the violation of the psychological contract. For this purpose, the study utilized the data of Belgium and Finland. The study applied the OLS model and revealed the negative association between UEB and the violation of the psychological contract (Sroka, 2019). Malhotra, Sahadev & Purani (2017) empirically tested the relationship between psychological contract violation and the intention of customers regarding the reuse of online merchant websites. Study further test that either this relationship is strengthening by the perceived structural assurance or not. The author utilized the data of 234 respondents and showed that perceived structural assurance significantly moderated the negative relationship between psychological contract violation and customer's intention regarding the reuse of merchant websites. Ning

& Zhaoyi (2017) done valuable work. The study investigated the moderating role of organizational ethical climate on the relationship between UEB and the violation of the psychological contract. For this purpose, the study utilized the data from 234 respondents. The study applied OLS regression models and revealed the positive effects of UEB on the violation of the psychological contract. The study further showed that this relationship is moderated through the ethical climate of any organization. Thompson & Hart (2008) indicated the positive relationship between UEB and the psychological contract violation. Results of this study are based on the data of 253 respondents. After reviewing the above literature, it is proposed that:

H2: “There is a positive relationship between unethical behavior and the experience of psychological contract violation.”

Erkutlu & Chafra (2013) examined the moderating role of TRS and EPSV on the association between realistic leadership and organizational deviance. For this purpose, the study collected the data from 545 lecturers of 10 state universities of turkey. Results of the study showed the negative relationship between realistic leadership and organizational deviance (Borowiecki & Makiela, 2019). Results of the study further showed that this relationship is significantly moderated by the TRS and EPCV. Shahnawaz & Goswami (2011) investigated the empirical relationship between PCV and TST by utilizing the data of 236 managers of Indian textile firms. The study applied the OLS regression model and found a significant relationship between PSV and TST. Yan & Zhu (2013) examined the influence of PSV on TRS. In this regard, the study collected the data from 210 enterprises of china. The study applied SEM and showed a negative relationship between PSV and TST. Similarly, Sutton & Griffin (2004) also revealed the negative relationship between PCV and TST. Thus, it is assumed that:

H3: “There is a negative relationship between the experience of psychological contract violation and trust.”

EPCV may occur in the deficiency of true destruction. It is not challenged in the appearance of actual destruction. The present study evaluates that “whether a supplier perceives unethical activities to have occurred or not”. The present study also considers the associated feelings of the supplier, i.e., abuse, irritation, annoyance and disappointment. The present study considers the probability of occurrences, where the supplier observes the buyer engage in unethical activities. However, the supplier does not involve abusive feelings. This rare set of conditions may appear for different reasons, i.e., perhaps during the period of a buyer-seller relationship, the accepted criticism was the main reason behind this destruction. The supplier may have perceived an unethical behavior, but assumes it an inconsequential matter and do not feel it violence (Snyder & Cistulli, 2011; Pruitt, 1981). Thus, this situation shed light on the ethics-psychological contract relationship. Therefore, the present study considers EPSV as a mediating variable

which explains that “why unethical behaviors result in a decreased level of trust”. So, it is proposed that:

H4: “experience of psychological contract violation mediates the relationship between unethical behavior and trust.”

### **Methodology**

The study collected the data from the 179 operation managers of manufacturing industries of Thailand. Data are collected through a questionnaire, and by a personal visit in February 2020, which is designed after the detailed study of literature. The area of the present study is “behavior”. Thus, different items related to marketing, organizational behavior, and operation management are included in the questionnaire. The questionnaire is based on 5-type Likert scale, starts from 1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. The questionnaire is comprising of two sections, i.e., section A and section B. Section A contains the information regarding the demographics of the respondents, i.e., information about gender, salary, age, and qualification. While section B contains different items related to modelled variables. The questionnaire is voluntarily filled by the respondents as nobody was forced to respond. The study uses UEB as an independent variable (IV) which is measured through 7 items of deceitfulness. Deceitfulness is defined as dishonest behavior, i.e., convincing the people to believe in something that is not true. TRS is used as a dependent variable (DV) of the study. Study measures trust with the six items of benevolence, which is defined as an act of kindness. The study uses EPCV as a mediating variable (MV) of the study, which creates a link between UEB and TRD. EPCV is defined as the emotional experience of dissatisfaction, prevention and annoyance, attached with feelings of dissatisfaction. The questionnaire consists of 5 items of EPCV. The study analyzes the data by using the software of SPLS, which uses the variances-based technique of partial least square that explicates the measurement error and provide more accurate results as compare to OLS regression. Moreover, SPLS is helpful in the case of small data files. The study applies structural equation modelling (SEM) for the empirical estimation of results. SEM is comprising of two models, i.e., measurement model and structural model. Measurement model tests the reliability and validity of the data through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). While the structural model is used for estimating the standardized coefficients. The structural model is obtained with the help of the bootstrapping process. Finally, the study conducted path analysis for estimating the direct and indirect effects of an independent variable (UEB) on the dependent variable (TRS).

### Empirical Results

This section presents the empirical results to analyze the mediating impact of UEB on TRS through EPCV. Figure 1 shows the measurement model of the study. The measurement model of the study comprises three latent variables, i.e., UEB, EPCV and TRS. UEB is the independent, TRS in the dependent, and EPCV is the mediating variable of the study. The measurement model is based on confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) which is used for testing the reliability and validity of different item and constructs. Measurement model tests the convergent validity of each item and construct, reliability and internal consistency of each construct, and construct validity.

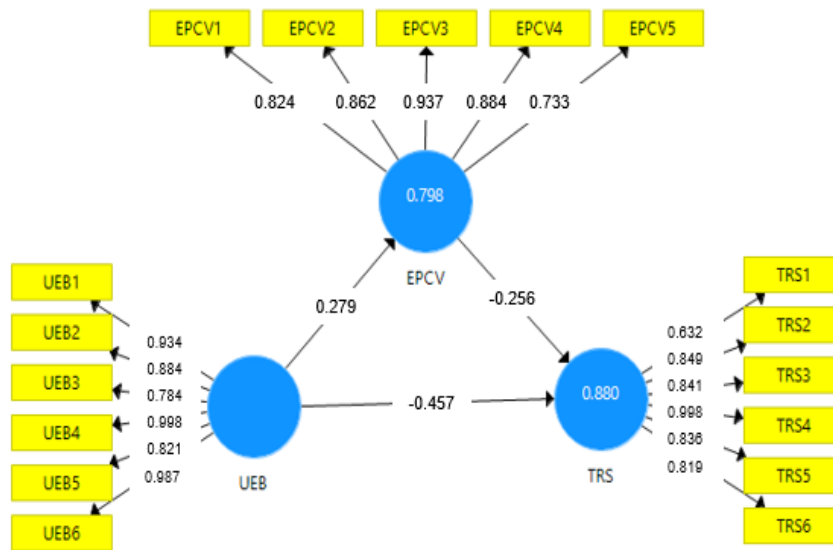


Figure 1: Measurement model

Table 1 shows the values factor loadings of each item of the construct. Values of factor loading are used to test the convergent validity of each item. According to the rule, the value of factor loading must exceed from 0.4. In the present case, the value of factor loading for each item exceeds from 0.4. Cronbach's Alpha tests the reliability and internal consistency of the data. According to the rule, the value of Cronbach's alpha must exceed from 0.4 to satisfy the condition or reliability. In the present case, the value of Cronbach's alpha exceeds from 0.4, i.e., the value of Cronbach's alpha for UEB, EPCV and TRS is 0.994, 0.873 and 0.883, respectively. So, it is concluded that the data of each construct is reliable. Composite reliability

tests the construct validity of the data. According to the rule, the value of composite reliability must exceed from 0.5 to satisfy the condition of construct validity. In the present case, the value of CR exceeds from 0.5. i.e., the value of CR of UEB, EPCV and TRS in 0.863, 0.925, 0.885 respectively. Hence, it is verified that construct validity is present in the data. The average variance extracted (AVE) tests the convergent validity of each construct. The value of AVE must exceed from 0.5 for satisfying the condition. In the present case, the value of AVE exceeds from 0.5, i.e., the value of AVE for UEB, EPCV, and TRS is 0.863, 0.973 and 0.825, respectively. So, it is concluded that convergent validity is also present in each construct.

**Table 1: Factor loadings**

Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
<b>UEB1</b>	0.934	0.994	0.863	0.863
<b>UEB2</b>	0.884			
<b>UEB3</b>	0.784			
<b>UEB4</b>	0.998			
<b>UEB5</b>	0.821			
<b>UEB6</b>	0.987			
<b>EPCV1</b>	0.824	0.873	0.925	0.973
<b>EPCV2</b>	0.862			
<b>EPCV3</b>	0.937			
<b>EPCV4</b>	0.884			
<b>EPCV5</b>	0.733			
<b>TRS1</b>	0.632	0.883	0.883	0.825
<b>TRS2</b>	0.849			
<b>TRS3</b>	0.841			
<b>TRS4</b>	0.998			
<b>TRS5</b>	0.836			
<b>TRS6</b>	0.819			

Table 2 shows the results of discriminate validity. The study used Fornier-Larker criterion for testing the discriminate validity of the data. Fornier-Larker criteria measure the discriminate validity of the data with the help of the correlation table. According to this criterion, the diagonal values of the correlation table must exceed the remaining values. In present case, the diagonal values i.e., 0.993, 0.942 and 0.893 (shown in bold) exceeds from 0.673, 0.715 and 0.773 (remaining values of the table). Thus, it is verified that discriminate validity is present in the data.

Table 2: Discriminate validity

Variables	UEB	EPCV	TRS
UEB	<b>0.993</b>		
EPCV	0.673	<b>0.942</b>	
TRS	0.715	0.773	<b>0.893</b>

Figure 2 shows the structural model of the study, which is obtained through the process of bootstrapping. This model deals with the issue of multicollinearity. Further, the structural model comprises the path analysis, which is used to obtain the direct and indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

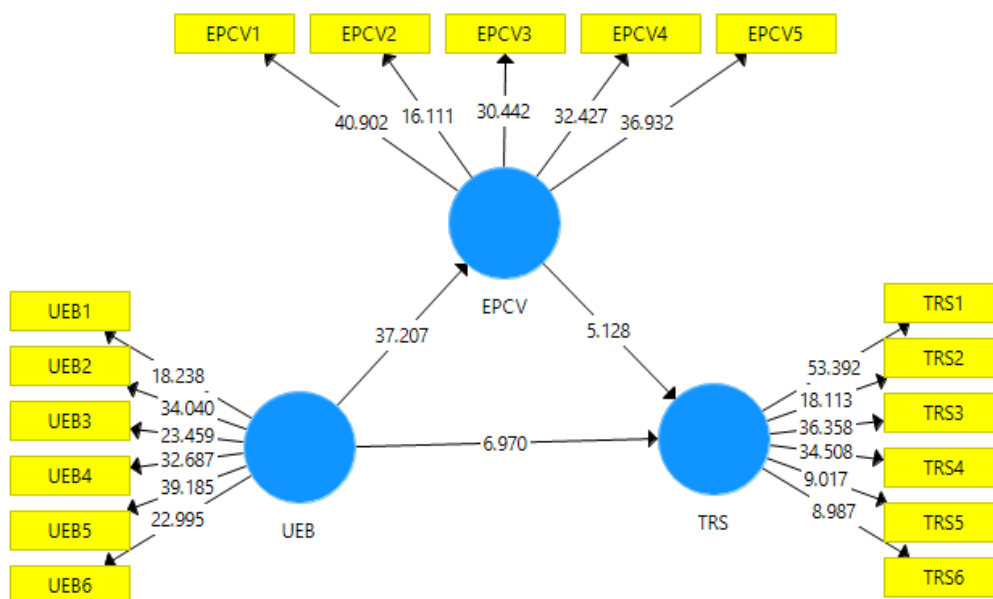


Figure 2: Structural model

Table 3 shows the results of path analysis which is used to analyze the mediating impact of UEB on TRS through EPCV. The table is comprising of two panels. Panel A shows the direct impact of variables, whereas panel B shows the indirect impact of variables. In panel A, path coefficient of model 1 (UEB→TRS) reveals the significant and negative relationship between UEB and TRS at the level of 1%. The result shows that a 1-unit increase in UEB tends to reduce TRS by 0.4573 units. Thus, H<sub>1</sub> “there is a negative relationship between unethical behavior and trust” is accepted by the study. Path coefficient of model 2 (UEB→EPCV) is also



significant at the level of 1%, showing that 1-unit increase in UEB tends to increase EEPCV by 0.2793 units. So, H<sub>2</sub> “there is a positive relationship between unethical behavior and the experience of psychological contract violation” is also supported. Path coefficient of model 3 (EPCV → TRS) also showing the negative and significant association between EPCV and TRS. For instance, 1-unit increase I, EPCV tends to reduce TRS by 0.2564 units. Hence, H<sub>3</sub> “there is a negative relationship between the experience of psychological contract violation and trust” is also accepted. In panel B, the coefficient of model 4 (UEC → EPCV → TRS) is significant at the level of 5%, showing that EPCV significantly mediates the relationship between UEB and TRS. Comparing the outcomes of model 4 with model 1, the coefficient of UEB is reduced from 0.4573 to 0.3655, showing that 1-unit increase in UEB tends to reduce TRS by 0.3655 units. The H<sub>4</sub> “experience of psychological contract violation mediates the relationship between unethical behavior and trust” of the study is accepted.

**Table 3: Path analysis**

Models	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	P Values	Decision
<b>Panel A: Direct Effects</b>				
UEB → TRS	-0.4573***	0.152	0.000***	Accepted
UEB → EPCV	0.2793***	0.265	0.000***	Accepted
EPCV → TRS	-0.2564***	0.173	0.000***	Accepted
<b>Panel B: Indirect Effects</b>				
UEB → EPCV → TRS	-0.3655**	0.044	0.067*	Accepted

Note: “\*\*\*, \*\* and \* shows the significance at the level of 1%, 5% and 10% respectively”.

### Discussions

The study used psychological contract violation as a mediating variable for examining the effects of unethical behavior on the trust within a partnership. For this purpose, the study collected the data from 179 operation managers of manufacturing industries of Thailand. The study applied structural equation modelling approach for examining the empirical results. The measurement model is used for testing the reliability and validity of different item and constructs. The structural model is used for testing the proposed hypothesis of the study. The study conducted path analysis for testing the direct and direct effects of the variables. Results of the study revealed the interesting findings: first, the study shows the negative and significant relationship between URB and TRS. Results are consistent

with (Singh, Iglesias & Batista-Foguet, 2012; Tuan, 2012; Xo, Lui and Ngo, 2016; Yip & Schweitzer, 2015) Secondly, results of the study showed EPCV significantly mediates the negative relationship between URB and TRS. Results are consistent with (Snyder & Cistulli, 2011; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2013; Thompson & Hart, 2008). The outputs acquired from the analysis provide important and interesting implications for the management of the relationship between supplier and buyer. First; the study empirically explains the importance of PCV (psychological contract violation) as mediator variable to association between TRT and UEB. The results given in this study have important and practical implications. Participants in supplier and buyer relationship should be familiar not only of activities of company's legislatures but also for acuties upheld by Partner Company. The study shows that these acuties are a significant driver of the feelings of PCV and TRT levels. Secondly; the study also indicates that there is a positive association between TRT and perceived UEB. It is of vital importance for buyers understanding that levels of TRT may be diminishing independent of EPCV of suppliers. A firm of the buyer cannot rely solely on the suppliers' signs of hindrance and disenchantment as indicator that of how having the trust on supplier perceive buyers to be. Findings are generalized to all the supplier and buyer company interested in maintaining a mutually rewarding association with other companies.

### **Conclusion**

This study draws the conclusion that inter-organizational supportive behaviors, i.e., collective arrangements, are strongly linked with the supplier's trust. Alternatively, the unethical business performs negatively affects this trust and disturb the long-term business dealings because unethical behaviors encourage negative promotion, considerable penalties and eventually decreased sales and revenue. When the trust of supplier damage due to the unethical behavior of the buyers, then supplier start searching for another business opportunity. Supplier converse negative information regarding buying firm with other suppliers which leads the violation of the psychological contract. The psychological contract is another reason of trust break down, which is defined as the emotional experience of dissatisfaction, prevention and annoyance, attached with feelings of dissatisfaction. These findings provided the guideline to the policy makers along with the management of the manufacturing organizations that they should developed and implement the effective policies related to the behavior of the management that violated the contract and damaged the trust of the organization. This study is also meaningful for the upcoming studies who want to investigate this area in future. This paper, therefore, contributes to the existing literature by examining the violation of the psychological contract between a buyer and a supplier.

### Limitations and future directions

The present study has some limitations: firstly, this study is conducted on the manufacturing industries of Thailand, future researchers may conduct a replica of this study on different industries. Secondly, future researchers may conduct a cross-industry comparison while conducting a replica of this study. Third, future researchers may explore some other aspects to extend this buyer-seller relationship examination, i.e., future researchers can investigate that “how does the buyer assess the ethicality of his behavior”? “how ethical does a buyer perceive the supplier to be”? Further, future researchers can also explore the factors that contribute to the violation of the psychological contract.

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### WPLYW NIEETYCZNEGO ZACHOWANIA ZARZĄDZANIA NA ZAUFANIE ORGANIZACYJNE

**Streszczenie:** Celem związanym z niniejszym badaniem jest zbadanie mediacyjnej roli doświadczenia naruszenia psychologicznego umowy na związek między nieetycznymi zachowaniami a zaufaniem. W tym celu w badaniu wykorzystano dane 179 kierowników operacyjnych przemysłu wytwórczego Tajlandii. W badaniu zastosowano podejście do strukturalnego modelowania edukacyjnego (SEM) do badania wyników empirycznych. Wyniki badania pokazują, że doświadczenie naruszenia psychologicznego kontraktu istotnie pośredniczy w negatywnym związku między nieetycznymi zachowaniami a zaufaniem. Tworzenie intencjonalnych relacji zwiększających ograniczenia organizacyjne potwierdziło trudną walkę dla menedżerów. Istnieją inne problemy, z którymi boryka się organizacja, w tym problemy związane z zaufaniem, umowami psychologicznymi oraz etyką i pojawiającymi się obszarami dla badaczy. Zasadniczo w organizacji istnieją pewne przypadki, które są niepisane, ale ekscytujące w przypadku znaczących zmiennych wydajności. Zaangażowanie organizacji w spełnianie obietnic, zwane umową psychologiczną, jest jedną z klasyfikacji, które należy zbadać.

**Słowa kluczowe:** nieetyczne zachowanie kierownictwa, zaufanie organizacyjne, przemysł wytwórczy.

### 管理层的不道德行为对组织信任的影响

**摘要:** 与本研究相关的目的是研究心理契约违约经验在不道德行为与信任之间的中介作用。为此, 本研究利用了泰国制造业的179名运营经理的数据。该研究采用结构教育建模 (SEM) 方法来调查实证结果。研究结果表明, 违反心理契约的经历可以显著调解不道德行为与信任之间的消极关系。故意关系的形成增加了组织上的限制, 这已经证实了经理人的艰巨挑战。组织还面临其他一些问题, 包括信任, 心理契约以及研究人员的道德和新兴领域等问题。通常, 组织中的某些事件是不成文的, 但对于重要的绩效变量却令人兴奋。组织关于兑现诺言的承诺, 称为心理契约, 是应检查的分类之一。

**关键词:** 管理不道德行为, 组织信任, 制造业。