

Influence of Vicarious Justice on Work Behavior: Role of Affect & Retributive Intent

Pooja Purang

This paper examined effects of vicarious interpersonal/ procedural justice on behavior intent namely counterproductive work behavior (CWB) and in-role behavior with affective reactions and revenge motives examined as mediators. Two experimental studies were conducted on two different groups of students (N=199 and 179) using role playing vignettes. The findings show vicarious justice influences CWB but not in-role behavior with affect and revenge motives as mediators in serial. This research highlights the role of respectful treatment for all in curbing workplace deviance, as uninvolved observers can have retaliatory intentions. This study contributes to justice research by extending previous research to vicarious justice. It also empirically tests affect (both positive and negative) and revenge motives as mediators which have been overlooked by previous studies.

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Introduction

Recent research has acknowledged the importance of employee work behaviors as they shape the context in which task activities and processes are performed in an organization (Dalal, 2005). These work behaviors can be broadly categorized as task performance, organizational citizenship behavior and counterproductive work behavior. Job attitudes, organizational justice perceptions and individual dispositions have been identified as antecedents of work behavior. Most research that has examined perceptions of justice have studied effects of procedural justice (Kim & Mauborgne, 1996; Tepper, Lockhart & Hoobler, 2001), distributive and interpersonal justice (Colquitt, LePine, Piccolo, Zapata & Rich, 2012) as direct experiences of individuals. But research highlights that justice judgments can be based on others' experiences as well not only on personal experiences (O'Reilly & Aquino 2011; Blader, Wiesenfeld, Fortin & Wheeler-Smith, 2013) as individuals may observe more instances than direct experience. Third parties may be disturbed by the mistreatment fearing a threat of such treatment befalling them

or they may internalize the harm caused to the other (Skarlicki, O'Reilly & Kulik, 2015). Also, the deontic model of justice provides that third parties react to unfairness with moral anger and are motivated to punish the wrongdoer for violating moral norms (Folger, 2001; Skarlicki et al, 2015). Prior research on third party perspectives has examined aspects like emotional reactions (Trevino & Ball, 1992), cooperative behavior (De Cremer & van Hiel, 2006), satisfaction with the supervisor (Huang, Ryan & Mujtaba, 2015), victim empathy/derogation (Kray & Lind, 2002^a), and interpersonal deviant behavior (Zoghbi-Manrique-de-lara & Suárez-Acosta, 2014). Although, theoretical frameworks (O'Reilly & Aquino, 2011; Skarlicki et al, 2015; Dhanani & LaPalme, 2019) explaining reactions to vicarious mistreatment suggest desire to punish the transgressor to restore justice, the influence on counterproductive work behavior (henceforth CWB) and in-role behavior have not been typically examined. Also, while emotions are invoked as the process by which negative outcomes occur emotional reactions have not been tested as mediators (Dhanani & LaPalme, 2019).

This paper proposes to study effect of vicarious justice perceptions on CWB and in-role behavior with negative and positive affect and revenge motives as mediators. This paper contributes by examining third party perceptions as antecedents of behavior that can have tremendous costs or impact productivity of the organization. Understanding how co-workers behave in response to treatment

meted out by peers is important as employees hear or learn about many more events than they personally experience. Often the felt injustice can guide attitudes and behaviors and poison the climate of the workplace. Thus, organizations need to design practices to establish or restore justice in the eyes of the observers to stop deviance and encourage performance. Also, while previous research has mentioned affective reactions as underlying processes by which justice effects occur, the mediating role of affect and desire for revenge have largely been inferred, and not tested. Further, most research on vicarious justice has focused on mistreatment at work, but the question remains: does justice make one feel good similar to how injustice makes one feel bad?

Specifically, this paper examines three research questions. First, in line with prior work, does vicarious justice shape behavior intentions at work namely CWB and in-role behavior? Second, do affect and revenge motives mediate the relationship between vicarious justice and behavior intentions? Third, does vicarious justice make people feel good similar to how injustice makes them feel bad? To answer these questions two experimental studies were conducted to investigate the effects of vicarious justice on CWB or in-role behavior. Also, to avoid interaction of different forms of justice in influencing outcomes only one dimension of justice was manipulated in one vignette. In study 1 interpersonal justice (treated with politeness, respect and dignity or not) was manipulated while in study 2 procedural justice (fairness of processes) was

manipulated. Based on literature different outcomes were examined with different dimensions of justice. As interpersonal justice is an important antecedent of deviant behavior (Ferris, Spencer, Brown & Heller, 2012; Jones, 2009) study 1 examined the effect of vicarious justice (interpersonal) on CWB directed at the source of unfairness. Also, as research shows people attempt to reciprocate procedural justice with in-role behavior (Kim & Mauborgne, 1996), in study 2 in-role behavior was examined as the outcome of vicarious justice (procedural). Further attempts were made to counter any false-positive errors by developing the hypotheses a priori based on theoretical predictions and using multiple studies to examine the hypotheses (Murayama, Pekrun & Fiedler, 2014).

In the following section, literature about third party perspectives, reactions to vicarious experiences and mechanisms by which these reactions occur have been discussed to present the rationale for potential mediators.

Vicarious Justice

Vicarious justice experiences are instances of fair/unfair treatment of another employee (distributive/procedural/interpersonal) witnessed by the focal person (Huang et al., 2015). These are perceptions that lie outside the dyad of victim and transgressor. Third party perspectives are important for organizations because for every victim there are a large number of third parties e.g. co-workers, friends and others, who get information from sources like the organi-

zational grapevine and social media. These perspectives can influence the victim's reaction to the mistreatment or members learn vicariously about the treatment they can expect (Skarlicki & Kulik, 2005). Furthermore, fairness perceptions of authority figures or institutions are not based only on personal experiences but also on collective experiences (Lind, Kray & Thompson, 1998), as people consider others experiences when forming process judgments (van den Bos & Lind, 2001) and evaluations of employing organizations (Colquitt, Zapata-Phelan & Roberson, 2005).

Third parties may be concerned about other's treatment for a host of reasons. They may sometimes be worried about similar mistreatment befalling them or they may internalize the harm caused to someone else (Skarlicki et al., 2015). Another reason could be ascribed to moral outrage based on the deontic model of justice; one experiences emotionally charged reactions to events that violate moral norms of social conduct and one is motivated to address the injustice even when one is not receiving the ill-treatment (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). Further, the adaptationist perspective explains that third party reactions to unfairness have an evolutionary basis and are centered on feelings and cognitions of right and wrong. The evolutionary foundation of reciprocity begets cooperation for cooperative behavior and social sanctioning to curb unfair behavior (Skarlicki et al., 2015).

Studies on the impact of other's treatment have shown mixed results. Lind et al. (1998) argue that people respond

to injustices to others; however, widespread acceptance of injustice reports may be difficult in the absence of some personal experience with injustice. Other researchers have (van den Bos & Lind, 2001) found participants' awareness of others' unfair experiences lowered fairness perceptions, as much as having an unfair experience oneself with greater relevance to fair procedures than who receives unfairness. Observing unfair experiences of others resulted in negative evaluations of groups by highly identifying group members (Okimoto, 2009), reduced work performance and commitment to the organization (Brockner et al, 1987), and high levels of emotional labor (Spencer & Rupp, 2009). Also, observers of punishment of unethical behavior reported more positive emotions and justice evaluations (Trevino & Ball, 1992) and vicarious justice perceptions positively influenced individual's satisfaction with authority and intentions to cooperate (Huang et al., 2015). Research using economic game paradigm suggests punishing the transgressor and helping the victim as complementary third-party reactions (Skarlicki et al., 2015). Thus, we can see that third parties are not unconcerned objective observers but have varied and complex reactions and therefore, understanding third party perspectives of justice and its effect on work behavior would give us greater insights into how justice effects unfold in a work setting.

Impact of Vicarious Justice on Work Behaviors

CWBs are actions of organizational members that are counter to the

organization's legitimate interests and because of high costs, both economic and psychological, are important for researchers and practitioners. Research has shown perceived unfairness as an antecedent of CWB, however most of this research focuses on victim's reactions to mistreatment and not of third parties. Perceived injustice results in CWB because employees who feel mistreated reduce their cooperative behaviors or engage in deviant behaviors to avoid further exploitation. Based on the principle of reciprocity (Skarlicki et al., 2015) similar reactions can be expected from third parties who may respond with CWB towards the source of the transgression. Dhanani and LaPalme (2019) in their dual process model of vicarious mistreatment propose that emotionally laden heuristic decision-making in response to mistreatment leads to retributive and restorative behavioral outcomes. Further, recent research (Zogbhi-Manrique-de-Lara & Suárez-Acosta, 2014) found interpersonal injustice to peers by a supervisor results in interpersonal deviant behavior directed towards other peers. We can therefore conclude that vicarious justice provokes retributive intent in third parties. However, while prior research has theoretically proposed that vicarious mistreatment leads to desire to punish the transgressor (O'Reilly & Aquino, 2011; Skarlicki et al, 2015; Dhanani & LaPalme, 2019) CWB directed towards the transgressor has not been tested. Thus, this study examines the effect of

Vicarious justice provokes retributive intent in third parties.

vicarious justice on CWB directed towards the source of the transgression.

In-role behaviors are on the job behaviors and organizations focus on understanding ways to improve these to enhance productivity and performance. Existing research shows that procedural justice affects in-role behavior which can be understood with the idea of reciprocity in social exchange. The social exchange theory provides that “individuals seek to reciprocate those who benefit them” (Kim & Mauborgne, 1996). The extent to which procedural justice is perceived by employees as receiving something valuable, they attempt to reciprocate it by engaging in positive behaviors like in-role behaviors. However, most of this research has been conducted on direct experiences of justice but individuals are affected by coworker’s treatment (Huang et al., 2015) and process fairness judgments are guided by experiences of others (van den Bos & Lind, 2001). Additionally, immediate emotional responses to mistreatment can divert resources from task performance and result in performance decrements (Dhanani & LaPalme, 2019). Thus, we can conclude that whether guided by reciprocity or emotional automatic heuristic processing, performance decrements can occur in third parties on observing mistreatment. At the same time, we can argue that as fair treatment can contribute to feelings of certainty (Skarlicki et al., 2015) and satisfying and fair working conditions lead to behavior beneficial for the organization (Dalal, 2005) vicarious justice can improve performance on the job.

Hypothesis _{1a}: Vicarious justice will negatively affect CWB directed towards the source of mistreatment.

Hypothesis _{1b}: Vicarious justice will positively affect in-role behavior.

Role of Affect & Revenge Motives

Research has identified third party reactions to injustice arising out of two goal orientations: approach and avoidance (O’Reilly & Aquino, 2011: 531); “Approach goals are activated by the need to reduce a discrepancy between one’s current state and one’s desired state;” motivating reactions like punishing the perpetrator and supporting the victim. Doing nothing is driven by the avoidance goal orientation which reflects a desire to avoid a potential harm. Furthermore, what determines which goal orientation is activated is the emotional reaction elicited by the event and the reasoning processes used to make sense of the event. On seeing others harmed unfairly moral anger is experienced which is followed by a more elaborate cognitive processing about the severity of harm, attribution of blame and deservingness of victim. If the third party concludes that an injustice has occurred the moral anger is intensified, this motivates the third party to respond. If the moral emotions are absent a third party will not be energized to take risks. These

What determines which goal orientation is activated is the emotional reaction elicited by the event and the reasoning processes used to make sense of the event.

intense emotional reactions to wrong acts and moral outrage that motivate third parties to punish the wrongdoer, exist even when the consequences of the act have no bearing on the observer (Folger, Cropanzano & Goldman, 2005) and express a reaction towards violation of moral accountability and not due to harm to self-interest. Further, Skarlicki et al (2015) Dhanani and LaPalme (2019) outline two reactions to others' mistreatment, an automatic "hot" reflexive emotional reaction and a more conscious cognitive appraisal. Exposure to vicarious mistreatment activates unconscious heuristic moral judgments that elicit moral emotional reactions which in turn prompt retributive intentions and behavior. But while these studies provide a theoretical framework on vicarious mistreatment and invoke emotions as the process that produces negative attitudinal outcomes, these have not tested emotions as mediators (Dhanani & LaPalme, 2019). Some empirical research with emotions in third party perspectives show (Blader, et al., 2013; DeCremer & van Hiel, 2006) that congruence of social emotions with a target predicted justice judgments and others' experience of procedural justice influenced emotions, but subject to others' willingness to support the participant. This brief literature leads us to conclude that a comprehensive understanding of vicarious justice would involve examining the emotional reactions as the process that in turn guides third parties' attitudes and behaviors. Further, despite the integration of affect in justice theorizing, most of the research has focused on violations of rules with negative state affect like anger. But other evidence in-

dicates that procedural justice effects positive emotional reactions as well (DeCremer & van Hiel, 2006). Also most research that examines discrete emotions like anger does provide richness and nuances specific to that emotion, a dimensional approach that organizes affective reactions according to where they fall on a particular core dimension, allows us to examine predictions about the set of emotions associated with particular outcomes (Blader et al., 2013). Thus this paper aims to examine the mediating role of affect in the vicarious justice-work behavior relationship to get a fuller understanding of complexities of third party perspectives. Further, this paper also examines the relationship between justice and positive affect as it remains unclear whether justice makes people feel good like injustice makes them feel bad (Colquitt, Scott, Rodell, Long, Zapata, Conlon, Wesson, 2013). Also, research suggests that for a better understanding of effects of social cues on affect both negative and positive affect should be assessed (De Cremer & van Hiel, 2006), this research examines both positive and negative affect as mediators with vicarious justice.

Hypothesis _{2a}: Affect shall mediate the relationship between vicarious justice and CWB-S.

Hypothesis _{2b}: Affect shall mediate the relationship between vicarious justice and In-Role behavior.

Research on third party reactions in organizational contexts has focused on third-party punishment, as a moral remedy to vicarious mistreatment (Skarlicki

et al., 2015; Folger, et al., 2005; Dhanani & LaPalme, 2019). These predict an urge to punish transgressors in response to unfairness even in the absence of any direct bearing of the act and sometimes at a personal cost to the third party. These morality-based mechanisms provide the basis for a desire for retribution in the workplace where individuals attempt to serve justice by “righting a wrong” (Jones, 2009; O’Reilly & Aquino, 2011). Thus, revenge motives would act as a process through which third parties would react to employee mistreatment. But previous research on justice provides that desires for revenge are largely inferred, with CWB labeled as ‘retaliatory behavior’, without any empirical evidence (Jones, 2009). Thus, this study examines revenge motives as a mediator along with affect to better explain the mechanisms by which vicarious justice shapes behavior in organization. Third party, guided by their desire for retribution, would either engage in counterproductive work behavior or reduce their performance on the job in response to co-worker mistreatment.

Hypothesis _{3a}: Revenge motives will partially mediate the relationship between vicarious justice and CWB-S

Hypothesis _{3b}: Revenge motives will partially mediate the relationship between vicarious justice and In-Role Behavior.

In sum, this paper proposes a serial mediation model to study the influence of vicarious justice perceptions on CWB and in-role behaviors, with affective reactions and revenge motive as mediators sequentially.

Study 1

Sample

The sample consisted of 199 full-time undergraduate students, pursuing different degrees, at an educational institute in Mumbai, India. Volunteers were sought from students pursuing a course in Psychology, those who volunteered to participate were given the vignettes and questionnaires during the class hour and completed questionnaires with informed consent and were collected at the end of the class. The sample consisted of 90.95% males and 9.04% females and the average age was 18.91 years.

Procedures

The researcher used the scenario methodology; role playing vignettes were used to manipulate the high vicarious justice and low vicarious justice. The researcher randomly distributed different versions of the scenario-based surveys to the students in a voluntary in-class exercise. There were two versions of the scenario which the students responded to in English, as all the students are fluent with the language. The respondents were asked to imagine themselves as an actual employee in a scenario described below:

You are an employee of Data Corp. International, an IT Solutions company. Few days back A, your co-worker, found his/her system crashed as he/she was working on completing the code for a client’s deadline. After reporting the problem to the maintenance department, A began to work on a presentation for a

client meet with two other team mates while the system was repaired.

Vicarious justice was manipulated on the interpersonal dimension where the treatment 'A' receives from the manager varied from being respectful and polite to rude and insulting. The manipulation was in line with aspects of interpersonal treatment – respect and propriety provided by Colquitt and Rodell (2015).

“[...] Your manager X on seeing this inquired from A why he/she was not completing the code, on hearing of the problem X called the maintenance head requesting replacement with a new system so that A's work was not slowed down. At the same time X appreciated A for chipping in with other team tasks and not wasting time which was an example, other team members could follow.”

In the low justice condition, the manager denies interpersonal justice to 'A'.

“[...] Your manager X on seeing this shouted at A in front of the whole team for not completing his/her work on time and instead distracting other members from completing their work too. X ignored A's protests and attempts to explain what he/she was doing and declared A as the most inefficient member of the team who was responsible for ruining the team's performance.”

Manipulation checks were administered using two items to test for the manipulation of interpersonal justice. The two items were: “A' was treated with dig-

nity and respect' and “A' was treated in a polite manner. The responses to both the items were aggregated and independent samples t test was performed. There was significant mean difference between high justice condition (Mean=8.41, SD=1.25) and low justice condition (Mean=2.92, SD=1.01) with $t(197) = 33.78, d = 4.81, p < .01$.

Measures

Affect were studied using PANAS positive affect and negative affect scales from Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988). The respondents were instructed to rate the items such that it reflected their reactions in response to the above scenario described in the vignettes. They had to use a rating scale from 1 (*definitely not*) to 5 (*very much so*). The positive affect had 9 states like 'excited', 'proud', 'inspired' and the negative affect had 10 states like 'upset', 'scared', and 'hostile' and aggregated responses were used as the score. The alpha coefficient for positive affect was 0.84 and for negative affect was 0.85.

Counterproductive work behavior (CWB-S) measure comprised five items, all referred to the supervisor X. All the items were taken from Jones (2009). The participants were instructed to describe how they would behave towards their supervisor after learning of the above scenario on a 5-point rating scale from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items are “I would purposely neglect to follow X's instructions” and “I would act rudely towards X”. The alpha coefficient was 0.83.

Revenge motives were assessed using two items on retaliatory intentions towards one's supervisor from Jones (2009). The scale ranged from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). The items were "I intend to settle the score with X" and "I plan on getting even with X in the near future". The alpha coefficient for revenge motive was 0.82.

Results

Descriptive Statistics: Table I presents the means, standard deviations, scale reliabilities for each scale and inter-scale correlations for all study variables. The inter-scale correlations were in the expected direction and all are significant at $p < .01$. The correlation matrix also shows that all correlations are lower than .9 hence no multicollinearity exists between the variables (Field, 2009).

Table I Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations of Study 1 Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1 Vicarious justice	1.52	.50	"				
2 Revenge Motives	5.08	1.98	.00	(.82)			
3 CWB (S)	9.08	3.42	-.33**	.31**	(.83)		
4 Positive Affect	28.53	6.44	.58**	.09	-.30**	(.83)	
5 Negative Affect	24.23	7.25	-.55**	.24**	.47**	-.47**	(.85)

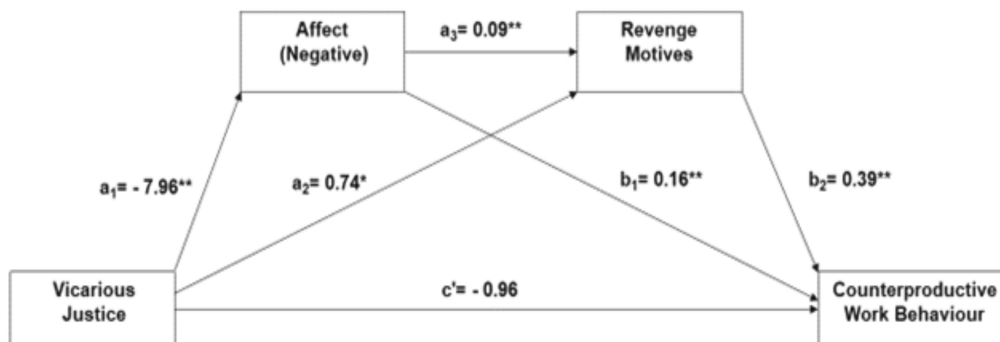
Notes: N= 199, CWB is counterproductive work behavior, S refers to the supervisor referenced variable. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. 1=vicarious injustice, 2=vicarious justice, Cronbach's α for measures are presented on the diagonal.

Test of hypotheses: To test the hypothesis, two serial mediation analyses were conducted using the SPSS macro PROCESS (Hayes, 2013) with affect and revenge motives as mediators. In one analysis we used negative affect and revenge motives as mediators (process model: vicarious justice \rightarrow negative affect \rightarrow revenge motives \rightarrow counterproductive work behavior) and positive affect and revenge motives as mediators in a separate serial multiple mediation analysis (process model: vicarious justice \rightarrow positive affect \rightarrow revenge motives \rightarrow counterproductive work behavior). This procedure uses an ordinary-least-squares path analysis to estimate the coefficients in the model in order to determine the direct and indirect effects of vicarious

justice on counterproductive work behavior. Bootstrapping, a method that does not rely on the assumption of a normally distributed sampling distribution of the indirect effect, was used to obtain the bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals for making statistical inference about specific and total indirect effects.

All the paths of the full process model for first serial mediation analysis are illustrated in Fig. I and their corresponding coefficients are provided in the figure (model 6 in PROCESS). The first serial multiple mediation tested whether negative affect and revenge motives sequentially mediate the influence of vicarious justice on counterproductive work behavior. The total effect of vicarious

Fig. 1 Serial Mediation Model with Negative Affect and Revenge Motives as Proposed Mediators of Vicarious Justice Effects on Counterproductive Work Behavior N=199 * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.



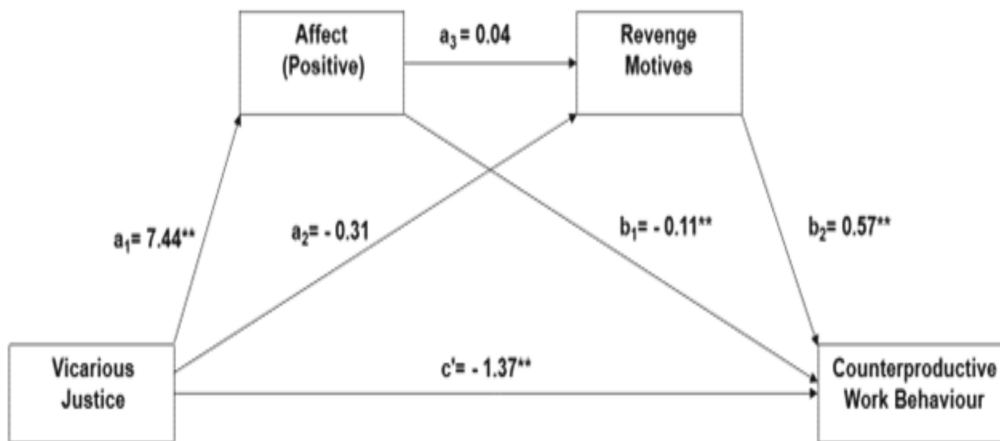
justice on counterproductive work behavior was significant ($\beta = -2.22$, $t = -4.84$, $p = .000$) but the total direct effect of vicarious justice on counterproductive work behavior was not significant ($\beta = -.96$, $t = -1.90$, $p = .06$). The total indirect effect, the sum of the specific indirect effects, was significant with a point estimate of -1.27 and 95% confidence interval between -2.01 and $-.64$. The specific indirect effect through negative affect only was significant ($a_1b_1 = -1.27$; $CI = -1.98$ and $-.68$); also, the specific indirect effect through revenge motives only was significant ($a_2b_2 = .29$; $CI = .06$ and $.66$). Furthermore, when testing the serial multiple mediation, the specific indirect effect through both negative affect and revenge motives was significant ($a_1a_3b_2$) with a point estimate of $-.29$ and 95% confidence interval between $-.59$ and $-.11$. The results of the mediation analysis show that total effect of vicarious justice on CWB was significant, but the direct effect of vicarious justice on CWB was not significant. On testing with the mediators, both negative affect and revenge motives (separately and in se-

quence) mediate the influence of vicarious justice on CWB-S, supporting H_{2a} and H_{3a} .

Both negative affect and revenge motives (separately and in sequence) mediate the influence of vicarious justice on CWB-S.

The second serial multiple mediation tested whether positive affect and revenge motives sequentially mediate the influence of vicarious justice on counterproductive work behavior. All the paths, with the corresponding coefficients, of the full process model are illustrated in Fig. 2. The total effect of vicarious justice on counterproductive work behavior was significant ($\beta = -2.24$, $t = -4.84$, $p = .00$) and the total direct effect of vicarious justice, removing the effects of the mediators was also significant ($\beta = -1.37$, $t = -2.61$, $p = .00$). The specific indirect effect through positive affect is significant ($a_1b_1 = -.85$; $CI = -1.69$ and $-.21$); but the specific indirect effect through revenge motives was not significant (a_2b_2

Fig. 2 Serial Mediation Model with Positive Affect and Revenge Motives as Proposed Mediators of Vicarious Justice Effects on Counterproductive Work Behaviour. $N=199$ * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$.



Revenge motives act as a mediator only with negative affect but not with positive affect.

$= -.18$; $CI = -.56$ and $.15$) nor was the specific indirect effect through both positive affect and revenge motives ($a_1 a_3 b_2 = .18$; $CI = -.02$ and $.42$). The significant direct effect of vicarious justice on counterproductive work behavior supports H_{1a} . However, since indirect effect through positive affect only was significant only H_{2a} is supported but not H_{3a} . Thus, revenge motives act as a mediator only with negative affect but not with positive affect.

Discussion

The findings of study 1 provide evidence for the proposition that people are triggered to engage in counterpro-

ductive work behavior on learning about unfair treatment of a co-worker. The first serial mediation model showed negative affect and revenge motives fully mediated the influence of vicarious justice. While the second serial mediation model showed positive affect partially mediated the influence of vicarious justice; no significant mediation effect was seen for revenge motives sequentially with positive affect. This behavioral reaction in the third parties seems to arise from the approach goal orientation (O'Reilly & Aquino, 2011) whereby affective reactions to co-worker mistreatment provoke (Skarlicki et al., 2015; Folger et al., 2005; Dhanani & LaPalme, 2019) third parties to desire revenge and punish the perpetrator. Also, these findings reveal that observers experience positive affect as well in response to vicarious justice which consequently reduces CWB. These results show that similar

to injustice making observers feel bad, justice makes observers feel good and fair treatment is not a steady state that goes unnoticed by third parties (Colquitt et al., 2013).

Study 2

Sample

The sample consisted of 179 second year and third year undergraduate students, pursuing undergraduate degrees in Mumbai, India. Volunteers were sought during the class hour, the students were introduced to the objectives of the study and invited to participate in the study. Those who volunteered were given the vignettes and questionnaires during the class hour and completed questionnaires and informed consent were collected at the end of the class. The sample consisted of 90.95% males and 9.04% females and the average age was 18.91 years.

Procedures

The researcher used the scenario methodology; with role playing vignettes being used to manipulate the high vicarious justice and low vicarious justice. The researcher randomly distributed different versions of the scenario-based surveys to the students in a voluntary in-class exercise. There were two versions of the scenario which the students responded to in English, as all the students are fluent with the language. The respondents were given hypothetical situations in which they were asked to imagine themselves as employees of an IT company.

You are an employee of Data Corp. International, an IT solutions company.

In line with Colquitt and Rodell (2015) the procedural justice manipulation used aspects like decision control, correctability, consistency, process control. In the high procedural justice condition, the manager was fair where providing decision and process control with correctability in procedures were used to reach a decision effecting A.

“Few days back A was removed from his/her current project and asked to move into leadership training. His/her manager (X) informed him/her about the removal and patiently explained challenges caused by duplication of skills with a new trainee joining the project. In response to A’s concerns the manager explained that as A was more experienced it was time for A to move into middle management roles for which the new training was essential. The manager also reassured A about working with HR to find a senior role for A on another project and to ensure A’s previous consistent performance does not go unnoticed.”

In the low justice condition, the manager denies consistent unbiased treatment to ‘A’.

“Few days back A- your co-worker- was removed from his/her current project and placed on the bench. His/her manager (X) informed A about the removal without providing any reasons and overlooking A’s excellent performance record. The manager stated that A did not fit in anymore and without acknowl-

edging A's dismay asked A to communicate directly with HR for all concerns."

The researcher conducted manipulation checks using two items to test for the manipulation of procedural justice. The two items were "A' was given the opportunity to voice his/her opinion." "A has been able to influence the outcomes arrived". The responses to both these items were aggregated, and independent samples *t* test showed significant mean difference between high justice condition (Mean=4.93, SD= 1.66) and low justice condition (Mean=3.87, SD=1.54), with $t(177) = -4.40, d=.66, p<.01$.

Measures

Affect were studied using PANAS positive affect and negative affect scales from Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988) as mentioned in Study 1. The alpha coefficient for positive affect was 0.82 and for negative affect was 0.78 in this study.

Revenge Motives: 2 items on retaliatory intention were used to assess revenge motives from Jones (2009) similar to Study 1. The alpha coefficient was 0.78.

In-role Behavior: 3 items for In-role behavior were used from O'Reilly and Chatman (1986). The participants were instructed to provide their intention to engage in these behaviors while working for the same organization with the rating scale from 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Always*). The three items were "I will work a full shift", "...Complete my assigned duties in time" and "...Comply with rules and regulations of the organization". The alpha coefficient with 3 items was .59. On removing first item with inter-item correlation less than 0.30 the alpha coefficient was acceptable at 0.70.

Results

The scale reliabilities, means, standard deviation for each scale and inter-scale correlations for all study variables are presented in Table 2. Only three of the six correlations were significant at $p<.05$. The correlation matrix also shows all correlations lower than .9 hence no multicollinearity exists between the variables (Field, 2009). Two serial multiple mediation analyses were conducted to test the hypothesis, using the SPSS macro PROCESS (Hayes, 2013). In one analysis we used negative affect and revenge motives as mediators (process model:

Table 2 Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations of Study 2 Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1 Vicarious justice	1.51	.50	"				
2 Revenge Motives	5.06	1.88	-.02	(.78)			
3 In-Role Behavior	8.83	1.28	-.03	-.18*	(.70)		
4 Positive Affect	26.54	5.79	.35**	-.03	.15*	(.82)	
5 Negative Affect	27.00	6.13	-.35**	.11	-.11	-.20**	(.78)

Notes: N= 179, * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$. * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$. 1=vicarious injustice, 2=vicarious justice, Cronbach's α for measures are presented on the diagonal

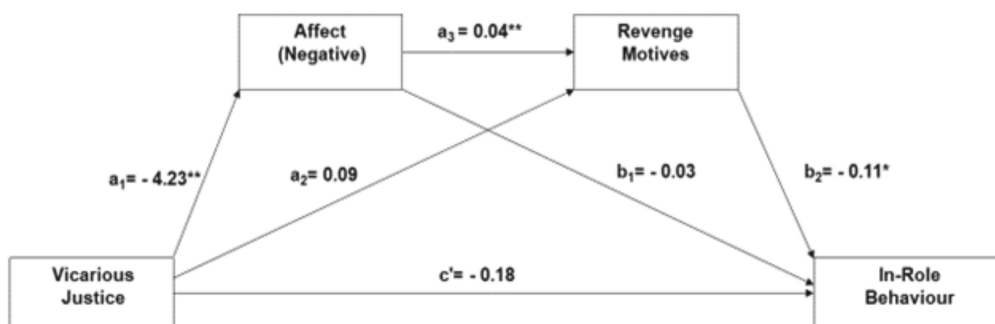
vicarious justice → negative affect → revenge motives → in-role behavior) and positive affect and revenge motives as mediators in a separate serial multiple mediation analysis (process model: vicarious justice → positive affect → revenge motives → In-role behavior). This procedure uses an ordinary-least-squares path analysis to estimate the coefficients in the model in order to determine the direct and indirect effects of vicarious justice on in-role behavior with bootstrapping.

The paths of the full process model for the two serial mediation analyses are illustrated in Fig. 3 and Fig. 4 with the corresponding coefficients (model 6 in PROCESS). The first serial multiple mediation (Fig.3) tested whether negative affect and revenge motives sequentially mediate the influence of vicarious justice on in-role behavior. The total effect of vicarious justice on in-role behavior was not significant ($\beta = -.07, t = -.38, p = .71$) nor was the total direct effect of vicarious justice on in-role behavior ($\beta = -.18, t = -.90, p=.37$).

The total indirect effect, the sum of the specific indirect effects, also, was not significant with a point estimate of .11 and 95% confidence interval between -.03 and .31. The specific indirect effect through negative affect only was not significant ($a_1b_1 = .10$; CI= -.02 and .26); nor was the specific indirect effect through revenge motives ($a_2b_2 = -.01$; CI= -.10 and .06). Furthermore, when testing the serial multiple mediation, the specific indirect effect through both negative affect and revenge motives was not significant ($a_1a_3b_2$) with a point estimate of .01 and 95% confidence interval between -.00 and .09. The mediation analysis shows no direct effect of vicarious justice on in-role behavior, hence H_{1b} is not supported. Also, the indirect effects through negative affect and revenge motives are not significant, thus H_{2b} and H_{3b} are also not supported.

The mediation analysis shows no direct effect of vicarious justice on in-role behavior.

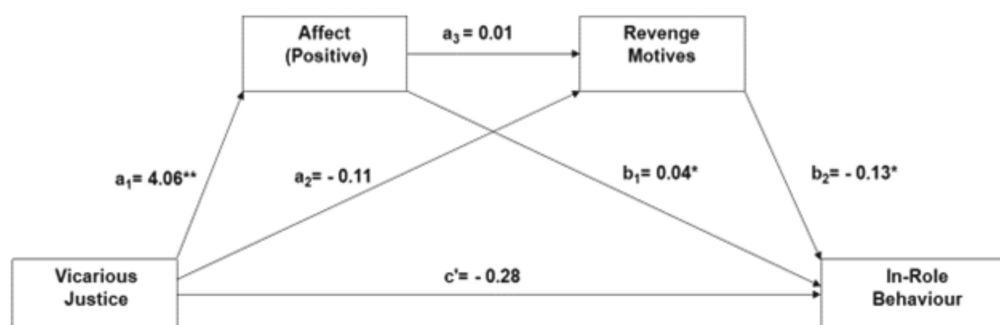
Fig. 3 Serial Mediation Model with Negative Affect and Revenge Motives as Proposed Mediators of Vicarious Justice Effects on In-role Behaviour. N=179, * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.



The second serial multiple mediation tested whether positive affect and revenge motives sequentially mediate the influence of vicarious justice on in-role behavior. All the paths, with the corresponding coefficients, of the full process model are illustrated in Fig 4. The total effect of vicarious justice on in-role behavior was not significant ($\beta = -.07$, $t = -.38$, $p = .71$) nor was the direct effect of vicarious justice, removing the effects of the mediators ($\beta = -.25$, $t = -1.24$, $p = .21$). The specific indirect effect through

positive affect is significant ($a_1b_1=.17$; CI= .03 to.36); but the specific indirect effect through revenge motives was not significant ($a_2b_2=.01$; CI= -.05 to .13) nor was the specific indirect effect through both positive affect and revenge motives ($a_3b_2= -.01$; CI= -.06 to .02). The direct effect of vicarious justice was not significant in this mediation analysis as well, hence, H_{1b} is not supported in this study. Also, only specific indirect effect through positive affect was significant lending partial support to H_{2b} .

Fig. 4 Serial Mediation Model with Positive Affect and Revenge Motives as Proposed Mediators of Vicarious Justice Effects on In-role Behavior. N=179 * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.



Discussion

In contrast to the findings of Study 1, Study 2 revealed that vicarious justice did not have a significant influence on in-role behavior. The findings of the serial multiple mediation analyses indicated that both the direct and indirect effects of vicarious justice on in-role behavior was not significant. These results are in contrast with the literature (Dhanani & LaPalme, 2019) that identified performance as an outcome of vicarious mistreatment events. This might be because in-role behavior is about on the job be-

In-role behavior is about on the job behavior which may be affected by personal experiences of fairness than learning of co-worker's experience.

havior which may be affected by personal experiences of fairness than learning of co-worker's experience.

General Discussion

In response to the need in literature for greater understanding of third-party

perspectives and the processes through which co-worker's treatment shapes individual's reactions (Skarlicki & Kulik, 2005) two experimental studies were conducted to examine the effect of vicarious justice on work behavior. The mediating role of affect and revenge motives was also examined. The findings suggest that vicarious justice influences CWB, but not in-role behavior. The paper provides empirical evidence for theoretical propositions made by previous research (O'Reilly & Aquino, 2011; Skarlicki & Rupp, 2010; Skarlicki et al., 2015) that third parties react with negative affect and a desire to punish the transgressor in response to co-worker mistreatment. However, in contrast to the dual process model by Dhanani and LaPalme (2019) that proposes decrements in performance as an outcome of vicarious mistreatment, the findings of Study 2 do not show significant effects of vicarious justice on in-role behaviors.

Not all work behaviors are similarly affected by vicarious justice.

The findings of the two studies show that not all work behaviors are similarly affected by vicarious justice. While vicarious (in)justice may not contribute to in-role behavior it definitely encourages deviant behavior in the work place. Some reasons can be proposed to understand these findings. Firstly, as in-role behavior involves performance on tasks specifically assigned to oneself, direct experiences of fairness may shape effort and task performance instead of co-worker treatment. While CWB may occur as retributive in-

tent is provoked in response to unfair treatment of a co-worker. Secondly, the two studies used different dimensions of justice for vicarious justice manipulation and the different effects on outcomes may be because of different reactions of observers to different forms of justice. While seeing a co-worker treated in a disrespectful way (interpersonal mistreatment) led to anger and desire to punish, but procedural unfairness does not trigger such consequences. These ideas could be fruitful avenues for replication, examining different outcomes across different dimensions of vicarious justice.

Implications, Limitations & Future research

Organizations are constantly challenged to reduce deviant behaviors and improve performance of employees. Previous research identifying antecedents of work behavior has focused mainly on direct experiences of justice. But vicarious justice experiences are part of the organizational context and guide work behavior as individuals do not work in isolation but influence and are influenced by their peers and surroundings. Examining the influence of organizational context provides cues about how justice effects spread and reverberate in an organization having consequences on uninvolved third parties.

The findings of the two studies have important implications for managers and organizations, it highlights that third-party reactions may not be straightforward, and may unfold in unexpected ways and detecting these behaviors may not be too

easy. The findings are especially meaningful as they show the importance of justice for all in an organization, as even co-worker's mistreatment can lead to increased engagement in disruptive behaviors. At the same time, treating with respect was found to reduce counterproductive work place behavior. Thus, organizations need to focus on treating everyone with dignity and respect as even social accounts can provoke uninvolved observers to act against the organization. An important contribution of this paper is identifying vicarious justice as an antecedent of counterproductive work behavior and the processes through which this effect occurs. So far research has only examined direct experiences of justice as an antecedent. Companies and especially human resource managers attempting to stop deviant behavior should emphasize on respectful and dignified treatment for all at all times. The findings show it doesn't matter whether one is at the receiving end of the treatment, even unaffected people may act in ways to avenge the wrong. Also, these findings probably suggest differential effects of different dimensions of justice and future research needs to examine such variations to understand third-party perspectives more thoroughly.

The full mediation effect of negative affect and revenge motives can be explained by both the 'deontic model' and the approach goal orientation on learning of mistreatment of a co-worker (Folger, 2001; O'Reilly & Aquino, 2011). On perceiving an unfair situation observers experience an immediate emotional reaction in response, and a desire for ret-

tribution which motivates individuals to engage in behaviors like punishing the perpetrators. Furthermore, the significant mediating effect of affect both positive and negative affect in Study 1 shows that justice is a felt experience (De Cremer & van den Bos, 2007) and that justice makes people feel good in similar ways injustice making them feel bad, a claim established in literature for direct experiences of justice only (Colquitt et al., 2013). This proves that third parties are not dispassionate and objective observers but experience strong emotional reactions that further affect specific outcomes. Also, significant mediating effect of revenge motives supports literature that argues retaliation as a common response to perceived injustice (Lian, Brown, Ferris, Liang, Keeping & Morrison, 2014; Barclay, Skarlicki & Pugh, 2005; Jones, 2009). However, this paper extends these claims to third-party perspectives of justice with a desire for revenge in those who witness or learn of the mistreatment but have no personal stake in the situation. Thus, this paper integrates affect and desire for revenge with justice research on how people react to injustice.

There are various limitations to this work; firstly, it used hypothetical role-playing vignettes with students. While the issue of justice is a fundamental concern and similar reactions should be elicited by individuals in a work setting, a cross-sectional study in an organization would throw light on how individuals react when faced with such situations in real life settings. Secondly, longitudinal research on behavioral outcomes of vi-

carious justice can help identify how varied reactions to vicarious (in) justice, directed towards the victim and perpetrator, unfold. Thirdly, only two mediators - affect and revenge motives - were examined, but to better understand the notion of justice in third-party reactions examining moderators like centrality of justice motive for observers, relationship with the victim and attribution of blame would give a deeper understanding. Further, this research only used the dimensional approach to emotions that allowed us to examine more general predictions about how emotions are related to retributive intent and particular outcomes. However, examining discrete emotions would provide deep insights into the nuances of each emotional reaction like guilt, empathy, happiness etc. Future research could use discrete emotions or inwardly or outwardly directed emotions to capture the affective component of third-party reactions.

Conclusions

In sum, this paper attempted to expand the literature regarding vicarious justice and behavior outcomes in organizations. Vicarious justice is important as employees observe more instances than direct experience and has been shown as a significant predictor of workplace deviance and justice makes one feel good similar to how injustice makes one feel bad. The findings also show differential effects of different forms of vicarious justice which can be examined in future research.

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