

**PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT VIOLATION, ABUSIVE SUPERVISION, GOSSIPS  
AND EMPLOYEE CYNICISM AMONG HEALTH WORKERS IN GHANA**

KNUST

**By**

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**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this submission is my personal effort towards the degree of Master of Philosophy (Strategic Management & Consulting) and that to the best of my knowledge, it includes no material previously published by others nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the university, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of academic laurels to my lovely wife, Tracy Yayra Adio and my parents Mr. and Mrs. Hornuvo for their love and support and also to my supervisor Dr. Ahmed Agyapong for his guidance throughout the completion of this work.



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## ABSTRACT

Psychological contract violation and abusive supervision have gained the attention of both practitioners and academics in recent years. Critical commentaries for instance have questioned whether psychological contract violation and abusive supervision have any implications for employee cynicism, and ultimately organizational performance. Research shows that approximately 94 per cent of employees perceived their organization as defaulting on agreed upon obligations within their first two years of work. This study therefore sought to examine the effects of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision and gossip on employee cynicism among health workers in Ghana. The study adopted both descriptive and explanatory research designs. The estimated staff strength of all five hundred and thirty (530) health facilities in the Ashanti Region was 8,800. The research sample of 424 involved different categories of health sector workers grouped into Type 1 (workers in Kumasi) and Type 2 (workers outside Kumasi). Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used to select respondents across selected institutions in the Region. The main instrument used for the data collection was questionnaire while structural equation modelling was performed using STATA 13. The study concluded that Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) predicts Job Related Gossip (JRG). However, the effect of Abusive Supervision (AS) on Employee Cynicism (ECN) was not supported. Again, Job related and Non Job related gossip partially mediated Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism (ECN) relationships. It is therefore recommended that the largest employer within the health sector (Government of Ghana) works at rectifying perceived psychological contract violations observed by the study. As highlighted, psychological contract violation was moderately high which partly explains the rate of worker agitations experienced within the health sector.

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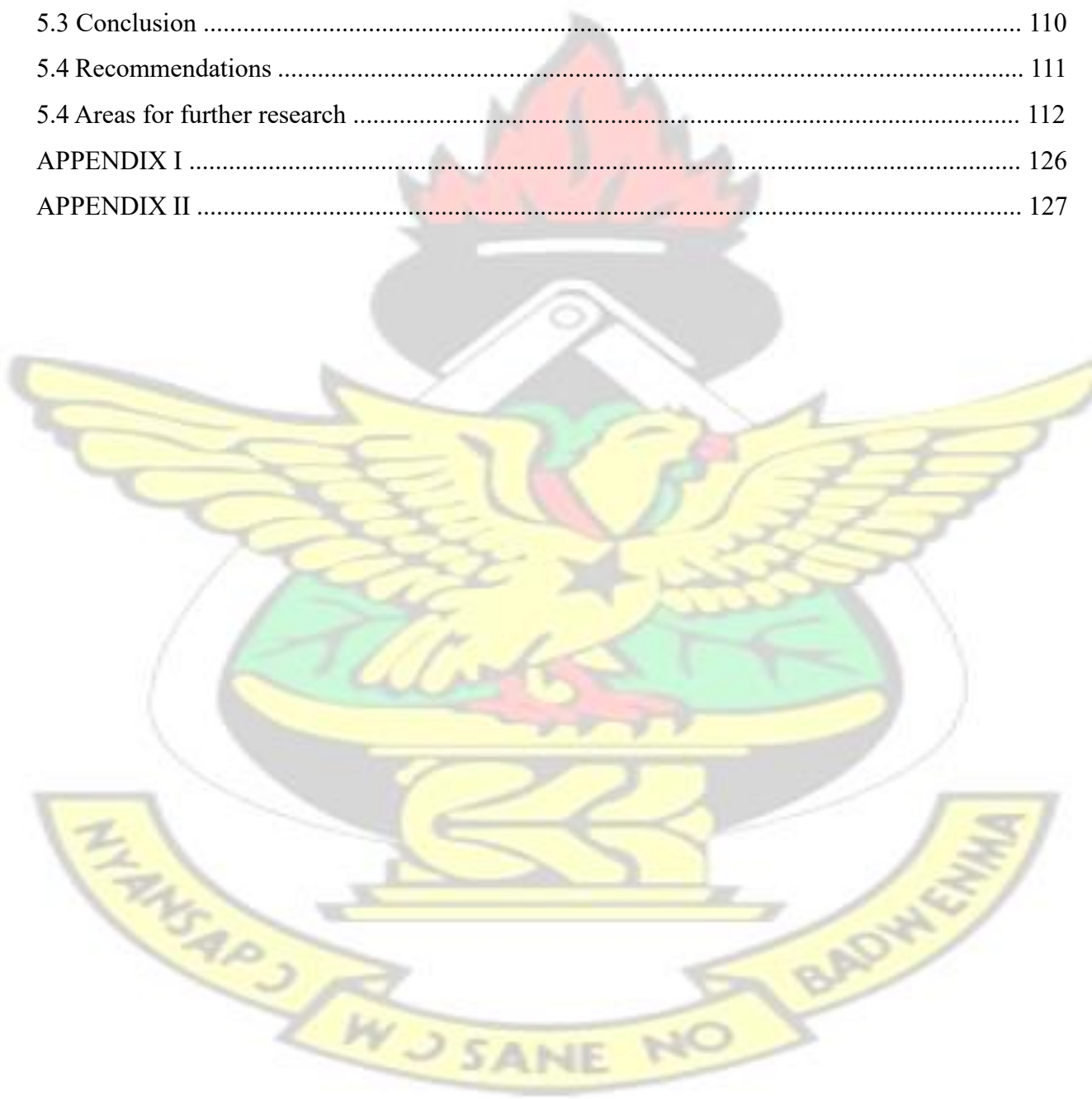
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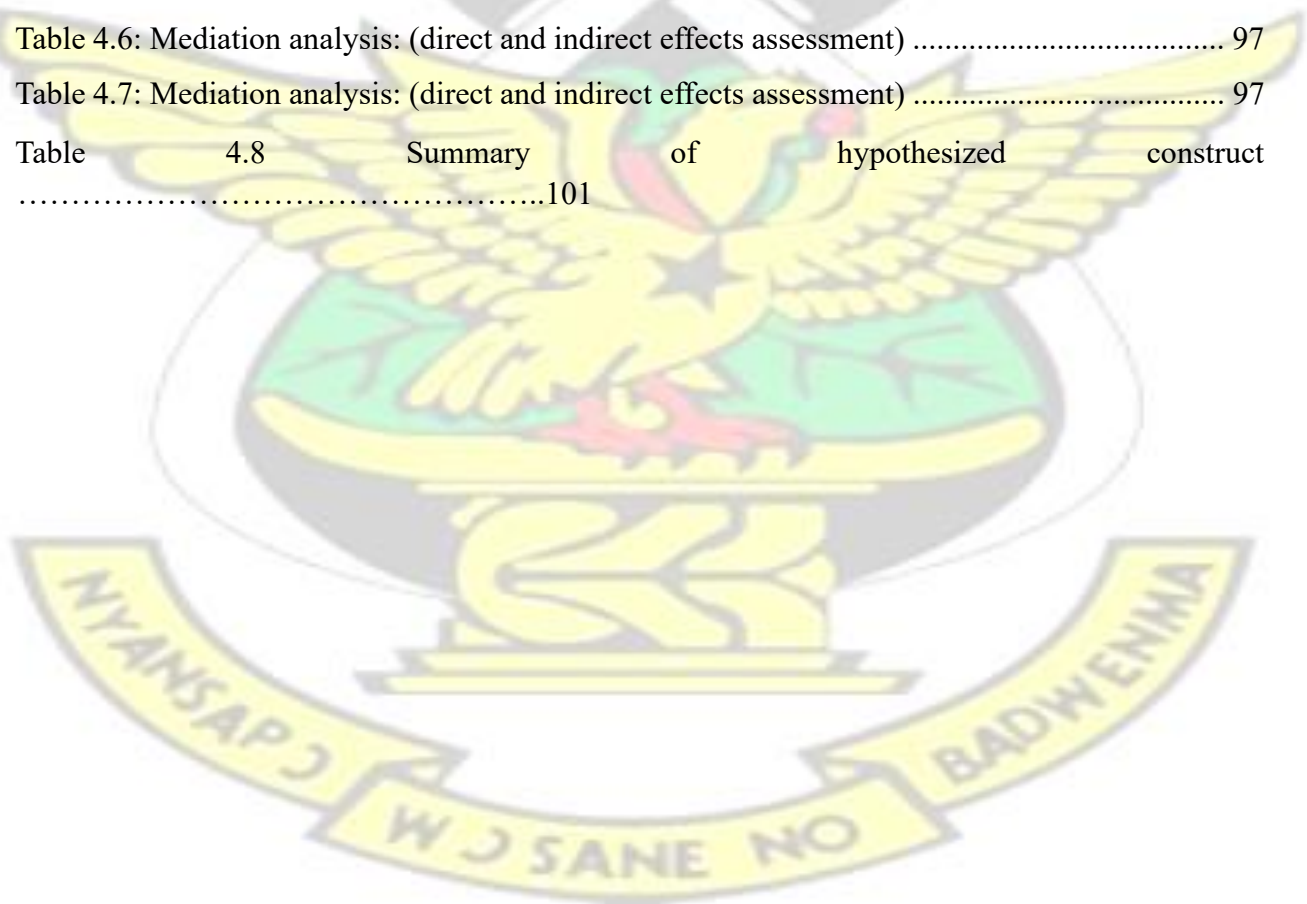
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS



AS	- Abusive Supervision
CFI	- Comparative fit index
ECN	- Employee Cynicism
JRG	- Job Related Gossip
NJRG	- Non Job Related Gossip
PCV	- Psychological Contract Violation
RMSEA	- Root mean squared error of approximation
SRMR	- Standardized root mean squared residual
TLI	- Tucker-Lewis index

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

This study reflects on issues of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision, gossips and employee cynicism among health workers in Ghana. Indeed, psychological contract violation and abusive supervision have gained the attention of both practitioners and academics in recent years. Critical commentaries for instance have questioned whether psychological contract violation and abusive supervision have any implications for employee cynicism, and ultimately organizational performance (Kuo, 2010; Bunting, 2004; Zellars et al. 2002; Wanous et al. 2000). Research shows that approximately 94 percent of employees perceived their organization as defaulting on agreed upon obligations within their first two years of work (Robinson and Morrison, 2000). Consequently, the observation that broken promises in the workplace are not the exception but the norm (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994), can be supported by research findings on work attitudes, which identified declines in employees' perceptions of their employer's trust, commitment, and loyalty to them (Cappelli, 2000). The underlying notion is that employment relationship is based on an exchange: the employer offers certain returns (e.g., pay, benefits, employment security) in exchange for employee contributions (e.g., effort, commitment, productivity) and the level of exchange depends on expectations from both sides (Robinson and Morrison, 2000; Wanous et al. 2000; Cappelli, 2000). By this Rousseau (1995) defined psychological contract as a set of beliefs, evaluations and assumptions held by employees about their employment relationships.

The problem of psychological contract breach becomes important for health sector employee performance because researchers have demonstrated that a relationship exists between employee

perceptions of contract breach and subsequent behaviours and attitudes such as job satisfaction, commitment, trust, organizational citizenship behaviour, absenteeism, and turnover intentions (Robinson and Morrison, 1995; Robinson and Rousseau, 1994; Shore and Barksdale, 1998).

Similarly, Tepper et al. (2006) theorized that psychological contract violation leads to abusive supervision. That is, workers or supervisors who feel their organizations are defaulting on agreed upon obligations have the tendency to engage in abusive supervision. Abusive supervision according to Tepper (2000) refers to subordinates perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact. Abusive supervision can take on many different forms such as ridiculing, undermining, and yelling at subordinates (Harris et. al, 2007; Schat & Kelloway, 2003; Eisenberger et. al, 1986).

Unfortunately, when a person perceives themselves as a victim, they tend to „adopt“ certain characteristics as a consequence to their perceptions (Harris et. al, 2007; Aquino and Bradfield, 2000). Victims of abusive supervision will display high levels of negative emotions including anger, aggression, fear or anxiety leading to employee cynicism (Cortina & Magley, 2003; Aquino et al. 2001; Eisenberger et. al, 1986).

Another essential but often neglected area in the discourse of employee cynicism is the issue of workplace gossip (idle chat). The phenomenon of gossip is not new to the African culture. In most cases, it is carried out by all age groups and professionals. Though considered informal, the spectacle of gossip is not alien to the workplace especially, the public sector. With the advent of fast paced messaging platforms, it is easier for people to gossip without having to make physical contacts. As explained by Gambetta (1994), gossip is the provision of information by one person (ego) to another person (alter) about an absent third person (tertius). Informal as it may be, gossip when contextualized is a source of employee cynicism (Grosser et al. 2010; Dunbar, 2004; Wanous

et al. 1994; Wanous et al. 2000). Gossip can have many adverse side effects on an organization (Foster, 2004; Michelson et al. 2010; Rosnow, 2001; Kurland & Pelled, 2000). It can increase conflict and decrease morale. It may result in strained relationships and further break down the trust level within project teams, which results in employees second-guessing each other and ultimately running to the supervisor to clarify the directions or instructions, or to settle the differences that will arise (Dunbar, 2004). Depending on how the issues are handled, it may pave the way for abusive supervision especially when the supervisor is affected by the gossip. Deceitful and incomplete information transmitted through gossip, triggers employee cynicism (ECN) (Abraham, 2000; Anderson & Bateman, 1997), whereas McAndrew et al. (2007) posit that positive gossip facilitates information transmission and group dynamics.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Studies show that even though many public sector workers experience some form of contract breach and abuse from their employers and immediate supervisors, very few employees have dared to comment on this phenomenon (Bono et al. 2007; Burton & Hoobler, 2006). It is also reported that approximately 94 percent of employees perceive their organization as defaulting on agreed upon obligations within their first two years of work (Robinson and Morrison, 2000). Even though studies on employee cynicism abound, very few studies have explored employee cynicism by combining psychological contract violation and abusive supervision as antecedents.

Similarly, inclusion of job-related and non-job-related gossip as antecedents to employee cynicism has been missing. There is also no connection of these studies particularly to developing economies and more specifically, the health sector. The phenomenon of psychological contract violation

becomes important for health sector employees' performance and the need to improve health service delivery. The health sector has been inundated with several agitations regarding working conditions for Doctors, Pharmacists, Nurses and even new recruits (Daily Graphic, August 9, 2015). These developments warrant a scientific research to interrogate the issues in the Ghanaian context. In view of the above, this study aims at examining the effects of Psychological Contract Violation (PCV), Abusive Supervision (AS) and Gossip on Employee Cynicism among health workers in Ghana.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The study sought to examine the effects of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision and gossip on employee cynicism among health workers in Ghana. To achieve the goal of this study the following specific objectives were examined:

1. To investigate the level of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision, gossip and cynicism among health workers in Ghana.
2. To examine the effect of psychological contract violation and abusive supervision on employee cynicism.
3. To examine the mediation role of gossip (JRG & NJRG) in the relationship between Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism.
4. To examine the mediation role of gossip (JRG & NJRG) in the relationship Abusive Supervision (AS) and Employee Cynicism.

### **1.4 Research Question**

Based on the above objectives, the following research questions were proposed for the study:

1. What is the level of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision, gossip and cynicism among health workers in Ghana?
2. Does psychological contract violation and abusive supervision have any effect on employee cynicism?
3. Does gossip (JRG & NJRG) mediate between Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism relationship?
4. Does gossip (JRG & NJRG) mediate between Abusive Supervision (AS) and Cynicism relationship?

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The study sought to examine the effects of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision and gossips on employee cynicism among health workers in Ghana. To this end, the research considered two main theoretical frameworks, namely, social information theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1988). For the purpose of this study, health workers are categorized into management and non-management comprising nurses, doctors and department heads, laboratory technicians among others. Measurement for psychological contract violation follows the PCV scale of Robinson & Morrison (2000) whilst abusive supervision adopted Tepper's (2000) scale. Finally, employee cynicism adopted the scale of Kuo (2010).

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This part of the research discusses the contribution of the study to the body of literature and strategic management practice. The literature review on empirical research to the relationship between conceptualization of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision and gossips indicate that

deceitful and incomplete information transmitted through gossip, triggers employee cynicism (ECN) (Abraham, 2000; Anderson & Bateman, 1997), whereas McAndrew et al. (2007) posit that positive gossip facilitates information transmission and group dynamics. Similarly, Tepper et al. (2006) theorized that psychological contract violation could lead to abusive supervision. These bodies of knowledge are positioned in the field of management literature and would help understand employee cynicism. The study also attempts to bring the four perspectives together and further shows how they influence employee behaviour at the work place. This work also contributes to bridging the gap in the existing literature by focusing on the complementarities between psychological contract violation, abusive supervision and gossips in contributing to employee cynicism among health workers in Ghana. The study also advances knowledge in literature by focusing on the individual effects of the various antecedents on employee cynicism. Generally, two types of psychological contracts have been distinguished: transactional and relational (Rousseau and Parks, 1992); whereas transactional contracts are focused on economic returns, closed-ended, and static, relational contracts are primarily socioemotionally focused (non-economic returns), open-ended, and dynamic (Rousseau and Parks, 1992; Shore and Tetrick, 1994). Finally, the findings of the study are expected to guide policy decision making in the health sector and also provide grounds for future research.

### **1.7 Brief Methodology**

In order to augment the validity of data collection, the researcher considered different types of health workers during participant recruitment. The researcher focused on health workers within the Ashanti Region, Ghana. In all, 15 health facilities were considered to participate in the research and provide data access. To improve the sample representativeness, the researcher distributed

different copies of questionnaire to different health facilities, subject to the size of the organisation. Specifically, large hospitals (with more than 400 staff) received 120 copies, medium entities with 100 to 300 staff received 80 copies whilst institutions with less than 100 staff received 30 copies (similar technique was used by Chang et al., 2013 and Kuo et al. 2014 respectively). A sample of 424 health workers was considered for the study. The researcher distributed questionnaires by support of Human Resource officers and Administrators of each health facility. Both purposive and convenience sampling techniques were deployed (see Chang et al., 2013). The Cronbach alphas reliability tests were performed. A second pre-test was also conducted through a peer review of the questionnaire by other MPhil students and academics. The sample comprised a wide range of workers including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, administrators and laboratory technicians. A series of analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted to examine whether internal heterogeneity exists between various groups of respondents. Sequential Equation Model (SEM) was used to test the nature of the various relationships. Both validity and reliability tests were conducted using STATA 13.

### **1.8 Organisation of Work**

The study is divided into five main chapters. Chapter one, the introduction, looks at the background of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision, gossip and employee cynicism which contextualizes the problem statement of the study. The chapter succinctly states the problem of the study and identifies the gap in the existing literature. Also, the chapter considers the main objectives of the study and poses several research questions. It discussed the significance and brief methodology of the study as well the scope of the work. In chapter two, an extensive literature focusing on all the relevant sections of the work has been reviewed. The chapter covers the two

main theoretical frameworks used for the study, namely the social cognitive theory social information theory. This chapter also reviews the relationship between theories of psychological contract violation and gossip; the effect of gossip on abusive supervision; gossip on employee cynicism. Chapter three covers the methodology and methods of analysis used for the study. Under this chapter, the population, sample and sampling method and the detailed methodology and measurements of the variables adopted in carrying out the research have been clearly explained. Chapter four looks at the results of the field work and detailed analysis of the data to establish the relationships among the various variables. The final chapter (chapter five) deals with discussions of the findings, conclusion, limitations of the study and recommendations for further studies.



# CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the background of the study, research problems and the gaps which formed the focus of the study. The chapter navigates around five research objectives and posed research questions which synchronise with the gaps identified. For this chapter, the purpose is to present review of literature that positions the research objectives in an expansive framework. The first section of this chapter begins with construct definition of Psychological Contract Violation (PCV), Abusive Supervision (AS), Gossip and employee Cynicism (EC). Next is the review on the relationship between the various constructs. The third section provides empirical review and criticisms on the various relationships whilst the last two sections are devoted to health workers behaviour and the development of conceptual model and hypothesis.

### 2.2 Construct definition and Formation

This section provides definition and insights into Psychological Contract Violation (PCV), Abusive Supervision (AS), Gossip and employee Cynicism (EC).

#### 2.2.1 Psychological Contract Violation (PCV)

Following Rousseau's (1995) milestone work, psychological contracts have been construed as the perceived agreement of promise based on obligations between the focal person and the employing organization. According to Rousseau (2011, p. 193) "psychological contract theory represents the

employment relationship in terms of the subjective beliefs of employees and their employers”. By definition, a psychological contract implies a subjective nature (Rousseau and Tijoriwala, 1998) indicating that in every mind there is a different world (Sparrow, 1996). A key issue in psychological contracts is the belief that some kind of promise is made and a consideration is offered in exchange for it, binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations (Rousseau, 1989, 2011). Farnsworth (1982) has defined it as a set of promises committing one to future action. Schein (1988), on the other hand defines psychological contract as a set of unwritten expectations. However, several authors have questioned the use of expectations in conceptualizing psychological contracts, because what employees merely expect from their employment relationship does not necessarily fall within the boundaries of the psychological contract (Rousseau and Parks, 1993; Shore and Tettrick, 1994). As stated by Flood et al. (2001), a psychological contract is entered into when one party is deemed to have promised future dividends, a situation giving rise to an obligation to provide future benefits. Such promises on the part of the employer creates expectations on the part of employees, for example, with respect to compensation and benefits, skills-development opportunities and job content and, consequently, staff feel the employer has fulfilled its obligation only when their expectations are met.

Defining psychological contract for assessment reasons is certainly useful. Guest (1998), for example has made it very clear that “we run into difficulties as soon as we start to examine definitions of psychological contract. The first problem that emerges from a comparison of definitions is that the psychological contract maybe about perceptions, expectations, beliefs, promises and obligations” (pp.660-1). Arnold (1996) also made similar criticism that “such definitional ambiguities matter because they have implications for what data researchers on the psychological contract should collect and from how many parties”. Similarly, Anderson and Schalk

(1998) point out that “researchers should clarify what is meant when using the term “psychological contract” but then add that “this does not necessarily mean that there only has to be one definition in use” (Anderson and Schalk, 1998; pp.644). Notwithstanding such definitional inconsistencies and diversities (rather than disagreements) most definitions of psychological contract seem to highlight the following characteristics:

- Psychological contract defines a form of belief that an exchange relationship between two parties exists (Guest, 1998; Rousseau, 1995)
- The psychological contract can be employed to explain how relationships between employment parties evolve, develop or degenerate (Shore and Tetrick, 1994).
- Psychological contract is a self-construct and its terms may be diversely interpreted (Rousseau, 1995).
- Psychological contract is a dynamic construct and is likely to change with passing of time in the organisation (Hiltrop, 1996).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopts the definition of Rousseau (2011, p. 193) which asserts that psychological contract represents the employment relationship in terms of the subjective beliefs of employees and their employers “. The study also embraced the assertion that in every mind there is a different world (Sparrow, 1996).

#### **2.2.1.1 Creation of Psychological contract**

Rousseau has presented an approach on how an individual’s contract is created with the other “party”, focusing mainly on constituent, intra-psychic processes, such as how the focal person encodes and decodes external messages based on personal dispositions and motives (Rousseau, 1995). Her theory of psychological contracting has been developed based on schema theory

focusing specifically on how the employee makes sense of her psychological contract (Rousseau, 2001). Fiske and Taylor (1984) have defined schema as a cognitive structure that demonstrates organized knowledge about a given stimulus as well as the rules that direct information processing. Schema serves as a mental map to make sense of the environment and guide the individual to act accordingly (Harris, 1994; Louis, 1980). Schema-based sense-making processes are generally understood to be naturally occurring for organizational newcomers from entry onwards (Harris, 1994). Sense-making theory furnishes insight into how the psychological contract, as a cognitive schema, is being created and evolves in an employee's mind (Rousseau, 2011; Shore and Tetrick, 1994). Sense-making refers to the actors' attempts to build meaning in relation to self and their context. The assumption is that people are continuously engaged in a retrospective sense-making process, particularly in new, novel or unanticipated situations (Weick and Quinn, 1999). Within the socialization context, sense-making refers to the attempts of a newcomer to cope with their entry experiences (Louis, 1980), and in particular by attributing meaning to their employment relationship (De Vos et al., 2005).

#### **2.2.1.2 Psychological contract violation**

With the current turbulent business environment, arguably the traditional psychological contract, long-term job security in return for hard work and loyalty, has come under pressure (Sims, 1994). In an uncertain context, organisational changes often make it unclear as to what both parties, the employee and employer, actually owe each other, thus making fulfilling obligations more difficult (McLean et al. 1994). As a result there is an increased likelihood of misinterpretation and violation of the psychological contract (Robinson, 1996; Braun, 1997).

Psychological contract violation has been defined as a failure of the organisation to fulfil one or more obligations of an individual's psychological contract (Robinson and Morrison, 1995; Robinson and Rousseau, 1994). Morrison and Robinson (1997), however, have argued that this definition focuses on the rational, mental calculation of what individuals have or have not received and downplays the emotional aspect of violation. As such they make the distinction between psychological contract breach and violation. Morrison and Robinson (1997, p. 230) have referred to perceived breach as "the cognition that one's organization has failed to meet one or more obligations within one's psychological contract". Therefore breach is essentially the identification of perceived unmet obligations; consequently it may be relatively short-term phenomenon and may result in individuals returning to their relatively "stable" psychological contract state, or alternatively it may develop into full violation.

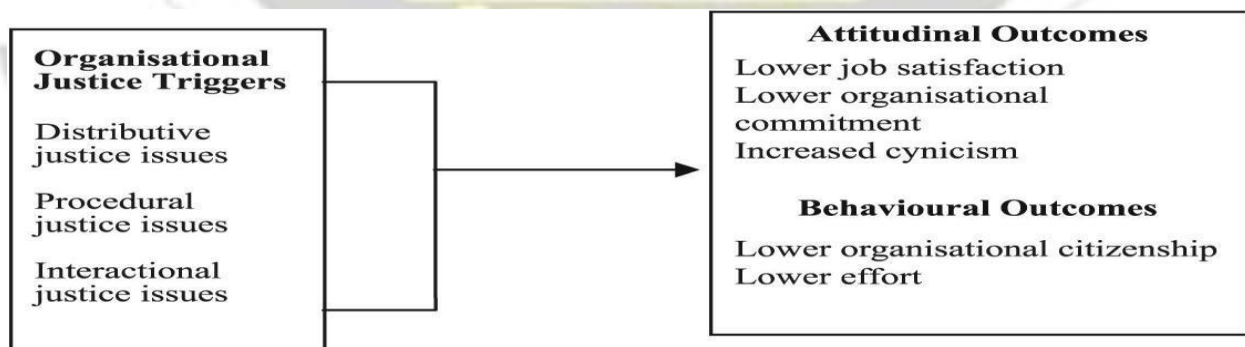
Violation however, is an "emotional and affective state that may follow from the belief that one's organization has failed to adequately maintain the psychological contract" (Morrison and Robinson, 1997, p. 230). Contract violation is more than the failure of the organisation to meet expectations; responses are more intense because respect and codes of conduct are called into question because essentially a "promise" has been broken and it is more personalised (Rousseau, 1989).

Psychological contract violation has been described as multi-faceted (Morrison and Robinson, 1997) because it incorporates a wide range of responses. At one level, violation invokes responses of disappointment, frustration and distress (Robinson and Morrison, 1995; Pate and Malone, 2000). More extreme emotional responses include anger, resentment, bitterness and indignation (Rousseau, 1989; Pate and Malone, 2000). Violation has also been associated with behavioural

outcomes such as lower organisational citizenship, reduced commitment, satisfaction and trust while cynicism increases (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994; Robinson and Morrison, 1995; Robinson, 1996; Herriot et al., 1998; Pate et al., 2000). As a result when an individual's psychological contract is violated the relationship becomes more calculated and transactional, but how far it moves along the continuum is dependent on the strength of the perceived violation (McLean et al. 1994; Pate and Malone, 2000).

Again, triggers of psychological contract violation may be rooted in an organisation's inability to meet obligations regarding distributive, procedural and interactional aspects of justice (Andersson, 1996; Novelli et al. 1995). Distributive violation occurs when outcomes are perceived to be unfairly distributed for example, financial rewards. Procedural violation refers to the perception of the unfair application of procedures, such as promotion. Finally, interactional violation is linked to employees' perception of trust of superiors and the organisation as a whole and occurs if employees feel they have been treated badly. Such notions of fairness trigger assessment of the psychological contract (Novelli et al. 1995). Figure 2.1 below presents a model on organisational triggers of psychological contract violation and potential outcomes.

**Figure 2.1: Psychological contract violation model**



Source: Novelli et al. (1995)

### 2.2.2 Abusive Supervision (AS)

In recent years, management researchers have investigated abusive supervision, subordinates' perceptions of supervisors' sustained displays of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours (Tepper, 2000, pp. 178). Abusive supervision in the form of ridiculing, undermining, and yelling at subordinates is a source of chronic stress that produces serious negative consequences (Tepper, 2007). Like victims of domestic abuse (Emery et al. 1998), victims of abusive supervision experience heightened psychological distress (Duffy et al. 2002), indications of strain that involve dysfunctional thoughts and emotions (e. g., anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion).

Abusive supervision is defined as “subordinates” perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact” (Tepper, 2000, p. 178). Examples include a supervisor making negative comments about an employee to other members of the organization, or telling that a subordinate’s thoughts or feelings are stupid.

For this study, abusive supervision refers to subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact (Tepper, 2007). This definition characterizes abusive supervision as a subjective assessment. The same individual could view a supervisor's behaviour as abusive in one context and as non-abusive in another context, and two subordinates could differ in their evaluations of the same supervisor's behaviour.

Like abuse directed toward intimate partners, the elderly, and children, abusive supervision can be characterized as sustained or enduring in the sense that it is likely to continue until (1) the target

terminates the relationship, (2) the agent terminates the relationship, or (3) the agent modifies his or her behaviour (Jezi et al. 1996; Shepard & Campbell, 1992). Several features of abusive relationships contribute to their enduring quality. First, targets of abuse may remain in the relationships because they feel powerless to take corrective action, are economically dependent on the abusers, or fear the unknown associated with separation more than they fear the abuse, and they may remain because the agents often intersperse abusive behaviour with normal behaviour, in effect intermittently reinforcing the targets' hope the abuse will end (Walker, 1979). Second, because abusers often fail to recognize or take responsibility for their abusive behaviour, few modify it, and, in many cases, even clinical intervention fails to recast such relationships as non-abusive (Wolfe, 1987).

Bies and Tripp (2000; 1998) identified the following manifestations of abusive supervision: public criticism, loud and angry tantrums, rudeness, inconsiderate actions, and coercion. Similar themes appear in Ashforth's (2004) description of organizational "petty tyranny," Neuman and Baron's (2007) examples of nonphysical workplace aggression, and Robinson and Bennett's (1995) typology of deviant organizational behaviour. However, although abusive supervision shares conceptual overlap with these constructs, there are meaningful distinctions that warrant treating abusive supervision as a separate construct. For example, Ashforth's (2004: 757) conceptual and operational definitions of petty tyranny capture management practices that may or may not involve hostility (for example, "uses authority or position for personal gain," "administers organizational policies unfairly," and "discourages initiative"). Second, diverging from Neuman and Baron's (2007) characterization of aggression as behaviours designed to cause harm, abusive supervision refers to behaviors that reflect indifference (for example, speaking rudely to subordinates in order

to elicit desired task performance), as well as willful hostility (publicly belittling subordinates in order to hurt their feelings).

The extant literature on this topic shows that abusive supervision is associated with a variety of negative consequences for the organization, as well as for the employees (Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2007). For example, abusive supervision has detrimental consequences with regard to employees' performance (Harris et al., 2007) and their organizational citizenship behaviors (Aryee et al., 2007; Zellars et al., 2002). In order to better understand the relation between abusive supervision and its negative consequences, researchers have drawn on mechanisms such as perceived fairness and control (reactance theory), but also on social exchange (Aryee et al., 2007; Mitchell and Ambrose, 2007; Thau et al., 2009).

### **2.2.3 Gossip**

Despite a growing awareness in management literature of the strength and limitations of gossip within organisations, much of this analysis has taken a rather narrow definition by dwelling on its negative aspects. This is very topical of how such talk has been viewed historically, reflecting a common emphasis within popular culture (McAndrew et al. 2007; Niederhoffer, & Swann, 2006). Gossip has many disparaging associations in popular parlance to do with tale-telling, malice and scandal since a tendency to deal with personal information about other people's private lives means it often leans towards the evaluative or judgmental; it is in this negative sense that it has often been used to denigrate women's language (Tebbutt 1995).

Diverse disciplines do not readily agree a common definition of the term gossip. In its most neutral sense, it talks about common acquaintances, either factual or fabricated. It usually takes place between a small number of individuals or within a small social group, these personal and collective aspects interacting in various complex ways. Distinctions are often made between the individual gossip (as a subject) and gossip as a process of communication (McAndrew et al. (2007). In this latter category, gossip can be used not only as a means of providing information, but also as a form of influence (for reasons of status, social approval, vindictiveness or power), self-evaluation (to check out one's own values against external standards) and entertainment. Ribeiro and Blakely (1995: 43), who provide a useful conceptual model on which to base analysis, have also referred to catharsis, 'the use of gossip as a vehicle for emotional ventilation'. It is in the analysis of group dynamics that gossip's role is perhaps particularly significant, for gossip performs important collective functions, not the least of which is the contribution it makes to group cohesiveness and the transmission of group mores and values. However, as was suggested earlier, certain contexts - such as instability or insecurity - exaggerate particular personal functions of gossip, perhaps making a larger number of people more prone to participate, as when competitive pressures produce a particularly judgmental type of talk about other people. Noon and Delbridge (1993: 25) take as their definition of gossip, 'the process of informally communicating value-laden information about members of a social setting'.

McAndrew et al. (2007) suggest that gossip is a necessary function of society because the constant flow of information within a network of human exchange needs to evaluate situations to assist people in making sense of their environment. Through gossip, people become able to look at pieces of information from different perspectives and interpret it according to their own knowledge base. Gossip facilitates critical thinking as a social sense-making tool (Bok, 1982).

Similarly, Levin and Arluke (1987) claim that gossip includes positive information and that gossip can deliver a more accurate, experiential truth than objective explanations. More specifically, positive gossip facilitates group member cooperation, and that the levels of reciprocity, trust and reputation between individual members are also enhanced (Sommerfeld et al. 2008). Negative gossip however, is effective for increasing the intimacy of social bonds (Bosson et al. 2006). Rumour is a more public and widely disseminated phenomenon than gossip, although many of its functions are similar. Its content is typically unsubstantiated information about 'larger social groups or organisations', and more publicly known individuals (Ribeiro and Blakely 1995: 44).

The long term result of gossip, no matter positive or negative, is mistrust of the organization and management, though in short term it may benefit some. Unfortunately, gossips are often destructive and sometimes out of control. They have consequences such as key employees waste their energy, good employees leave their jobs, costs go up for fighting the gossips, the organization loses face, productivity decreases and employees of different departments do not tend to cooperate with each other (Esposito and Rosnow, 1983). The person who spreads gossip may share the information in order to gain a better social position. Gaining power and social status are the products of gossip for the person who spreads it; he raises his position by lowering those of the others. Gossip can act as social controlling tools to influence others. It means the person who originates gossips provides some information to influence people who are prone to believe gossips (Niederhoffer & Swann, 2006). Since in organizations direct aggression is dangerous it has become common to attack indirectly via gossips. Applying gossip as a confliction tactic results in various consequences such as forming coalitions resulting in intensified conflict. Gossips directly cause conflicts and indirectly cause coalition formation resulting in intensified conflicts (Kartch, 2009).

In 1947 Alpert and Postman conducted a study on gossip dubbed “the psychology of gossip”. They believed that gossips have complicated purposes and that gossips are a way to relieve excitement and emotions while they justify the person’s emotion in a specific situation. Difonzo and Bordia (2000) regarding the purpose of social communication have pointed out three motives: knowing the fact, communication and proving their self-importance. Gossip is common in every organization more or less but it appears stronger and becomes more common in organizations in which the employees face defects in the information system and among those groups and societies which are more likely to be simple and naive and are more prone to be influenced and to spread gossip.

#### **2.2.3.1 Job-related and Non-job-related Gossip**

Since this work focused on workplace gossip, attempt has been made to conceptualise gossip into two arms: job-related gossip (JRG) and non-job-related gossip (NJG). JRG and NJG differ in their relationship with employee behaviour, for the following reasons. The starting point is that, gossip may not necessarily tell the truth and cause problems (Dunbar, 2004). More so, if the actual gossip is not related to the job but to general social issues, an employee may not treat gossip seriously in the workplace and may not vehemently respond to the source of gossip such as colleagues or the organisation. DiFonzo and Bordia (2007) described gossip as superfluous and insignificant. The authors explained that the purpose of gossip is to entertain and to amuse.

Following this understanding, if the gossip is not connected to the job but to someone’s personal life, an employee may not necessarily attribute the pressure of that gossip to his/her colleagues or organisation. Very much so, at the individual level, the influence of NJG may be less salient at work than the influence of JRG. Suffice it to say, gossip at work may impact upon the perceptions of

status, power and esteem (Rosnow, 2001). JRG shall have higher tendency (or possibility) to influence employee's behaviour, as JRG is directly associated with the job, colleagues and/or the workplace.

Gossip has been argued to serve a number of functions (Beersma and Van-Kleef, 2012; Foster, 2004; Grosser *et al.*, 2012). Two of these functions are likely to play an especially important role in situations of (leader-follower) conflicts. The first is the emotional venting and related bonding function of gossip. The second is the exchange of reputational information. First, gossip can be used to release pent-up emotions (Grosser *et al.*, 2012; Waddington and Fletcher, 2005). It can serve as a "pressure valve" that employees can use to "let off steam", particularly in cases in which this cannot be done in another way. In a study among nurses, who had to control their emotions in their interactions with patients, gossip was shown to help these nurses cope with the stress this caused (Waddington and Fletcher, 2005). In addition, Feinberg *et al.* (2012) found that gossiping about someone's behaviour to another person reduced negative affect caused by this behaviour. Related to emotional venting is the function of gossip as a bonding mechanism. Gossip has been argued to bring people closer together. Exchanging sensitive gossip with someone signals that one trusts this person. As such, gossip has been compared to grooming in primates (Dunbar, 2004): it signals trust and interpersonal intimacy (Grosser *et al.*, 2012).

The need for emotional venting, as well as the need for increasing interpersonal trust and intimacy with others in the workplace, is likely to be particularly high when employees are exposed to unfair treatment in the event of a conflict with their boss. Conflict is one of the most important stressors employees encounter in the workplace (Bolger *et al.*, 1989; Smith and Sulsky, 1995) and has shown to be related to negative emotions (Bruk-Lee and Spector, 2006). In conflicts with a leader in particular, it is often difficult to release emotions by turn to overt reactions, as this might have

undesirable consequences (DeCoster *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, using gossip to release conflict-related emotions might be very likely. Moreover, the asymmetric power distribution characteristic of the leader–follower relationship can make employees vulnerable during such conflicts (Aquino *et al.*, 2001; Bies and Tripp, 2002), increasing the need to bond with others. This, again, would lead to gossip as a conflict reaction on the part of employees confronted with a conflict with their leader.

A second function of gossip that seems relevant in conflict situations is the exchange of reputational information. Gossip can be used to influence how someone thinks about someone else and research has shown that it is highly effective in doing so (Anderson *et al.*, 2011; Milinski *et al.*, 2002; Sommerfeld *et al.*, 2007). There are two important reasons why employees who experience a conflict with their leader would be motivated to engage in the exchange of reputational information. First, doing so can be a form of indirect aggression (Archer and Coyne, 2005).

#### **2.2.4 Employee Cynicism (EC)**

Early research defined cynicism as an attitude distinguished by a 'dislike for and distrust of others' (Cook and Medley, 1959, p. 418). Some studies have equated cynicism with disillusionment resulting from the failure of specific institutions to meet the high expectations presented by modern-day life (Kanter and Mirvis, 2009). Although cynicism has been described as both a personality trait (Allred and O'Keefe, 2007) and an emotion (Meyerson, 1999), most studies of cynicism have defined it as an attitude toward an object (such as business), susceptible to change by exposure to factors in the environment (e.g. Bateman *et al.* 1999; Mirvis and Kanter, 1999; Stern *et al.* 1990; Wanous *et al.* 1994). In fact, a study of cynicism toward business and its relation to work values defined cynicism as a specific negative work attitude and showed that cynicism toward work is not associated with a stable personality characteristic (Guastello *et al.* 1999). Similarly,

another study defined cynicism as an attitude of pessimism and hopelessness toward future organizational change induced by repeated exposure to mismanaged change attempts, and found that employee cynicism is not associated with the trait negative affectivity (Wanous et al., 1994). Furthermore, in the police and corrections literature, cynicism refers to hostile, suspicious, and disparaging attitudes toward work situations and social interactions (Crank et al 1999; Ulmer, 1992).

In some instances, cynicism reflects a basic philosophy about human nature, a general attitude that one cannot depend on other people to be trustworthy and sincere (Costa et al. 1985; Wrightsman, 1992). On other occasions, cynicism has specific objects, such as work, big business, particular industries, single firms, labor unions, or management (Lipset and Schneider, 1983; Kanter and Mirvis, 1989; Regoli et al. 1990; Stern et al., 1990). Cynicism toward work, for example, is a specific attitude conveying work as oppressive, unrewarding, and unworthy of effort (Stern et al. 1990). Often, cynicism toward one group or institution can generalize to other objects, such as when cynicism toward the leader of one corporation generalizes to cynicism toward the leaders of other corporations (Bateman et al., 1992). Hence, cynicism can be directed toward a specific object or can be generalized to multiple objects. Cynicism, therefore, can be defined best as both a general and specific attitude, characterized by frustration and disillusionment as well as negative feelings toward and distrust of a person, group, ideology, social convention, or institution.

The literature on cynicism has been varied yet sparse, concentrating in three main areas: police cynicism, psychosocial aspects of cynical hostility, and cynicism in social work. Findings from these three streams of research, in conjunction with information gleaned from public opinion polls and popular journals, have stimulated research on cynicism directed toward business organizations

and their leaders. For example, organizational cynicism has been introduced as a concept encompassing the sense of betrayal and pessimism experienced by employees as a result of repeatedly observing failed managerial attempts to initiate change (Wanous et al., 1994). Employees who are more cynical toward organizational change express less motivation to exert change efforts, expect less personal success, and perceive fewer and less valuable intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Wanous et al., 1994). Cynical employees believe that the average worker is exploited and does not receive a fair share of organizational rewards (Guastello et al., 1992).

A large-scale study revealed that cynicism toward business, fostered by high expectations and subsequent disillusionment in the workplace, is an attitude held by a large portion of the American public (Kanter and Mirvis, 1989; Mirvis and Kanter, 1992). Other studies lend support to this conclusion. Cynicism toward work, described as an attitude 'that companies do not care about their employees and that most jobs are not worthy of a worker's commitment' (Stern et al., 1990; p. 271), was found to be high among high school students who held part-time jobs. Likewise, cynicism toward American business and its leaders was higher among both American and Japanese audiences after viewing *Roger & Me*, a film depicting the ruthlessness of plant closings and layoffs at General Motors (Bateman et al., 1992).

This brief review of the literature suggests that cynicism is a potentially useful construct in employee behavior. It is important, however, to conceptually differentiate cynicism from similar constructs such as job satisfaction and trust. Whereas job satisfaction is a global attitude conveying a 'pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences' (Locke, 1996, p. 130), or the degree to which one's work is capable of satisfying (or frustrating, as in the case of dissatisfaction) one's needs (Griffin and Bateman, 1996), cynicism is both a

generalized and specific attitude involving frustration, disillusionment, and negative feelings toward and distrust of a person, group, or object(s). Although cynicism and job dissatisfaction share an element of frustration, cynicism incorporates disillusionment and distrust toward a variety of persons or objects. Thus, cynicism is anticipatory and outwardly directed, while job satisfaction is retrospective and self-focused (Wanous et al., 1994). Also, cynicism can be similarly distinguished from trust (or distrust) by its broader nature. Trust is defined as a belief held by an individual that the word, promise, or oral or written statement of another individual or group can be relied on (Rotter, 1980; Stack, 1978). Like cynicism, trust can be divided into two sub-constructs: a global or generalized component and a specific situational component (Driscoll, 1998; Stack, 1978). However, whereas trust is a belief (or expectancy), cynicism is an attitude consisting of an affective component (negative feelings and disillusionment) as well as a belief (distrust).

#### **2.2.4.1 Predictors of Cynicism in the workplace**

Attitudes change when some fact, behavior, or event produces inconsistency between the attitude components (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977). Because of their pervasiveness in the business environment and the amount of attention they have garnered, high levels of executive compensation, poor organizational performance, and harsh layoffs are offered as variables that can evoke inconsistency in the attitude structure and generate employee cynicism. As people seek cognitive consistency (Festinger, 1957) and form attitudes toward populations based on the observation of a single case (Hamill et al. 1980), it is implicit in our hypotheses that these predictors will affect not only cynicism toward a particular organization and its management, but will

generalize to affect cynicism toward other business organizations and executives as well as cynicism toward human nature in general (Bateman et al., 1992).

## **2.5 Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism (EC)**

Psychological contract violation may result in a number of attitudinal or behavioural responses (Guest et al., 1996). Attitudinal responses include reduced organisational commitment, job satisfaction and increased cynicism (Robinson and Morrison, 1995). In addition, individuals may become more cynical. Employee cynicism has been defined as a negative attitude and involves a belief that their organisation lacks integrity, negative emotions towards the organisation and a tendency for employees towards critical behaviour of their organisation (Dean et al., 1998; Pate et al., 2000). The targets of such cynicism are usually senior executives, the organisation in general and corporate policies. Relationship rupture may also engender behavioural changes, in reduced effort and citizenship. Therefore breaking the psychological contract may have implications for employee and organisational performance.

The connection between attitude and behaviour has long since been recognised by the planned behaviour school of thought (Conner and Armitage, 1978; Conner and Sparks, 1996) and is epitomised by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) theory. The planned approach ascertains that attitude to a significant extent can predict behaviour. Therefore it follows that violation of an individual's psychological contract will result in a number of behaviour changes such as absenteeism and withdrawal of citizenship, as outlined by Guest et al. (1996) and Guest and Conway (1997, 1998). Additionally, Nicholson and Johns' (1985) study applied the psychological contract to absenteeism at work. They suggested, "the psychological contract emerges from interaction and communication, effectively dictating how culture is acted out" (Nicholson and Johns, 1985, p. 398). Therefore it is

“the psychological mechanism by which collective influence is translated into individual behaviour” (Nicholson & Johns, 1985, p. 398) and thereby stresses the impact of attitude on behaviour although this was not empirically tested.

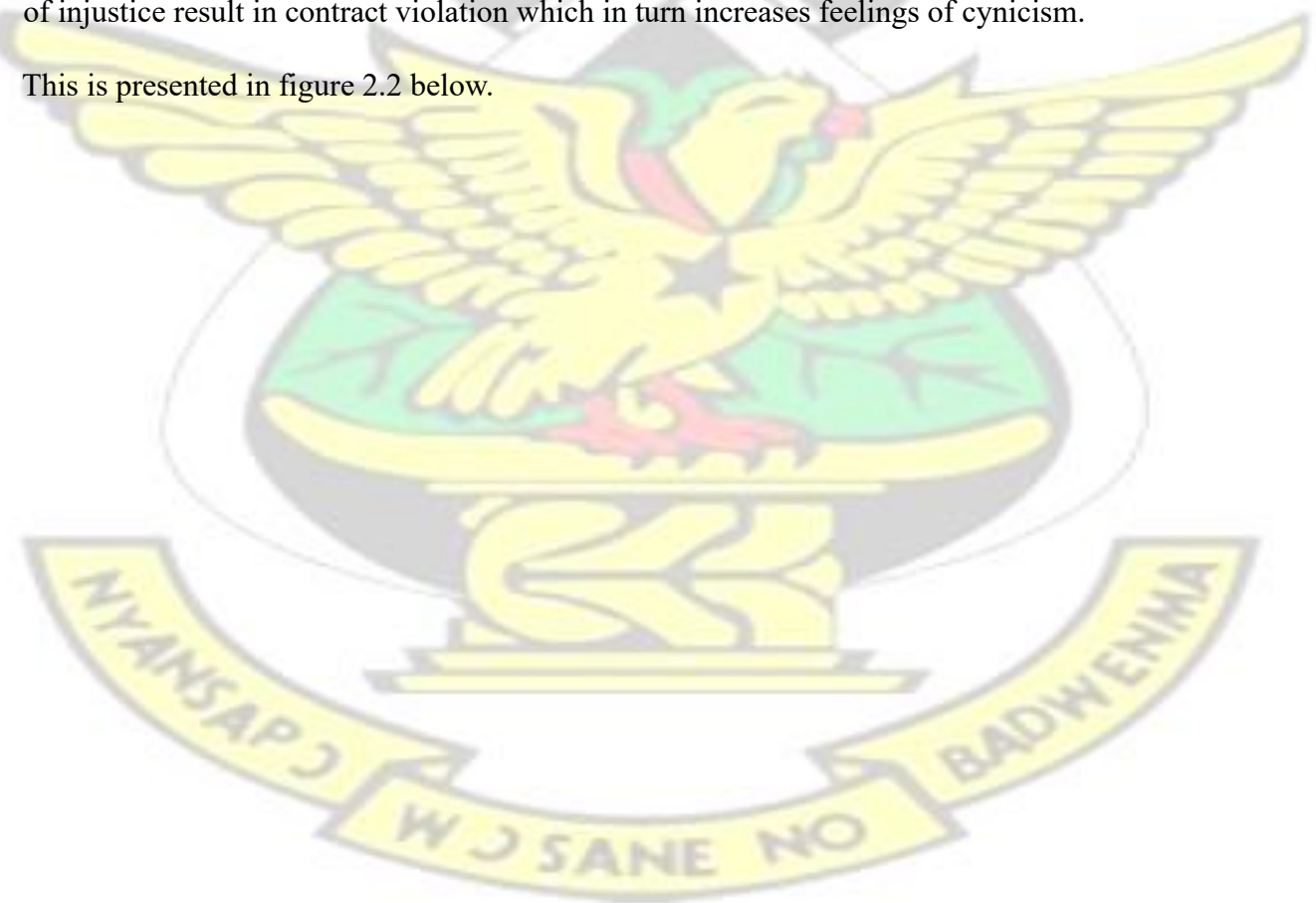
Furthermore, Morrison and Robinson (1997) present a theoretical model of the cognitive processes involved in the interpretation of a violation in the psychological contract. They propose that psychological contract violation is a complex cognitive process which begins with an appraisal of a perceived discrepancy between an employee’s understanding of what was promised by the organization and what he or she actually received. The employee then makes a judgment as to whether or not a promise has been broken or unfulfilled. The model outlines possible individual difference and contextual variables that may influence employee perceptions of a breach of contract. Additionally, Morrison and Robinson (1997) propose four variables that influence employee interpretation of unmet promises as a violation of the psychological contract: the perceived magnitude of the breach, attributions about why the breach occurred, perceptions of fair treatment, and the social context or backdrop against which the employee interprets a breach. The interpretation process of this model is particularly important because it is here that the employee shifts from merely recognizing that the organization has failed to meet certain obligations to actually experiencing and reacting to the negative emotions associated with the violation of a psychological contract (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

Previous research has examined the relationship between employees’ trust in the organization and perceptions of psychological contract violation. Robinson (1996) found that trust mediated the relationship between contract breach and employee contributions to the firm. She also reported that trust in the employer at the time of hire moderated the relationship between contract breach and subsequent trust. While Robinson studied trust as both a mediator and moderator, others have

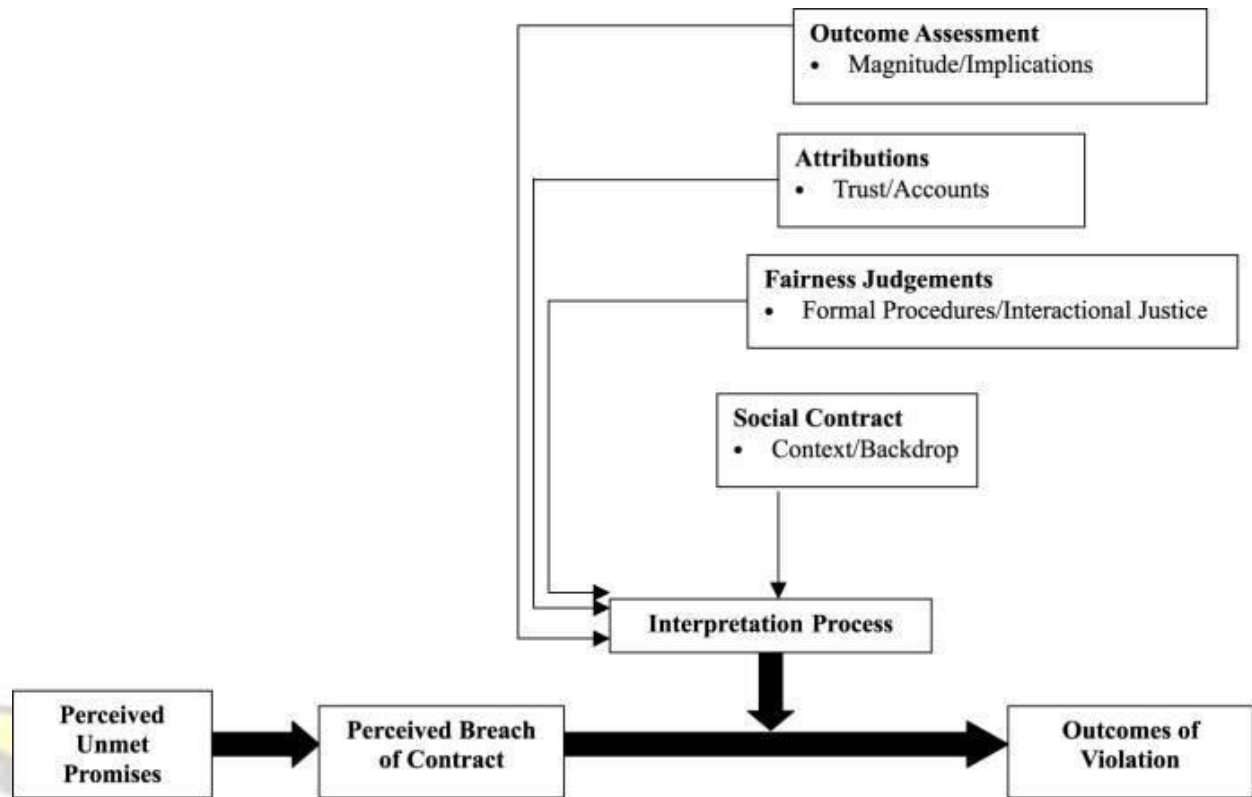
studied organizational trust as a mediator of organizational citizenship behavior and contract violation (Robinson & Morrison, 1995) and as an outcome of violation (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Morrison and Robinson (1997) propose in their model of violation that employees who have high trust in the organization will be more apt to attribute a breach to justifying circumstances and less likely to interpret unmet promises as a serious violation of the psychological contract. Similarly, Morrison and Robinson (2007) propose that when employees feel they are fairly treated, they will be less likely to perceive a discrepancy between what they believe was promised by the organization and what they have or will receive. If treated fairly, they will be more likely to feel that in the long run, their contributions will be reciprocated.

Additionally, Andersson's (1996) theoretical work on employee cynicism suggests that perceptions of injustice result in contract violation which in turn increases feelings of cynicism.

This is presented in figure 2.2 below.



**Figure 2.2: Psychological contract violation and employee cynicism**



**Source:** Based on the theoretical model developed by Morrison and Robinson (1997)

## 2.6 Abusive Supervision (AS) and Employee Cynicism (EC)

During the past decade, a growing range of studies have reported on the far-reaching consequences for those who are the victim of an abusive supervisor (Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2007). Xu et al. (2012) showed that abusive supervision is detrimental for employees' performance, their organizational citizenship behaviors toward the organization (OCBO), and toward other individuals (OCBI), and that these relations can be explained by social exchange processes between the supervisor and his/her employees (i.e. leader-member exchange (LMX)).

A few systematic studies have investigated the effects of behaviour akin to abusive supervision. Ashforth (1997) found that tyrannical supervision (which included belittling subordinates, displaying little consideration, and using non-contingent punishment) was associated with frustration, helplessness, and alienation from work. Keashly and colleagues (1994) found that nonphysical abuse occurred more frequently than physical violence like throwing things, punching, or threatening with a weapon and that individuals who experienced more supervisory abuse were less satisfied with their jobs. Studies of medical students and residents suggest abusive supervision is associated with dissatisfaction and elevated levels of psychological distress (Richman et al. 1992; Sheehan et al. 1990). Taken together, these studies suggest nonphysical, abusive supervisor behaviors negatively influence subordinates' work related attitudes and psychological health (Duffy et al., 1998).

The discussion of the relationship between abusive supervision and Employee Cynicism (ECN) can be framed in terms of social exchange theory. Social exchange scholars (Homans, 1958; Lau, 1964), describe social behavior as an exchange of resources, both material and non-material, between multiple parties, where individuals evaluate the costs and benefits of exchanging with current partners. When exchange theory is applied to an abusive supervisor-subordinate relationship, the abused employee may perceive that they have received less valuable resources from their supervisor (e.g. Intimidation, threats, or inappropriate expressions of anger) than would an employee whose supervisor demonstrates supportive leadership behaviors (e.g.

Coaching or mentoring). In order to bring an abused employee's relationship with the abusive supervisor back into equilibrium, the employee may either seek to reduce the value of the intangible resources that they provide to their manager (e.g. Motivation, commitment, OCBs, etc.), or maybe even exhibit counterproductive behaviours that will allow them to "get even" (Richard et al., 2002;

Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). Although some employees may respond to abusive supervision with destructive behaviours such as organizational deviance (Thau et al., 2009; Tepper et al., 2008), the power differential between supervisors and subordinates makes it unlikely that the subordinates will respond with identical action to their more powerful abusers (Zellars et al., 2002).

## **2.7 Gossip and Employee Cynicism (EC)**

Cynicism has been proposed as a paradigm of employee–employer relations as a result of longer working hours, work intensification, ineffective leadership and management, new deals in the workplace, and the continual downsizing and delayering of organisations (Bunting, 2004). For instance, after repeated exposure to mismanaged change efforts and an unpleasant working environment, employees may accumulate negative emotions and engage in disparaging behaviour towards their organisations (Wanous et al., 1994). During a period of unsuccessful organisational development and defective changes, employees with cynicism beliefs tend to attribute such events to their managers, leaders and officials. These employees simply distrust the management policies and disbelieve that their voices are heard by their managers, leading to lower or even no performance (Wanous et al. 2000). Similarly, Andersson and Bateman (1997) reveal a correlation between cynicism, organisational citizenship behaviour and compliance with unethical requests. Also, Stanley et al. (2005) also state that employees with higher cynicism are more likely to doubt their managers’ strategies and to suspect the intention underlying these strategies. Cynicism is often triggered by business practices such as lay-offs and inflated salaries commanded by corporate executives, creating an implicit sense of alienation and frustration towards the organisation may be displayed through cynicism (Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Cartwright & Holmes, 2006). The preceding discussion has also implied that gossip is a plausible antecedent to cynicism.

Furthermore, Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) provide a valuable contribution to understanding ECN via their social information theory. This theory posits that the social context has two salient effects on individual attitude, behaviour and needs. First, the social context provides a direct construction of meaning which acts as a guide for socially acceptable reasons for action. Second, the social context focuses an individual's attention on certain information, making that information more salient, and provides expectations concerning individual behaviour and the logical consequences of such behaviour. Thus, social values, environmental factors and relationships with others all influence individual perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. Social information theory neither explains the mechanism nor direction of influence, but Pollock, et al.

(2000) suggest that social context and individuals are like ties and nodes in a wider network. Individuals need ties to fulfil their social/psychological needs, whereas ties need nodes to form the foundation of a network. Following this, it seems logical to support the gossip–cynicism relationship, predicated on the following reasons: (1) gossip contains contextual information shared by the gossips and bystanders (DiFonzo et al. 1994), (2) gossip requires social context as a means of information transmission (Rosnow & Georgoudi, 1985) and, (3) people may collect valuable information from gossip and guide their behaviours accordingly as an extension of social information theory. In addition, people may interpret gossip as a malicious attack and thus resent or retaliate against the source and location of the gossip, the workplace, with the purpose of defending their self-esteem and to reassure themselves (cf. self-affirmation theory; Sherman & Cohen, 2006).

## **2.8 Theoretical framework**

This part of the study focused on theories that support the current study. This include the social exchange theory, the justice based model, and the theory of Attribution.

### **2.8.1 Social exchange theory - PVC and Employee Cynicism**

Research on the impact of PCV on employee attitudes and behaviors has generally been grounded in social exchange theory (Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003; Zhao et al., 2007). Social exchange theory posits that the parties in an exchange relationship provide benefits to one another in the form of tangible benefits such as money or intangible benefits such as socioemotional support (Blau, 1964). The exchange of these benefits is a result of the norm of reciprocity. According to the norm of reciprocity, individuals are obligated to return favors that have been provided by others in the course of interactions in order to strengthen interpersonal relationships (Gouldner, 1960). In addition, social exchange theory maintains that trust is an essential condition for the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Therefore, according to social exchange theory, individuals seek to enter and maintain fair and balanced exchange relationships. In organizations, employees seek a fair and balanced exchange relationship with their employers.

When PCV is perceived, an employee believes that there is a discrepancy between what he/she was promised and what was delivered by the organization (Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1995). Discrepancies represent an imbalance in the social exchange relationship between the employee and employer. From an equity perspective (Adams, 1965), the employee is motivated to restore balance in the social exchange relationship by various means including negative workplace attitudes and behaviours. Consistent with the predictions of social exchange theory and equity theory, the line of research in the psychological contracts literature that has focused on the outcomes of PCV has found negative relations between PCB and a variety of workplace outcomes. For

example, PCB has been found to be negatively related to job satisfaction (e.g. Robinson and Rousseau, 1994), organizational commitment (e.g. Robinson, 1996), intentions to quit (e.g. Robinson and Rousseau, 1994), trust (e.g. Robinson and Rousseau, 1994), and in-role job performance (e.g. Robinson, 1996; Turnley and Feldman, 1999).

### **2.8.2 A Justice-Based Model of Subordinates' Responses to Abusive Supervision**

According to justice theory, individuals' evaluative assessments of fairness draw on perceptions of distributive justice (fairness of outcome allocation), procedural justice (fairness of the procedures used to make allocation decisions), and interactional justice (fairness of the interpersonal treatment individuals receive during the enactment of procedures).

Interactional justice is particularly relevant to this analysis because it reflects the interpersonal dimension of fairness (Bies, 2000). According to Bies and Moag (1986), individuals experience interactional injustice when organizational representatives fail to treat them with respect, honesty, propriety, and sensitivity to their personal needs. Contextual factors influence whether or not subordinates experience unfairness when they are the targets of behaviors that fit the present definition of abusive supervision; as Bies and Moag stated, "A person may hold a criterion such as personal respect inviolable. However, if rudeness is seen as an expected part of the procedure itself, as in a stress interview, then it may not be perceived as unfair because there is an instrumental purpose to its occurrence" (1986: 51).

Also, subordinates who experience long-term abusive supervision may conclude that their organization has not done an adequate job of developing or enforcing procedures that discipline

abusers or protect targets of abuse. These conclusions might imply that one or more of the procedural justice rules Leventhal (1980) described has been violated; these rules are that organizational procedures should be consistent across people and over time, not be biased by self-interest, be based on accurate information, include provisions for appeal, and reflect the concerns and ethical system of those affected. For example, the bias suppression and ethicality rules would be violated if subordinates believed their organization was unwilling to discipline an abusive but high-performing manager out of fear that the bottom line would be negatively affected. The accuracy rule would be violated if subordinates believed that organizational representatives had not done a good job of collecting the information necessary to adequately monitor or document supervisory behaviors that might warrant disciplinary action. Consequently, subordinates should experience procedural injustice when their supervisors are more abusive.

Theories of distributive justice also suggest that individuals make fairness judgments when they compare their inputs and outcomes with those of a referent (Adams & Freedman, 1976). Subordinates of abusive supervisors may experience what Martin (1981) referred to as relative deprivation: the belief that they are getting less than they deserve compared to target referents. For example, subordinates of abusive supervisors may feel disadvantaged compared to peers if their supervisors spend more time berating them than providing the mentoring functions that prepare junior colleagues for advancement (Tepper, 1995). Abusive supervision may also influence subordinates' perceptions of the inputs that figure in their evaluations of distributive justice. For example, subordinates of abusive supervisors may have to overcome obstacles that increase the time and effort required to fulfill their responsibilities; for instance, gathering needed information from a superior who is more inclined to provide criticism than constructive feedback will take

longer. In addition, because people are likely to see unfair procedures as producing unfair outcomes—a phenomenon known as the fair process effect (Greenberg, 1990)—the procedural injustices subordinates of abusive supervisors experience may result in the perception that their outcomes are not as favorable as those of subordinates who do not have abusive supervisors. Given these possibilities, subordinates should experience distributive injustice when their supervisors are more abusive.

### **2.8.3 Theory of Attribution**

Abusive behaviour by the supervisor is undoubtedly a negative experience for the employee (Duffy et al., 2002) and elicits increased causal attribution activity (Bandura, 1997). Employees who encounter such behaviour may speculate whether it is caused by their own behavior, traits or performance, or by external factors such as situational characteristics, organizational norms, and factors related to the supervisor. Referring to negative performance feedback, Gaddis et al. (2004) suggest that feedback focusing on internal factors is likely to heighten feelings of threat and induce emotions such as anxiety, fear or hopelessness by weakening self-perceptions of coping potential and personal control. For instance, a study by Liden et al. (1988) found that subordinates' perceptions of fairness, accuracy and satisfaction with feedback were higher when leader feedback attributed success to internal causes and failure to external ones. When feedback is personalized, these authors suggest, a leader's negative affect may exaggerate subordinates' feelings of threat because they perceive themselves as the target of this affect. Similarly, other studies have shown that destructive criticism from managers generates feelings of anger and tension in subordinates (Baron, 1990).

## **2.9 Empirical Review of Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism (EC)**

The study by Pate et al. (2003) sought to examine the extent to which psychological contract breach impact on employee attitude and behaviour. The research was derived from a single case study and relates to a medium-sized industrial textile company employing approximately 600 people in 2000. The company was located in a small rural town in Britain, where it has four separate sites in the locality specialising in various aspects of the product range. An important contribution of this study to the literature is its longitudinality (over three years) and this offers a unique insight into changes to the psychological contract. The research design adopted was a mixed methodology approach (Creswell, 1994) involving both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. There were three parts to data collection: quantitative attitude survey; the analysis of absenteeism data; and interviews. The purpose of the attitude survey was to test statistically the relationship between organisational justice and psychological contract violation outcomes, as discussed in the review above. It was conducted in 2000 using a stratified random sample (structured to reflect the proportion of employees within each site). The survey questionnaires were posted to employees' home addresses along with a pre-paid return envelope, and the response rate was high at 52 per cent (Miller, 1991). To "test" the model a number of statistical techniques were used: factor analysis, stepwise regression and correlation, thereby assessing the extent to which the "causes" triggered the "outcomes". The findings suggested that triggers of violation impinged on employee attitudes but not on behaviour, trends substantiated by analysis of the organisation's absenteeism records. The qualitative data helped explain this trend and have highlighted two contextual issues. The first of

these is labour market conditions and perceptions of job insecurity and second of these is a sense of collegiality and pride in the job.

Similarly, Nadin and Colin (2011) sought to explore psychological contract from the employers' perspective, by examining violations where the employer rather than employee is the victim, an issue that has so far seldom been addressed in extant psychological contract research. In this study, 72 small business owners were studied using qualitative interviews, incorporating critical incidents technique. Interview transcriptions have been analysed using template analysis. The analysis revealed the significant disruption and damage caused by these incidents, with employers involving other employees in their response as they set about the essential repair work required. Employers actively mobilised shared understandings at the normative level of the group, reinforcing and sometimes renegotiating the employee obligations, as they seek to reaffirm their authority in the eyes of all of their employees.

Reviewing the two studies above, the researcher observed that while the work of Pate et al. (2003) was limited just one institution, they were able to gather data over a long period and also used statistical approaches that adequately measured the various constructs. Unfortunately, Nadin and Colin (2011) adopted a qualitative approach for their work even though the focus of Nadin and Colin's study was unique as they sought to explore psychological contract from the employers' perspective, by examining violations where the employer rather than employee is the victim.

Also, Kuo et al. (2014) reviewed diverse literature on gossip to develop and test hypotheses concerning some of the antecedents of gossip, with an aim of developing knowledge of the relationship between gossip and employee behaviour in the workplace. To enhance the external validity of data collection, the authors considered different types of businesses and sizes of

organisation during participant recruitment. The authors contacted 34 business companies from different industries, and 26 companies agreed to participate in the research and provide data access. The study analysed survey data in a two-stage process, from 362 employees across a range of industries in Taiwan. First, the authors identified two constructs of gossip, job-related and non-job-related gossip not previously reported and a validated scale has been created. Second, they confirmed that these different constructs of gossip impact differently on employee behaviour and therefore HR managers should be cautious about gossip in the workplace, as it can cause cynical behaviour amongst employees. The findings revealed that job related gossip predicted employee cynicism and mediated the relationship between psychological contract violation and cynicism, and that non-job-related gossip showed a similar but weaker effect to employee cynicism.

Reviewing the work of Kuo et al. (2014) alongside that of Pate et al. (2003) and Nadin and Colin (2011), the study found a significant willingness by the researchers to embrace different constructs and more statistical approaches to make their work unique. For instance, the authors contacted 34 business companies from different industries and further analysed the data in a two-stage process, from 362 employees across a range of industries. Kuo et al. also identified two constructs of gossip, job-related and non-job-related gossip which is missing in many studies.

In Chrobot-Mason (2002), the author focused on examining the psychological contract held by minority employees as it relates to diversity, and the implications of violating the contract on minority employee job satisfaction, commitment to the organization and organizational cynicism. Data was collected from 88 minority employees at four university campuses. The results of this study provide evidence to support the belief that violation of employer promises specific to diversity issues has a strong positive impact on minority employees' perceptions of breach of the

psychological contract and on employee dissatisfaction, lack of commitment, and organizational cynicism. As previous research has noted, the psychological contract is multifaceted, highly perceptual, and essentially resides in the eye of the beholder. Thus, it is likely that different groups of employees hold different expectations with regard to the work environment, future opportunities, rewards, etc., and that these unique expectations should be considered when addressing organizational retention and job satisfaction issues for specific groups of employees.

Furthermore, Suazo (2008) examined the role of psychological contract violation (PCV) as a mediating variable in the relations between psychological contract breach (PCB) and work-related attitudes and behaviors. In addition, this study aims to expand the generalizability of psychological contract theories by examining service-oriented employees rather than a population of managers as in most research on PCB. The survey was administered to 196 service-oriented employees working in the USA. Factor analyses (principal components, varimax rotation) were conducted on all the variables in the study to determine the factorial independence of the constructs. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the main effects and mediating hypotheses. The findings are consistent with the proposed mediation model of the study. PCV was found to fully mediate the relations between PCB and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intentions to quit, perceived organizational support, service delivery, service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, and participation service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. PCV was found to partially mediate the relation between PCB and loyalty service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. PCV was not found to mediate the relation between PCB and in-role job performance.

Unlike Chrobot-Mason (2002), Suazo (2008) gave a new twist to his work by examining the role of psychological contract violation (PCV) as a mediating variable in the relations between psychological contract breach (PCB) and work-related attitudes and behaviors. However, the use of a cross-sectional non-experimental design did not allow for definitive conclusions regarding causality and that the results may be influenced by common method variance.

Lemire and Rouillard (2005) also set out to investigate the impact of psychological contract infringement (independent variable) on organizational commitment, exit, voice and neglect (dependent variables) within a Canadian federal public organization located in Quebec, where individual (e.g. age), organizational (e.g. stricter rule enforcement) and situational (e.g., employment alternatives) variables are controlled. A pre-tested questionnaire (204 questions) on the psychological contract was distributed to 357 Canadian civil servants in a one site federal department. One hundred and thirty-two questionnaires were returned and considered usable for research, for a 37 per cent response rate. Bivariate analysis was performed on the various determinants and individual responses to psychological contract violation, including organizational commitment, departure designs and counterproductive behaviors. Results clearly illustrate the great complexity of the link between organizational variables and individual reactions and shed light, on a higher level, on the need to outgrow arguments that reduce bureaucracy to its mere perverse effects. These results suggest that the managerial challenge is not so much to produce a shift from an environment where the rule of law, standards and regulations prevails to an open and flexible environment where individual autonomy is prized as it is to ensure compliance with normative and regulatory constraints.

Examining the role of cultural value orientations (mastery and subjugation) in moderating the relationship between psychological contract violation (PCV) and turnover intention was the focus of Arshad (2015). The author employed a longitudinal survey method to collect data from downsizing survivors in two phases. The final sample was 281 cases. Confirmatory factor analysis and hierarchical regression models were used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that PCV is positively related to turnover intention, and the relationship is moderated by cultural value orientations. Specifically, the relationship is stronger among downsizing survivors with a high level of subjugation orientation (SO) and/or a low level of mastery orientation (MO) in comparison with downsizing survivors with a low level of SO and/or a high level of MO.



**Table 2.1 Summary of PCV and EC studies**

Author(s) and Year	Objective of Study	DV	IDV	Sample Size	Methodology	Findings
Pate, Graeme and McGoldrick (2003)	To examine the extent to which psychological contract breach impact on employee attitude and behaviour	Employee attitude and behaviour	Psychological contract violation: Distributive Justice, Procedural justice and Interactional justice	600 employees	Stratified random sampling technique.	The findings suggested that triggers of violation impinged on employee attitudes but not on behaviour, trends substantiated by analysis of the organisation’s absenteeism records. The qualitative data helped explain this trend and have highlighted two contextual issues. The first of these is labour market conditions and perceptions of job insecurity and second of these is a sense of collegiality and pride in the job.
Nadin and Colin (2011)	To explore psychological contract from the employers’ perspective, by examining violations where the employer rather than employee is the victim	Employer attitude and behaviour	Psychological contract violation	72 employees	Snowball / critical incidents technique	The analysis reveals the significant disruption and damage caused by these incidents, with employers involving other employees in their response as they set about the essential repair work required. Employers actively mobilised shared understandings at the normative level of the group, reinforcing and sometimes renegotiating the employee obligations, as they seek to reaffirm their authority in the eyes of all of their employees. This response reflects the collective psychological contracts the employer holds with each of their

						employees and their concerns to limit the fall-out/damage when one employee
						commits a violation.
Kuo et al. (2014)	To examine the antecedents of gossip, with an aim of developing knowledge of the relationship between gossip and employee behaviour in the workplace	Employee Cynicism	Psychological contract violation, Abusive supervision, Job related and Non-job related Gossip	362 employees across a range of industries in Taiwan	Snowball sampling technique	The findings revealed that job related gossip predicted employee cynicism and mediated the relationship between psychological contract violation and cynicism, and that non-job-related gossip showed a similar but weaker effect to employee cynicism.

Chrobot-Mason (2002)	To examine the psychological contract held by minority employees as it relates to diversity, and the implications of violating the contract on minority employee job satisfaction, commitment to the organization and organizational cynicism	psychological contract held by minority employees	Employee job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, organizational cynicism and organizational trust or justice	88 minority employees	Convenience sampling technique	The results of this study provide evidence to support the belief that violation of employer promises specific to diversity issues has a strong positive impact on minority employees“ perceptions of breach of the psychological contract and on employee dissatisfaction, lack of commitment, and organizational cynicism
Suazo (2008)	The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of psychological contract violation (PCV) as a mediating variable in the relations between psychological contract breach (PCB) and workrelated attitudes and behaviors.	Work-related attitudes and behaviors	psychological contract breach (PCB)	196 serviceoriented employees	Convenience sampling	PCV was found to fully mediate the relations between PCB and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intentions to quit, perceived organizational support, service delivery, service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, and participation service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. PCV was found to partially mediate the relation between PCB and loyalty

						service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. PCV was not found to mediate the relation between PCB and in-role job performance.
Lemire and Rouillard (2005)	To investigate the impact of psychological contract infringement (independent variable) on organizational commitment, exit, voice and neglect (dependent variables)	organizational commitment, exit, voice and neglect	Psychological contract infringement	132 civil servants	Convenience	Results clearly illustrate the great complexity of the link between organizational variables and individual reactions and shed light, on a higher level, on the need to outgrow arguments that reduce bureaucracy to its mere perverse effects
Arshad (2015)	To examine the role of cultural value orientations (mastery and subjugation) in moderating the relationship between psychological contract violation (PCV) and turnover intention	Turnover intention	Psychological contract violation (PCV)	281 cases	Stratified random sampling technique.	The findings revealed that PCV is positively related to turnover intention, and the relationship is moderated by cultural value orientations. Specifically, the relationship is stronger among downsizing survivors with a high level of subjugation orientation (SO) and/or a low level of mastery orientation (MO) in comparison with downsizing survivors with a low level of SO and/or a high level of MO.

## **2.10 Empirical Review of Abusive Supervision (AS) and Employee Cynicism (ECN)**

Tepper et al. (2007) directed the study at re-analysing data from Tepper's (2000) two-wave study regarding the effects of subordinates' perceptions of supervisory abuse to assess previously unexamined relationships. A total of 712 respondents were involved in the study. The sample was derived using random digit dialing to pre-call 2,415 residents of a mid-western city. Of those called, 1,073 were not eligible for the study either because they were not employed or because they did not have supervisors at work. Of the 1,342 who were eligible, 1,064 agreed to participate, 741 of whom returned completed survey questionnaires via business reply envelopes. The study found that subordinates who more rather than less strongly perceived that they had been abused by supervisors tended to use regulative maintenance tactics with higher frequency. Further, the positive relationship between abusive supervision and subordinates' psychological distress was exacerbated by subordinates' use of regulative maintenance communications, and that relationship was reduced by subordinates' use of direct maintenance communication.

In Burton et al. (2012), the author examined how supervisor stress is associated with employee-rated abusive supervision. In addition, they tested the premise that higher levels of physical exercise by supervisors can buffer the negative effects of stress on their relationship with their subordinates. A matched sample of 98 employed individuals and their direct supervisors was used to test the hypothesis. Results suggest that increased levels of supervisor-reported stress are related to the increased experience of employee-rated abusive supervision. The study also found that the relationship between supervisor stress and abusive behavior can be diminished when supervisors engage in moderate levels of physical exercise.

Stijn et al. (2014) in a replication of a multi-source study by Xu et al., the authors examined whether leader-member exchange (LMX) mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and employee work behaviors, more specifically task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors toward the organization (OCBO), and toward other individuals (OCBI). Moreover, the authors also examined whether LMX mediates this relationship when the authors focus on the two dimensions of abusive supervision, that is active-aggressive and passive-aggressive abusive supervision. The authors collected multi-source data in order to minimize common method bias. A total of 203 employees with their matched coworkers and direct leaders invited from organizations in Flanders, Belgium, to participate in the study. One-hundred fourteen matched surveys were returned, yielding an overall response rate of 56.2 percent. After checking for missing values for the variables used in this study (abusive supervision, LMX, performance, OCBO, and OCBI), 101 of the 114 matched surveys could be used for data analyses. The authors conducted regression analyses, Sobel tests, and bootstrapping techniques. The authors found support that LMX mediates the negative relationship between abusive supervision and OCBO and OCBI. However, the authors could not replicate the mediating role of LMX in the association between abusive supervision and employees' performance. Similar results were obtained when the data were analyzed with the active-aggressive and passive-aggressive abusive supervision subscales. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the study, this study does not allow the authors to draw causal conclusions regarding the proposed relationships.

Again, Tepper (2000) examined the consequences of abusive supervisor behaviour. The study tested the hypotheses with data collected at two points in time. The substantive component of the time 1 survey contained measures of abusive supervision, perceived job mobility, interactional justice, procedural justice, and distributive justice. At time 2, I measured subordinates' voluntary

turnover (quitting their jobs), job satisfaction, life satisfaction, organizational commitment, conflict between work and family, and psychological distress. As expected, subordinates who perceived their supervisors were more abusive were more likely to quit their jobs. For subordinates who remained with their jobs, abusive supervision was associated with lower job and life satisfaction, lower normative and affective commitment, and higher continuance commitment, conflict between work and family, and psychological distress. Organizational justice mediated most of these effects, and job mobility moderated some of the deleterious effects of abusive supervision.

Furthermore, Yagil, (2005) positioned his study to look at employees' attribution of abusive supervisory behaviours. The study was constructed with a convenience sample consisting of 289 employees (64% women) representing a variety of jobs: customer service representatives and salespeople (20%), technicians (20%), human resources (25%), clerical (16%), and teachers, nurses, waiters/waitresses and security (19%). This two-part research project examines self-serving attributions by employees in reaction to supervisor's negative interpersonal behaviors in the workplace. The first study (N = 289) examined internal and external attributions in reaction to negative supervisor's behaviors compared to positive behaviors, and the moderating effect of organizational empowerment. The respondents attributed positive behaviors internally and negative behaviors externally. However, empowerment did not affect the attributions. The second study (N = 252) examined the relationship of attributions of blame to the victim in relation to being the victim of negative behaviors as compared to being the perpetrator. Again, negative supervisor's

behaviours were related to attribution of blame to factors external to the victim. However, the employee's own negative behaviors were positively related to attribution of blame to the victim.

Next is the study by Gregory et al. (2012) which sought to investigate the boundary conditions of the negative relationship between abusive supervision and OCBs, by investigating time and money (dyadic duration and pay satisfaction) as potential moderating variables to the abusive supervision-OCBs relationship. A sample of 357 bank employees in Kazakhstan was used to test Hypotheses. Results indicate that the negative relationship between abusive supervision and OCBs is more pronounced when employees have been supervised by a particular manager for a longer period of time, as well as when employees are less satisfied with their level of compensation.



**Table 2.2 Summary of Abusive supervision and Employee Cynicism**

Author(s) and Year	Objective of Study	DV	IDV	Sample Size	Methodology	Findings
Tepper et al. (2007)	To examine Abusive Supervision, Upward Maintenance Communication, And Subordinates' Psychological Distress	Subordinates' Psychological Distress	Abusive Supervision, Upward Maintenance Communication	712 respondents	Random sampling technique, Confirmatory factor analysis.	The study found that subordinates who more rather than less strongly perceived that they had been abused by supervisors tended to use regulative maintenance tactics with higher frequency. Further, the positive relationship between abusive supervision and subordinates' psychological distress was exacerbated by subordinates' use of regulative maintenance communications, and that relationship was reduced by subordinates' use of direct maintenance communication
Burton et al. (2012)	To examine how supervisor stress is associated with employee-rated abusive supervision	abusive supervision	supervisor stress	A matched sample of 98 employed individuals and their direct supervisors	Means, standard deviations ,and correlations	Results suggest that increased levels of supervisor-reported stress are related to the increased experience of employee-rated abusive supervision. The study also found that the relationship between supervisor stress and abusive behavior can be diminished when supervisors engage in moderate levels of physical exercise.
Stijn, Camps and Stouten (2014)	To examine whether leader-member exchange (LMX) mediates the relationship between	abusive supervision and employee	leader-member exchange abusive	101 employees and their matched	regression analyses, Sobel tests, and	The authors found support that LMX mediates the negative relationship between abusive supervision and OCBO

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	abusive supervision and employee work behaviors, more specifically task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors toward the organization (OCBO), and toward other individuals (OCBI).	work behaviors, more specifically task performance	supervision	coworkers and direct leaders	bootstrapping techniques	and OCBI
Tepper (2000)	To examine the consequences of abusive supervisor behavior	Voluntary turnover (quitting their jobs), job satisfaction, life satisfaction, organizational commitment, conflict between work and family, and psychological distress	Abusive supervision, perceived job mobility, interactional justice, procedural justice, and distributive justice	Type 1 Sample: 741 individuals  Type 2 sample: 475 individuals	Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)  and  Logistic Regression Analysis	As expected, subordinates who perceived their supervisors were more abusive were more likely to quit their jobs. For subordinates who remained with their jobs, abusive supervision was associated with lower job and life satisfaction, lower normative and affective commitment, and higher continuance commitment, conflict between work and family, and psychological distress. Organizational justice mediated most of these effects, and job mobility moderated some of the deleterious effects of abusive supervision.

Yagil, (2005)	To examine internal and external attributions in reaction to negative supervisor's behaviors compared to positive behaviors, and the moderating effect of	supervisor's behaviors	internal and external attributions	Type 1 Sample: 289 individuals  Type 2 sample: 252 individuals	Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations	The study found that negative supervisor's behaviors were related to attribution of blame to factors external to the victim. However, the employee's own negative behaviors were positively related to attribution of blame to the
	organizational empowerment  To examine the relationship of attributions of blame to the victim in relation to being the victim of negative behaviors as compared to being the perpetrator					victim.
Gregory et al. (2012)	To investigate the boundary conditions of the negative relationship between abusive supervision and organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs), by investigating time and money (dyadic duration and pay satisfaction) as potential moderating variables to the abusive supervision-OCBs relationship	Organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs)	Abusive supervision	Sample of 357 bank employees in Kazakhstan	Harman's single-factor, correlation and Regression	Results indicate that the negative relationship between abusive supervision and OCBs is more pronounced when employees have been supervised by a particular manager for a longer period of time, as well as when employees are less satisfied with their level of compensation.

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## 2.11 Empirical Review of Gossip and Employee Cynicism (EC)

A study by Dijkstra (2014) sought to argue that it is important for conflict management research to start focusing on leader–follower conflict as a “special case” of conflict because the relationship between leaders and followers is, by definition, characterized by divergence of interest and, second, because it is asymmetric in terms of power and vulnerability. Moreover, it is argued that conflict management research should start to examine the various behaviors that people engage in as a response to conflict, in a broader sense, than has been done until now. Research on conflict management increasingly recognizes the significance of interpersonal relations in the workplace. As a case in point, a survey study among 97 Dutch police officers is presented. Leaders’ conflict management behaviours as assessed by followers are measured. In addition, followers’ experienced interactional justice and the extent to which they indicated that they would engage in negative and/or positive gossip about their leader was measured. Results demonstrate that more forcing and avoiding leader conflict management behavior was related to more negative and less positive gossip about leaders. Moreover, more problem-solving and yielding leader conflict management behavior was related to less negative and more positive gossip. All relationships between leader conflict management behavior and follower gossip were mediated by followers’ experienced interactional justice.

Similarly, Workman (2014) investigated the tendency to gossip, self-monitoring and fashion leadership among young adult consumers in two cultures: US and South Korean. Survey was conducted using a convenience sample of 690 (278 US; 412 Korean) university students. Data were analyzed using MANOVA, ANOVA, descriptive statistics,  $X^2$  and Cronbach’s alpha reliability. The findings revealed that Compared with US participants, Korean participants scored higher on tendency to gossip and lower on self-monitoring, the two subscales of self-monitoring

(ability to modify self-presentation; sensitivity to the appearance of others), and fashion innovativeness and opinion leadership. In both cultures, fashion leaders scored higher on selfmonitoring and tendency to gossip than fashion followers, and high self-monitors scored higher on tendency to gossip than low self-monitors. Results of this research supported Hofstede's (1980) theory of cultural dimensions as appropriate for examining differences among fashion consumers from different countries

Grant (2000) explored the issue of rumour and gossip in organisations. Given that rumour and gossip can break the harmony of the workplace unless well managed, it is rather surprising that they have not been sufficiently examined in management and organisational studies. In addition to providing an analysis of the role played by rumour and gossip within organisations, including, but not limited to, its origin, hidden reasons and its management, the role of gender is examined. The research revealed that despite the commonly-held and entrenched view that women are largely responsible for instigating and perpetuating organisational rumour and gossip, a review of the evidence fails to support this claim.

Kuo et al. (2014) adopted social information theory and social cognitive theory to interpret the diverse literature on gossip, and to develop and test hypotheses concerning some of the antecedents of gossip, with an aim of developing knowledge of the relationship between gossip and employee behaviour in the workplace. The study analysed survey data in a two-stage process, from 362 employees across a range of industries in Taiwan. The findings revealed that job-related gossip predicted employee cynicism and mediated the relationship between psychological contract violation and cynicism, and that non-job-related gossip showed a similar but weaker effect to employee cynicism. The contribution made by this work is of value; first, the authors identified two constructs of gossip, job-related and non-job-related gossip not previously reported and a

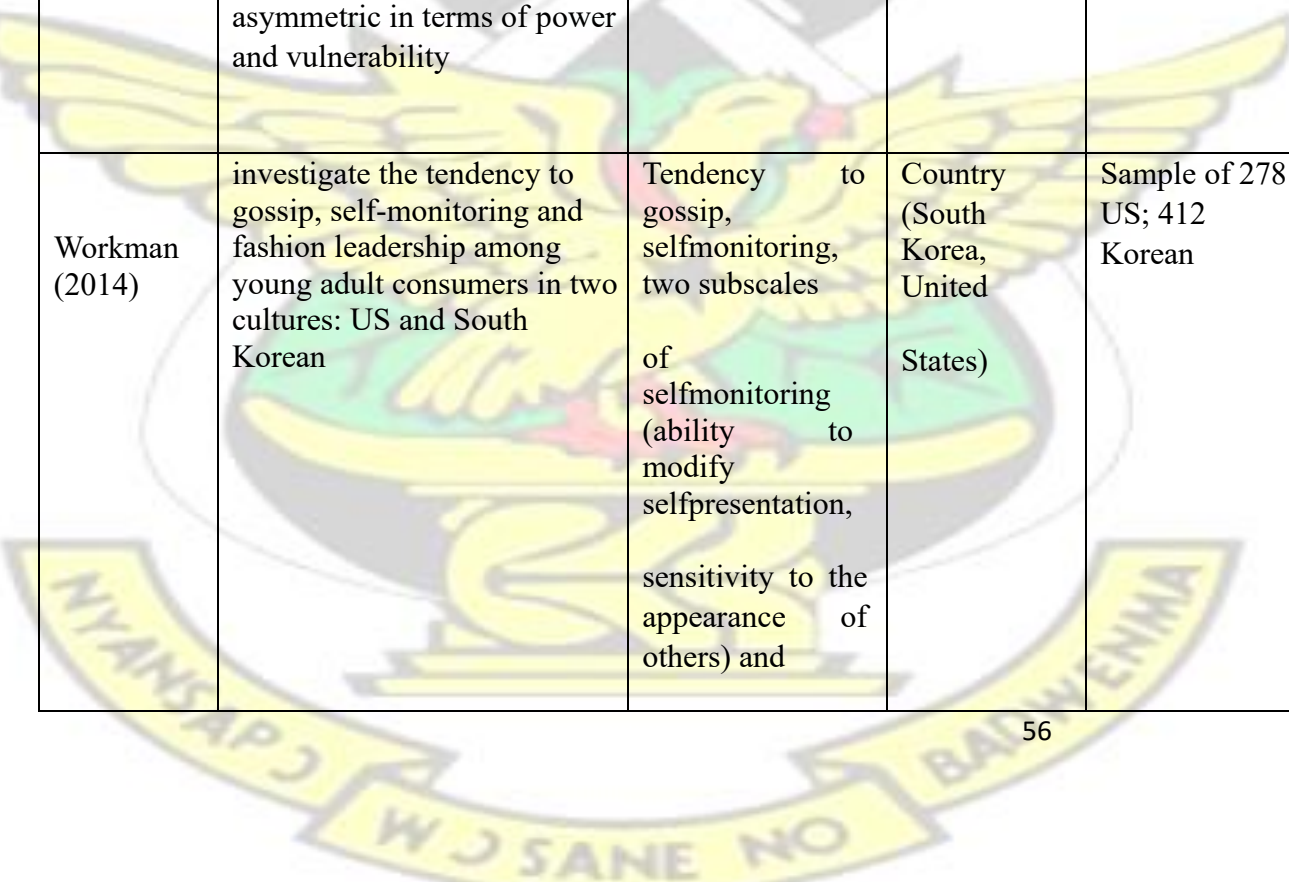
validated scale has been created. Second, we have confirmed that these different constructs of gossip impact differently on employee behaviour and therefore HR managers should be cautious about gossip in the workplace, as it can cause cynical behaviour amongst employees.

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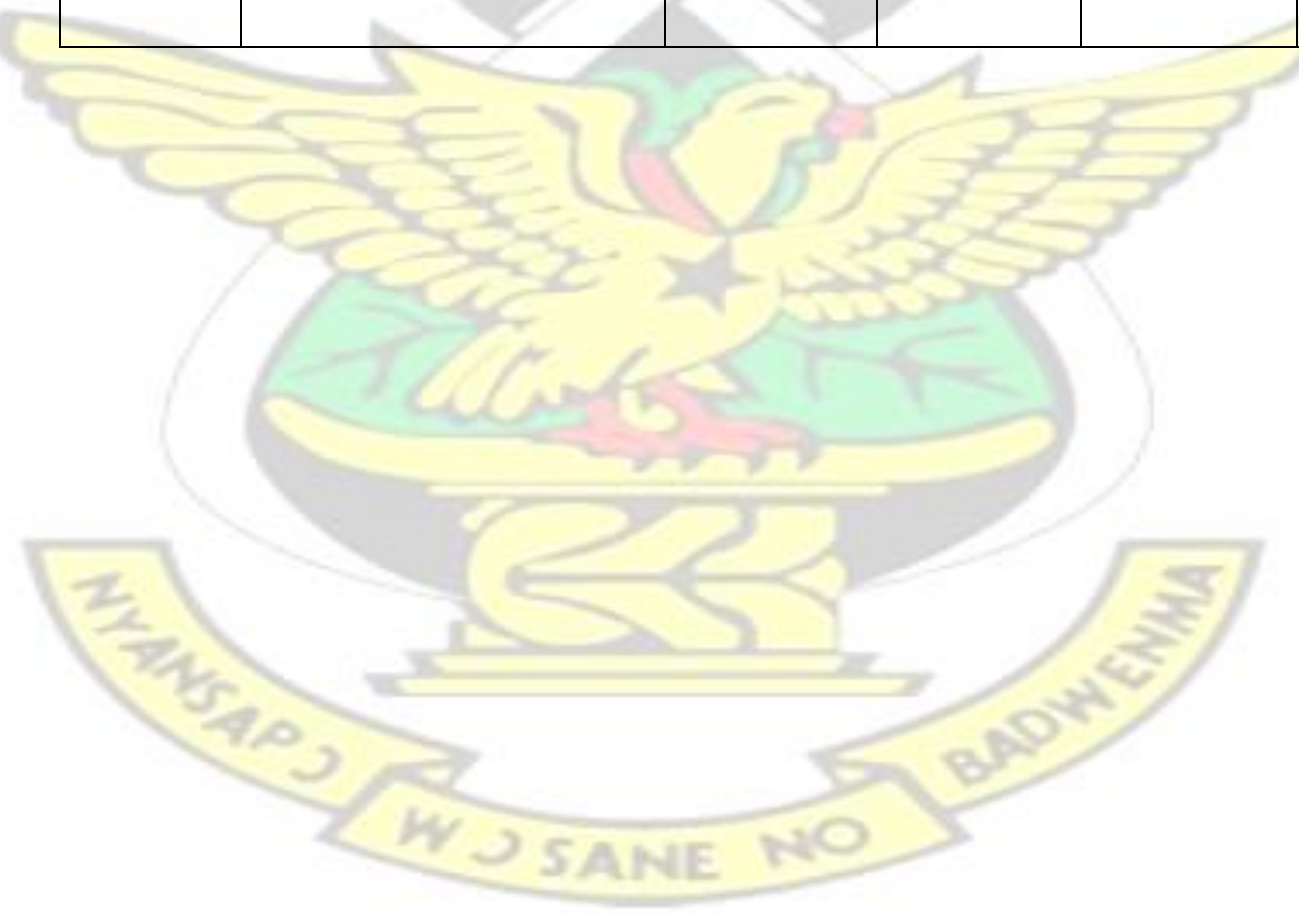


**Table 2.3 Summary of Gossip and Employee Cynicism (EC) studies**

Author(s) and Year	Objective of Study	DV	IDV	Sample Size	Methodology	Findings
Dijkstra (2014)	To argue that it is important for conflict management research to start focusing on leader–follower conflict as a “special case” of conflict because the relationship between leaders and followers is, by definition, characterized by divergence of interest and, second, because it is asymmetric in terms of power and vulnerability	interactional justice,  Gossip	Conflict with the boss	A survey study among 97 Dutch police officers	Means, standard deviations, regression and zero-order correlations	Results demonstrate that more forcing and avoiding leader conflict management behavior was related to more negative and less positive gossip about leaders. Moreover, more problemsolving and yielding leader conflict management behavior was related to less negative and more positive gossip. All relationships between leader conflict management behavior and follower gossip were mediated by followers’ experienced interactional justice.
Workman (2014)	investigate the tendency to gossip, self-monitoring and fashion leadership among young adult consumers in two cultures: US and South Korean	Tendency to gossip, selfmonitoring, two subscales  of selfmonitoring (ability to modify selfpresentation, sensitivity to the appearance of others) and	Country (South Korea, United States)	Sample of 278 US; 412 Korean	Convenience sampling	The findings revealed that Compared with US participants, Korean participants scored higher on tendency to gossip and lower on self-monitoring, the two subscales of self-monitoring (ability to modify self-presentation; sensitivity to the appearance of others), and fashion innovativeness and opinion leadership. In both cultures, fashion leaders scored higher on self-monitoring and tendency to gossip than fashion followers, and high self-monitors scored higher on tendency to gossip than low self-monitors.



		fashion innovativeness and opinion leadership				
Kuo et al. (2014)	To examine the relationship between gossip and employee behaviour in the workplace	Employee Cynicism	Job-related and Non-job related gossip	362 employees across a range of industries in Taiwan	Snowball sampling technique	The findings revealed that job related gossip predicted employee cynicism and mediated the relationship between psychological contract violation and cynicism, and that non-job-related gossip showed a similar but weaker effect to employee cynicism.



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## 2.12 Behaviour of Health Workers

Quality of care refers to all aspects of treatment that are beneficial to the patient (Chalkley and Malcomson, 2000). When the beneficial aspect occurs during the process of treatment it is referred to as process quality. Attitude of health care workers towards patients, waiting period in the hospital, and the way in which treatment is communicated to patients are important examples of process quality of care. Bad attitude of health workers could intimidate patients and prevent them from asking relevant questions that could make treatment beneficial. Long waiting periods for treatment represent opportunity cost to a lot of patients especially those in the informal sector who may have to give up a whole day's income in order to seek care in the hospital.

Besides, long waiting period delay treatment and hence can deteriorate health status. Finally, when treatment, such as drug dosage, is not clearly communicated to the patient, the resulting wrong treatment could deteriorate patient's health. All three types of quality are underprovided in the Ghanaian health system. The attitude of health workers have been described by the literature as rude, uncaring, and indifferent (Ghana Health Service (GHS), 2007; Bannerman et al., 2010). In 2006, the GHS commissioned several researches on quality of care. The poor attitude of health care workers and long waiting periods were the most common complaints made by patients (GHS, 2007). Health facilities have even been advised to keep unfriendly workers away from patients (Owusu- Ampratwum, 2011).

For many, the underlining issues about health workers behaviour relates to psychological violation, abusive supervision and gossip. Studies suggest that cynicism among employees emanates from the conception that their employers have failed to keep promises made to them.

Health workers are also exposed to different health conditions and all manner of people. To this effect, it is not surprising to find that gossip thrives among health professionals. These gossips may be job-related or non-job related.

It is also emphasized that cynic workers, who do not make things easy both for the organization and themselves, experience apathy, alienation, despair, disappointment and have a higher level of emotional exhaustion (Kutani et al. 2010). Thus there is a close relationship between gossip and cynicism employee. As an example, Maslach et al. (1981:99) define burnout as emotional exhaustion and cynicism syndrome of people. Maslach especially speaks of “negative attitudes and cynical feelings about an individual” mentioning depersonalization dimension of cynicism.

### **2.13 Conceptual Model and Hypothesis**

This part of the study presents the hypotheses and hypothetical research model for the research.

#### **2.13.1 Relationship between Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism (EC)**

Employee cynicism is another potentially negative work outcome variable that has not been extensively investigated in the psychological contract literature. As identified in literature, Dean et al. (1998) define employee cynicism as a negative attitude toward one’s employing organization, comprising three dimensions: (1) a belief that the organization lacks integrity; (2) negative affect toward the organization; and (3) tendencies to disparaging and critical behaviors toward the organization that are consistent with these beliefs and affect. Support for the inclusion of this construct in the present study comes from Andersson (1996) who proposed that unmet obligations and broken promises of psychological contracts are the primary determinants of employee cynicism. While cynicism toward work and job dissatisfaction share feelings of

frustration, Andersson (1996) argues that cynicism is broader and also includes feelings of hopelessness, disillusionment, and distrust toward others.

Employee cynicism may be a particularly important outcome variable to consider when examining employer obligations that include promises about diversity efforts. The emotional effects of a contract violation may ultimately result in cynical attitudes toward the organization. Morrison and Robinson (1997) argue that the negative feeling associated with a violation in one's psychological contract is experienced at a deep visceral level. Because psychological contract violation is by definition a highly perceptual and subjective interpretation of events, health workers may feel particularly let down and mistreated when promises remain unfulfilled. Thus, it is proposed that the more health workers perceive their employer to have failed on promises made to them (psychological contract violation), the higher the potential for employee cynicism.

***H1: Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) positively and significantly affects Employee Cynicism (ECN)***

**2.13.2 Relationship between Abusive Supervision (AS) and Employee Cynicism (EC)** Central to social exchange is the concept of reciprocity: individuals are sensitive to valued outcomes they receive and they are motivated to reciprocate these outcomes (Blau, 1964). The quality of the social exchange between supervisors and employees is denoted as Leader – Member – Exchange (LMX) (Graen, 1976). When employees perceive the relationship with their leader as valuable they may reciprocate by, for example, displaying more positive behaviours.

For example, LMX has been found to be positively related to employee behaviour (Bauer and Green, 1996; Rosen et al., 2011). In contrast, when employees perceive a lack of valued outcomes by their supervisor, they are expected to reciprocate in a negative way in order to restore the balance. For example, employees who are confronted with low LMX are typically unwilling to go

beyond behaviors specified in their employment contract (Moss et al., 2009). Thus it is proposed that there is a strong correlation between abusive supervision and Employee Cynicism.

***H2: Abusive Supervision (AS) positively and significantly predicts Employee Cynicism (EC)***

### **2.13.3 Relationship between Psychological Contract Violation and Gossip (JRG & NJRG)**

Attempts have been made to conceptualise gossip into two arms: job-related gossip (JRG) and non-job-related gossip (NJG). The ultimate question is what conditions provide a fertile ground for gossip to thrive? This work attempts to use psychological contract violation as a predictor of gossip. The assumption is that the more workers perceive their employers to have failed on their obligations, the more likely they are to discuss such issues in the work place (job related gossip).

Again, do we expect workers who suffer some form of psychological contract violation to engage in non-job related gossip? The answer is not straightforward as non-job related gossip is influenced by a multiplicity of factors. However, when workers have fallen out of love with their organisations, they more likely would engage in non-job related gossip as a way of reducing the frustration (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007; Dunbar, 2004). In any case, whether a health worker engages in job related or non-job related gossip, productive work hours are wasted. The effect of psychological contract violation is however expected to be positive but insignificant. It is thus hypothesized that:

***H3: Psychological contract violation (PCV) significantly and positively predicts job related gossip (JRG)***

***H4: Psychological contract violation positively predicts non-job related gossip.***

#### **2.13.4 Relationship between Abusive Supervision and Gossip (JRG & NJRG)**

Abusive supervision as defined in literature denotes “subordinates” perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact” (Tepper, 2000, p. 178). Examples include a supervisor making negative comments about an employee to other members of the organization, or telling that a subordinate’s thoughts or feelings are stupid. Bies and Tripp (2000; 1998) also identified the following manifestations of abusive supervision: public criticism, loud and angry tantrums, rudeness, inconsiderate actions, and coercion.

As explained in psychological contract violation and gossip relationships, the researcher further exogenised abusive supervision as predictor of both job related and non-job related gossip. As shown in literature, abusive supervision is associated with a variety of negative consequences for the organization, as well as for the employees (Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2007). Health workers who suffer abuses are expected to report or talk about such unpleasant experiences at the work place (job related gossip). For some workers, it is dangerous to discuss these abuses with others at the workplace because of fear of adverse consequences especially if supervisors have much power. Abusive supervision has detrimental consequences with regard to employees’ performance (Harris et al., 2007) and their organizational citizenship behaviors (Aryee et al., 2007; Zellars et al., 2002). In order to better understand the relation between abusive supervision and its negative consequences, researchers have drawn on mechanisms such as perceived fairness and control (reactance theory), but also on social exchange (Aryee et al., 2007; Mitchell and Ambrose, 2007; Thau et al., 2009). It is however important to understand the influence of culture on psychological contract violation and gossip relationships. In most sub-Saharan African countries

people are careful about reporting abuses. The syndrome of „enye hwe“ or „give it to God“ is much prevalent. Thus it was hypothesized that:

***H5: Abusive supervision positively predicts job related gossip (JRG)***

***H6: Abusive supervision insignificantly predicts non-job related gossip.***

**2.13.5 Relationship between Gossip (JRG & NJRG) and Employee Cynicism (EC)** Bandura's (1988) work on social cognitive theory indicates that portions of an individual's knowledge acquisition are directly related to observing others within social interactions, experiences and external influences. People do not learn new behaviours solely by trying them and either succeeding or failing, but rather, people learn and behave by watching what others do, by listening to what others say. In a recent study, Kuo et al. (2013) found that organisational disidentification (a type of alienation) is correlated with workplace deviance. This finding offers a preliminary but crucial clue to supporting the gossip–cynicism relationship. Although social information and social cognitive theories differ in nature, both theories provide support for the proposed gossip–cynicism relationship. Social information theory helps explain the foundation of gossip–cynicism relationship, whereas social cognitive theory helps clarify the mechanism of how and why negative gossip may lead to ECN. Thus it is suggested that JRG and NJG differ in their relationship with ECN. To begin with, as NJG is not related to the job, employees tend to pay less attention to NJG and may not respond to the source of gossip vehemently. Again, as NJG is more related to personal life, employees may not attribute the pressure of that gossip such as colleagues or the organisation. Different from NJG, JRG may have higher possibility to influence employees' perception and their behaviours at work, as it is linked to their job and the people they work with. Thus, two specific hypotheses are proposed as follows:

***H7: Job-related Gossip positively and significantly predicts Employee Cynicism (EC)***

***H8: Non-job-related gossip significantly affects Employee Cynicism (EC)***

#### **2.13.4 The mediation role of Gossip (JRG & NJRG) in the relationship between Psychological Contract Violation and Employee Cynicism (EC)**

The relationship between psychological contract violation and ECN may be explained by social exchange theory (Homans, 1958). As discussed in literature, an employee develops and maintains a transactional psychological contract by exchanging transactional resources such as work productivity (performance) for a certain amount of payment (reward). An employee also develops and maintains a relational contract by exchanging relational resources such as proactive work behaviour and loyalty for better quality relationships with leaders and managers (Dulac, 2008). When violations occur (a sign of unbalanced exchange), individuals are prone to feel frustrated and disappointed about their organisation. Such frustration and disappointment may consequently convert into JRG. Very likely, when the organisation violates its obligations, the employees are likely to feel frustrated at work, have poor attitude towards their jobs and behave negatively against the organisation; this may take the form of cynicism attitude and behaviour against their colleagues and organisation. The employees may also use gossips to cope with their negative emotions and feelings against their organisations. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

***H9: Job related gossip positively and significantly mediates the relationship Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism (EC).***

***H10: Non-job related gossip significantly mediates the relationship Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism (EC).***

### **2.13.5 The mediation role of gossip (JRG & NJRG) in the relationship Abusive Supervision (AS) and Employee Cynicism**

When exchange theory is applied to an abusive supervisor-subordinate relationship, the abused employee may perceive that they have received less valuable resources from their supervisor (e.g. Intimidation, threats, or inappropriate expressions of anger) than would an employee whose supervisor demonstrates supportive leadership behaviours (e.g. Coaching or mentoring). In order to bring an abused employee's relationship with the abusive supervisor back into equilibrium, the employee may either seek to reduce the value of the intangible resources that they provide to their manager (e.g. Motivation, commitment, OCBs, etc.), or maybe even exhibit counterproductive behaviours such as gossip that will allow them to "get even" (Richard et al., 2002; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). Although some employees may respond to abusive supervision with destructive behaviours such as organizational deviance (Thau et al., 2009; Tepper et al., 2008), the power differential between supervisors and subordinates makes it unlikely that the subordinates will respond with identical action to their more powerful abusers (Zellars et al., 2002). This study hypothesized that:

***H11: Job related gossip significantly mediates the relationship Abusive supervision (AS) and Employee Cynicism (EC).***

***H12: Non-job related gossip significantly mediates the relationship Abusive supervision (AS) and Employee Cynicism (EC).***

To consolidate the five latent variables and clarify the associations between the research variables, an integrative framework (hypothetic research model) has been developed (see Figure

2.3 below).

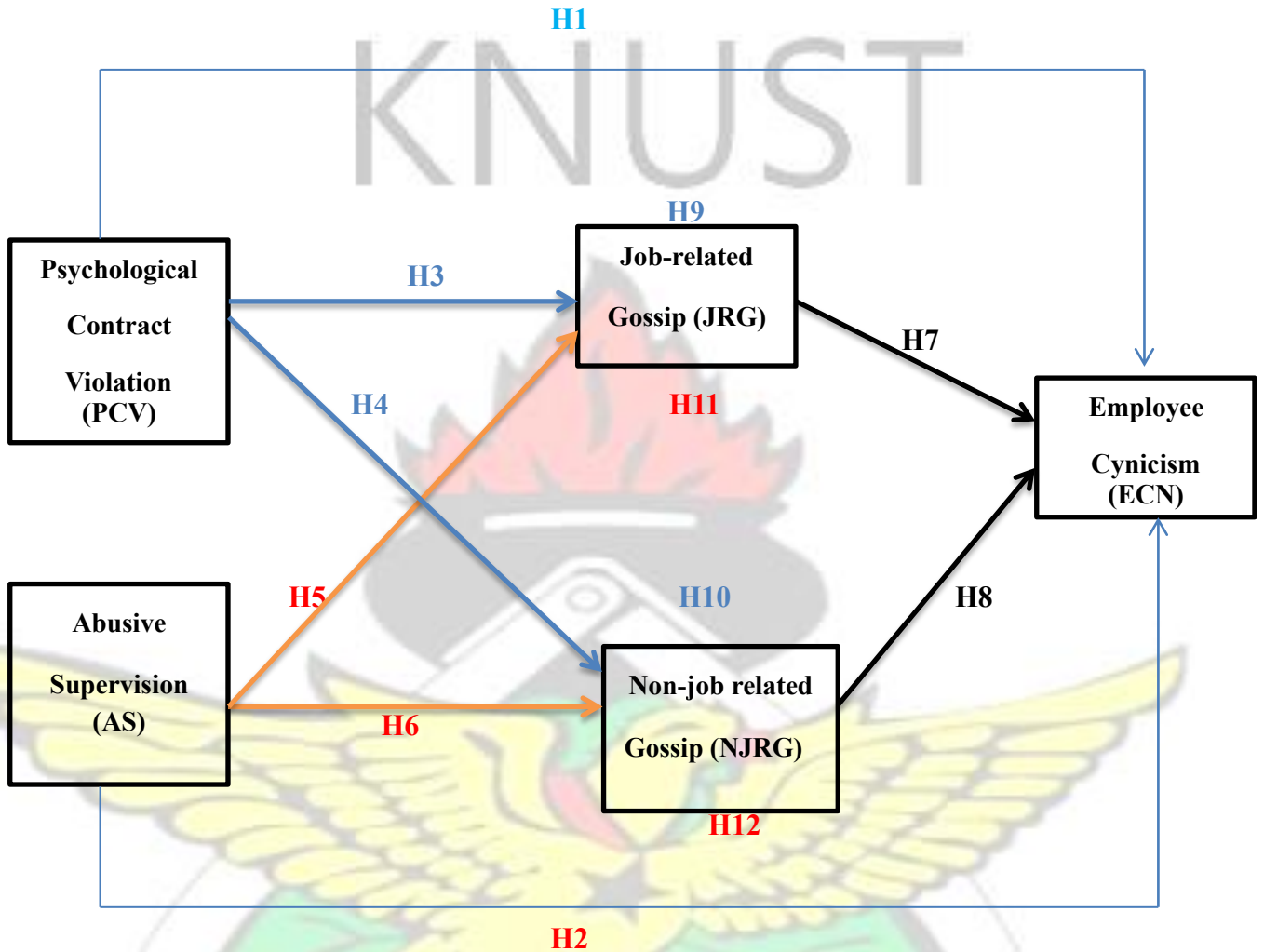


Figure 2.3: Modified hypothetical research model adapted from: Kuo et al. (2014)

This framework is informative in several ways. First, it proposes a new concept of workplace gossip comprising two dimensions: JRG and NJG. Second, it uses two antecedents of gossip:

PCV and AS. Specifically, PCV predicts JRG and ECN, whereas AS predicts JRG, NJG and ECN. Finally, JRG mediates the relationship between PCV and ECN, and NJG does not mediate the relationship between AS and ECN.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework for the study. It outlines the research methods used to address the research questions posed in the introductory chapter. The also chapter deliberates on the research philosophy underpinning the study. Subdivisions in the chapter include research design, data collection, sample selection as well as details of the statistical techniques used.

#### 3.2 Research Theory/Approach

Every research is supported by a research theory or approach. Largely, researchers have identified two kinds of research theory; deductive and inductive (Gill and Johnson, 2010). Inductive research begins with the researcher collecting data that are relevant to the area of interest. Having garnered considerable amount of data, the researcher attempts to create patterns in the data. On the basis of these patterns, the researcher develops a theory that could elucidate those patterns. This therefore suggests that when a researcher takes an inductive approach, He starts with a set of observations and then move from those particular experiences to a more general set of propositions about those experiences (Schutt, 2009); thus to suggest that the researcher moves from data to theory or from the specific to the general.

Deductive research approach on the other hand allows the research to establish a hypothesis by using a theory. The researcher then collects variety of data and information, test the hypothesis in order to reject or confirm to resolve the issue (Gill and Johnson, 2010). The various steps of using

deductive approach are development of theory, hypothesis, observation through data and information and confirmation. A deductive approach to research has been typically associated with scientific investigation. Unlike the inductive research, deductive approach is underpinned by positivism and is also associated with explanatory and quantitative research.

On the premise of research the hypotheses developed, this study adopts a deductive research approach. The reason for the adoption of the deductive approach is that the researcher reviewed the existing theories of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision and gossip and empirical studies done in both developed and emerging economies to establish their relationship with employee cynicism variables based on the theories. Based on the review of the existing theories, various hypotheses were developed to establish pattern of relationships between psychological contract violation on employee cynicism, abusive supervision and employee cynicism, psychological contract violation and gossip among health workers in Ghana, the mediation of gossip between abusive supervision (AS) and employee cynicism relationship, the effect of gossip on employee cynicism among health workers in Ghana, the mediation of gossip between psychological contract violation (PCV) and employee cynicism relationship, effect of gossip on abusive supervision among health workers in Ghana. These hypotheses were tested based on the data collected from 424 health workers in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

### **3.3 Research Philosophy**

There is increasing debate on the best means to test a social phenomenon. There is seemingly some consensus by to suggest that social phenomenon can best be studied based on the investigator's social research philosophy or epistemological and ontological positions (Schutt, 2009).

Researchers have sought to distinguish between two main research philosophies: positivism and interpretivism.

As a philosophy, positivism adheres to the view that only “factual” knowledge gained through observation (the senses), including measurement, is trustworthy. In positivism studies the role of the researcher is limited to data collection and interpretation through objective approach and the research findings are usually observable and quantifiable (Collins, 2010). In positivism studies the researcher is independent from the study and there are no provisions for human interests within the study. Crowther and Lancaster (2008) inform that as a general rule, positivist studies usually adopt deductive approach, whereas inductive research approach is usually associated with a phenomenology philosophy. In summary, studies with positivist paradigm are based purely on facts and consider the world to be external and objective.

The position of interpretivism in relation to ontology and epistemology is that interpretivists believe the reality is multiple and relative (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain that these multiple realities also depend on other systems for meanings, which make it even more difficult to interpret in terms of fixed realities (Neuman, 2000). The knowledge acquired in this discipline is socially constructed rather than objectively determined (Carson et al., 2001, p.5) and perceived (Hirschman, 1985).

This study follows a positivist research philosophy; this is because the study assumes a controlled and structural approach for the research.

### 3.4 Research Purpose

Three main types of research designs identified by Saunders et al. (2007) include exploratory, descriptive and explanatory studies. Exploratory research, as the name suggests, intends merely to explore the research questions and does not intend to offer final and conclusive solutions to existing problems. It is conducted in order to determine the nature of the problem, exploratory research is not intended to provide conclusive evidence, but helps to have a better understanding of the problem (Brown, 2006). Saunders et al. (2007, p.134) warn that when conducting exploratory research, the researcher ought to be willing to change his/her direction as a result of revelation of new data and new insights. Exploratory research design does not aim to provide the final and conclusive answers to the research questions, but merely explores the research topic with varying levels of depth. “Exploratory research tends to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done” (Brown, 2006, p.43).

Explanatory research sometimes referred to as analytical study seeks to identify any causal links between the factors or variables that pertain to the research problem (Saunders et al., 2007). Such research is also very structured in nature. Descriptive research on the other hand can either be quantitative or qualitative. It can involve collections of quantitative information that can be tabulated along a continuum in numerical form, such as scores on a test or the number of times a person chooses to use a-certain feature of a multimedia program, or it can describe categories of information such as gender or patterns of interaction when using technology in a group situation (Hakes, and Neal, 1994). Descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection (Glass & Hopkins, 1984). It often uses visual aids such as graphs and charts to aid the reader in understanding the data distribution. Because the human mind cannot extract the full import of a large mass of raw data,

descriptive statistics are very important in reducing the data to manageable form. When in-depth, narrative descriptions of small numbers of cases are involved, the research uses description as a tool to organize data into patterns that emerge during analysis. Description emerges following creative exploration, and serves to organize the findings in order to fit them with explanations, and then test or validate those explanations (Krathwohl, 1993).

This study adopts both descriptive and explanatory research designs because it allows the researcher to compare descriptive results and further examine relationships that exists between factors or variables that pertain to the research problem. The use of both descriptive and explanatory designs are appropriate because they yield rich data that leads to appropriate analysis on the relationship between psychological contract violation on employee cynicism, abusive supervision and employee cynicism, psychological contract violation and gossip among health workers in Ghana, the mediation of gossip between abusive supervision (AS) and employee cynicism relationship, the effect of gossip on employee cynicism among health workers in Ghana, the mediation of gossip between psychological contract violation (PCV) and employee cynicism relationship, effect of gossip on abusive supervision among health workers in Ghana.

### **3.5 Research Strategy**

Two main strategies have been proposed to study about social phenomenon. This includes qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative approach tends to approximate phenomena from a larger number of individuals using survey methods (Bryman, 2008). It also emphasises relatively large-scale and representative sets of data, and is often perceived as being about the gathering of 'facts'. Quantitative research assumes that social reality is objective and external to the individual. Quantitative research is also described as „positivism“ (Duffy, 1985). Further

Quantitative methodologies test theory deductively from existing knowledge, through developing hypothesised relationships and proposed outcomes for study.

The qualitative approach to research on the other hand is focused on understanding a phenomenon from a closer perspective. On an epistemological level, there is no access to reality independent of our minds, no external referent by which to compare claims of truth (Smith, 1983). The investigator and the object of study are interactively linked so that findings are mutually created within the context of the situation which shapes the inquiry (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). This suggests that reality has no existence prior to the activity of investigation, and reality ceases to exist if it is no longer focused on (Smith, 1983). The emphasis of qualitative research is on process and meanings. Techniques used in qualitative studies include in-depth and focus group interviews and participant observation. Samples are not meant to represent large populations. Rather, small, purposeful samples of articulate respondents are used because they can provide important information, not because they are representative of a larger group (Reid, 1996).

This study adopts quantitative strategy because it follows the process of quantitative research methods. The study started with theories on psychological contract violation, abusive supervision, gossip and their relationship with employee cynicism which signifies a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research. In line with quantitative method, several hypotheses were formulated based on the examination of various constructs and their relationship with cynicism.

### **3.6 Population of the Study**

The hypotheses were tested with data collected from staff of health institutions in Ghana. Health workers were asked to provide information about abusive supervision, psychological contract

violation, gossips and employee cynicism. Generally the scope of the research was limited to selected health institutions in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The Ashanti Region is the second densely populated region after Greater Accra and it harbours a significant number of health care institutions. There are five hundred and thirty (530) health facilities in the region. The Ghana Health Service operates about 32% of all health facilities in the region. Kumasi has the highest number of facilities of 38% (<http://www.ghanahealthservice.org>).

**Table 3.1 List of hospitals in Ashanti Region**

Type of Hospital	Population
Government	170
Mission	71
Private	281
Quasi Government	08
<b>Total</b>	<b>530</b>

**Source:** (<http://www.ghanahealthservice.org>)

### 3.7 Sample Selection and Sampling Procedure

The sample consisted of 424 health workers from Eight (8) selected hospitals in the Ashanti Region. A similar study conducted by Kuo et al. (2014) used a sample 362 from five industries: manufacturing (42), finance (50), IT (44), services (131) and civil departments (89). For the purpose of this study, the hospitals were grouped into two categories: Type 1 and 2. Type 1 hospitals are those found within the Kumasi Metropolis whilst Type 2 describes hospitals outside the capital of the Ashanti Region, Kumasi.

**Table 3.2: Sample size distribution**

Hospital	Population (ASHANTI)	Staff (full time)	Sample	Percentage

TYPE 1 (Kumasi):	201	5,600	<b>S= 262</b> (KNUST 80, KATH 120, Emena 32 & Ejisu 30)	5%
TYPE 2 (Outside Kumasi):	329	3,200	<b>S= 162</b> (Mankranso 40, Tepa 42, Mampong 40 & Tafo 40)	5%
TOTAL	530	8,800	<b>424</b>	5%

Source: Author's construct, 2016.

Grouping hospitals into Type 1 and 2 was to further allow the researcher to compare results.

Type 1 health workers or hospitals denoted respondents who worked within Kumasi whilst Type 2 denoted workers outside Kumasi. The assumption is that health workers in the city would more likely to enjoy some benefits either in the form of better work conditions or training which may be lacking in health institutions outside Kumasi.

Purposive and Convenience sampling techniques were used to select respondents across the selected institutions in the Region. Fifteen (15) hospitals located within different districts of the Ashanti Region were contacted using official introductory letters from the Department of Marketing and Corporate Strategy. Out of the 15 hospitals contacted, 8 of these health facilities agreed to participate in the research by allowing their staff to take part in the survey.

### 3.8 Data Collection Instruments

The main instrument used for the collection of the data was a questionnaire. Structured questionnaires were designed and all observed variables were measured with 7-point Likert scales. Antecedent of Gossip included two variables: psychological contract violation and abusive

supervision. Gossip was grouped into Job related and Non-job related gossip. Employee all constructs were measured with 7 proposed items.

### **3.9 Administration of Questionnaire**

In order to improve the sample representativeness, the researcher distributed different copies of questionnaires to various health facilities subject to the size of the organisation. Specifically, large hospitals (with more than 400 staff) received 120 copies, medium sized entities with 100 to 300 staff received 80 copies whilst institutions with less than 100 staff received 35 copies (similar technique was used by Chang et al., 2013 and Kuo et al. 2014 respectively).

The researcher also adopted a novel approach to mitigate the effect of common method variance (CMV) as most participants would be tempted to use the same assessment for other constructs. As explained by Podsakoff et al. (2003), common method variance (CMV) emerges when self-rated measures are simultaneously used, as in some cases the observed relationships between variables are inflated, jeopardising the reliability of data analysis. In this case, participants were given questionnaires containing three (3) constructs (i.e. PCV, JRG and NJG) and later asked to complete a separate one on ECN. The first questionnaire containing the three constructs was retrieved before giving out the ECN questionnaire two days later. The implication is that participants could not refer to responses given on the first three constructs.

A total of 520 questionnaires were administered and 424 were retrieved putting the response rate at 81.5 per cent. The research sample of 424 involved different categories of health sector workers grouped into Type 1 and Type 2 workers.

### 3.10 Data Analyses methods

Data analysis has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques. To ensure data is processed into meaningful information, confirmatory factor analyses, correlation and structural equation model were performed to examine the relationship between PCV, AS, JRG, NJRG and ECN.

### 3.11 Measures: Validity and reliability test

The questionnaire was designed to measure five major constructs, including (1) Psychological Contract Violation (PCV), (2) Abusive Supervision, (3) Job-related gossip (JRG), (4) Non jobrelated gossip (NJRG), and (5) Employee Cynicism (ECN). Consistent with the literature, 7point multi-item measures were used to measure all constructs.

**Control Variables:** A number of demographic variables can influence psychological contract violation, abusive supervision, gossip (JRG & NJRG) and employee cynicism. Accordingly, the researcher collected information on gender, age, education working experience, profession category of staff and type of institution (A & B).

#### 3.11.1 Psychological Contract Violation (PCV)

The study adapted PCV scale of Robinson & Morrison (2000) to measure employees' experiences of PCV. Responses for this construct were recorded using a 7- point likert scale (1 = much strongly disagree, 7= much strongly agree): Where Higher scores represent a higher occurrence of PCV among health workers. 7 proposed sample items included (1) I have not received everything promised in exchange for my contributions; (2) My employer has broken many of its promises to me even though I have upheld my side of the contract;(3) I feel extremely

frustrated by how I have been treated by my organization; (4) I feel that my organization has violated the contract between us; (5) I feel betrayed by my organization; (6) I feel a great deal of anger toward my organization; (7) I'm beginning to have some regrets working with this organisation.

After following necessary model modification/purification suggestions (see Hair et al., 2014), 4 items were retained (see Table 3.3 below).

### **3.11.2 Abusive Supervision**

Similarly, Seven (7) items were adapted from Tepper (2000) following some modification to measure Abusive supervision. These were: (1) *My boss ridicules me*; (2) *My boss gives me the silent treatment*; (3) *My boss puts me down in front of others*; (4) *My boss invades my privacy*; (5) *my boss does not allow me to interact with my colleagues in other departments*; (6) *My boss shouts at me even in public* (7) *I feel intimidated anytime I stand before my boss*. Responses for this construct was recorded using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Not recorded, 7= Very much the case). High means scores represent a higher occurrence of Abusive supervision among health workers (see Table 3.3).

### **3.11.3 Gossip**

The study also adopted the Gossip scale of Kurland & Pelled (2000) to measure Job-related gossip (JRG) and Non-job related gossip (NJRG) among health workers. The literature review supported the view that gossip should be re-conceptualised into two dimensions: JRG and NJG.

### **3.11.4 Job related gossip**

Sample items for Job-Related Gossip (Kurland & Pelled (2000) comprised: (1) *Have you recently talked about colleague's excellent job performance?*; (2) *Have you recently talked about*

*colleague's diligence and dedication to work?; (3) Have you recently talked about colleague's credibility in job role and experience?; (4) Have you recently talked about colleague's good interpersonal skills?; (5) Have you recently talked about colleague's demonstration of job morality?; (6) Have you recently talked about colleague's poor job performance?; (7) Have you recently talked about colleague's inexperience and poor job knowledge? After several examinations, four (4) items were extracted as best fit to represent Jobrelated gossip (see Table 3.3below).*

### **3.11.5 Non-Job Related Gossip**

Furthermore, sampled items for Non-Job related Gossip was adapted from Kurland & Pelled (2000). These included: 1) *Have you recently talked about colleague's recent joyful life events such as purchasing a house or car? (2) Have you recently talked about colleague's recent sorrowful life events such as illness or car accident? (3)Have you recently talked about colleague's new friendship or love relationship? (4) Have you recently talked about colleague's good interaction with children? (5) Have you recently talked about colleague's engagement or getting married? (6) Have you recently talked about colleague's good relationship with family? (7) Have you recently talked about colleague's poor relationship with family?* Responses for this construct were recorded using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 5= Always). *High scores represent a higher occurrence of Gossip among health workers.* After following necessary model modification/purification suggestions, 4 items were retained.

### 3.11.6 Employee Cynicism (ECN)

Lastly, Kuo's (2010) scale was adapted to measure the experiences of cynicism among health workers. This scale was developed in line with ECN (Cole, Bruch & Vogel, 2006) and workplace cynicism (Dean et al., 1998). All items were preceded by a statement: „In the institution I work for . . . “ Items included (1) *I disdain people when they play games against my performance;* (2) *most colleagues at job do not treat their job as important and* (3) *colleagues report to work late without any tangible excuse;* (4) *some colleagues idle about without working;* (5) *there is constant misunderstanding between junior and senior staff officers;* (6) *there is less incentive to work;* (7) *most people pretend to work only when their supervisors are watching.* A total of five (4) items were retained after model modification/purification (see Table 3.3 below).

The use of Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), construct reliability (C.R) and average variance explained (AVE) were made to examine the reliability and validity of the scales. Results indicated that the Cronbach's alpha and construct reliability coefficients were always above 0.65; whereas AVE were also significantly above the 0.5 acceptable thresholds. Thus the reliability of the scales was confirmed. Furthermore, constructs and discriminant validity were assessed. Construct validity was attained by making sure only items that loaded well on the scale were allowed. Discriminant validity was tested by comparing the square root of the AVE coefficients with the highest correlation of specific constructs. Results as reported on Table 3.3 show that both construct and discriminant validity was achieved.

**Table 3.3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Results**

Variable	Loading	T
<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT VIOLATION: C.R =0.86, AVE=0.6; Alpha=0.85</b>		
<i>I feel extremely frustrated by how I have been treated by my organization</i>	.719	3.90

<i>I feel that my organization has violated the contract between us</i>	.752	5.99
<i>I feel betrayed by my organization</i>	.873	4.94
<i>I feel a great deal of anger toward my organization</i>	.745	5.22

**ABUSIVE SUPERVISION (AS): C.R = 0.844 ; AVE= 0.59 ; Alpha= 0.82**

<i>My boss invades my privacy</i>	.40	1.71
<i>My boss does not allow me to interact with my colleagues in other departments</i>	.88	2.70
<i>My boss shouts at me even in public</i>	.90	0.65
<i>I feel intimidated anytime I stand before my boss</i>	.79	9.79

**JOB RELATED GOSSIP C.R = 0.84 ; AVE= 0.577; Alpha= 0.79 Have**

<i>you recently talked about colleague's excellent job performance?</i>	.88	17.18
<i>Have you recently talked about colleague's diligence and dedication to work?</i>	.92	5.68
<i>Have you recently talked about colleague's good interpersonal skills?</i>	.72	0.72
<i>Have you recently talked about colleague's inexperience and poor job knowledge?</i>	.41	7.78

**NON JOB RELATED GOSSIP (NJR) C.R = 0.78 ; AVE= 0.50; Alpha= 0.77 Have**

<i>you recently talked about colleague's good interaction with children?</i>	.45	3.07
<i>Have you recently talked about colleague's engagement or getting married?</i>	.68	3.18
<i>Have you recently talked about colleague's good relationship with family? problems?</i>	.79	1.97
<i>Have you recently talked about colleague's poor relationship with family??</i>	.79	10.15

**EMPLOYEE CYNICISM (ECN) C.R = 0.77; AVE= 0.50; Alpha=0.76**

<i>I disdain people when they play games against my performance</i>	.45	2.96
<i>There is constant misunderstanding between junior and senior officers</i>	.67	3.46
<i>There is less incentive to work</i>	.87	1.86
<i>Most people pretend to work only when their supervisors are watching</i>	.68	12.63

**Note: CR = Construct Validity; AVE = SQRT of average variance explained.**

**Source: Author, 2016.**

### 3.11.7 Reliability and Validity Checks

Table 4.4 below presents reliability and validity checks for variables used. Brown (2006) recommends RMSEA close to 0.06 or less; SRMR close to 0.08 or less; CFI close to 0.95 or

greater; and TLI close to 0.95 or greater. Kline (2005) also recommends that model chi-square, RMSEA, 90% confidence interval for RMSEA, CFI, and SRMR be reported. According to Kline (2005), “RMSEA  $\leq$  .05 indicates close approximate fit, values between .05 and .08 suggest reasonable error of approximation, and RMSEA  $\geq$  .10 suggests poor fit” (p. 139). CFI “greater than roughly .90 may indicate reasonably good fit of the researcher’s model” (Kline, 2005, p. 140), and SRMR values “less than .10 are generally considered favourable” (Kline, 2005, p. 141). Going by recommended fit indices of Kline (2005), checks show goodness fit to be used for subsequent estimation in chapter in the next chapter.

**Table 3.4: Reliability and Validity Checks**

VARIABLE	$\chi^2$	(d. f.)	$\chi^2/d.f$	P	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT V	3.20	2	1.6	0.2017	0.998	0.038	0.010
ABUSIVE SUPERVISION (AS)	0.37	2	0.185	0.83	1.00	0.00	0.004
JOB RELATED GOSSIP (JRG)	8.71	2	4.35	0.01	0.99	0.08	0.020
NON JOB RELATED GOSSIP	2.07	2	1.035	0.35	1.00	0.009	0.011
EMPLOYEE CYNICISM (ECN)	2.4	2	1.20	0.30	0.99	0.022	0.012

Notes: 2.  $\chi^2$ =Chi-square d.f.=Degree of freedom;  $\chi^2/d.f$  = normed Chi-square; RMSEA=Root mean standard error of approximation; CFI=Comparative fit index; SRMR=Standardized mean square residual

Source: Author, 2016.

### 3.11.8 Inter-Construct Correlation

The study also tested for discriminant validity. Campbell and Fiske (1959) introduced the concept of discriminant validity within their discussion on evaluating test validity. They stressed the importance of using both discriminant and convergent validation techniques when assessing new

tests. A successful evaluation of discriminant validity shows that a test of a construct is not highly correlated with other tests designed to measure theoretically different constructs. Although there is no standard value for discriminant validity, a result less than .85 indicates that discriminant validity likely exists between the two scales (Henseler, Ringle, Sarstedt, 2014). A result greater than .85, however, tells us that the two constructs overlap greatly and they are likely measuring the same thing. Therefore, we cannot claim discriminant validity between them.

Table 3.5 shows that all correlation results were less than 0.7 showing that discriminant validity exists between the scales (see Table 3.5 below). The study also relied on methods from Song et al. (2005) and Little, Bovaird, and Widaman (2006) to orthogonalize the raw scores of the constructs. This was necessary to reduce potential problems of multicollinearity. **Table 3.5: Inter-Construct**

**Correlation**

VARIABLE	ECN	PCV	NJRG	JRG	AS
PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT V.	1.000				
ABUSIVE SUPERVISION (AS)	0.4096	1.000			
JOB RELATED GOSSIP (JRG)	0.3203	0.3607	1.000		
NON JOB RELATED GOSSIP (NJRG)	0.2419	0.2744	0.1959	1.000	
EMPLOYEE CYNICISM (ECN)	0.2648	0.5035	0.2408	0.1649	1.000

**Source: Author, 2016**

**3.11.9 COMMON METHOD BIAS (CMB)**

Several steps were taken to minimize common method bias in this study. First, items that have been tested and applied in other empirical studies were used. Second the questionnaires were forwarded to the District Health Directorates in the health sector to moderate. This afforded the researcher the opportunity to take out items that did not synchronize with the Ghanaian situations. As explained by Podsakoff et al. (2003), common method variance (CMV) emerges when self-rated measures are simultaneously used, as in some cases the observed relationships between variables are inflated, jeopardising the reliability of data analysis. In this case, participants were

given questionnaires containing three (3) constructs (i.e. PCV, JRG and NJG) and later asked to complete a separate one on ECN. The first questionnaire containing the three constructs was retrieved before giving out the ECN questionnaire two days later. The implication is that participants found it difficult to refer to responses given on the first three constructs.

Again, because all data are self-reported and collected through the same questionnaire during the same period of time with cross-sectional research design, common method variance, variance that is attributed to the measurement method rather than the constructs of interest may cause systematic measurement error and further bias the estimates of the true relationship among theoretical constructs. Method variance can either inflate or deflate observed relationships between constructs, thus leading to both Type I and Type II errors (Avolio, Yammarino & Bass,

1991; Bagozzi & Yi, 1990; Crampton, & Wagner, 1994). Harman's one-factor test and confirmatory factor analysis were conducted to further test the presence of common method effect.

All the 20 variables were entered into an exploratory factor analysis to determine the number of factors that are necessary to account for the variance in the variables. If a substantial amount of common method variance is present, either (a) a single factor will emerge from the factor analysis, or (b) one general factor will account for the majority of the covariance among the variables (e.g., Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Aulakh & Gencturk, 2000; Greene & Krishnan, Martin, & Noorderhaven, 2006; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Steensma et al. 2005). Moreover, all 20 variables were loaded on one factor to examine the fit of the confirmatory factor analysis model. If common method variance is largely responsible for the relationship among the variables, the one-factor CFA model should fit the data well (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995; Mossholder et al. 1998). The unrotated principal component factor analysis, principal component analysis with varimax rotation, and principal axis analysis with varimax rotation all revealed the presence of four distinct

factors with eigenvalue greater than 1.0, rather than a single factor. The four factors together accounted for 92 percent of the total variance; the first (largest) factor accounted for (47%) of the variance (see Table 3.6 below). Thus, no general factor is apparent. Moreover, the confirmatory factor analysis showed that the single-factor model did not fit the data well,  $\chi^2 = (170) 2786.01$ ,  $p=.000$ ; CFI= .39; TLI= .318; SRMR= .136; RMSEA = .191. While the results of these analyses do not preclude the possibility of common method variance, they do suggest that common method variance is not of great concern and thus is unlikely to confound the interpretations of results.

### **3.12 Ethical Consideration**

Data and information collected from health institutions would be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes. Also, the researcher has pledged not to make public names of hospitals includes unless for policy formulation. In most cases, Type 1 or A and Type 2 or B would be used to describe hospitals used. Type 1 hospitals refer to hospitals located within Kumasi whilst Type 2 are hospitals outside Kumasi Metropolis.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the methodology employed for this study. In this chapter, data analysis and results are presented. The chapter commences with descriptive analysis and the correlation among variables used for the study, after which a comparison was made between workers in Type 1 (Hospitals in Kumasi) and Type 2 (Hospitals outside Kumasi). The chapter continues with the presentation of data and analysis of the contribution of the independent (PCV & AS) variables to the dependent (ECN) variables in both categories of respondents using structural equation modeling (SEM). After the SEM analyses the study further considers testing the various hypotheses. The details of these have been discussed in the preceding sections. A total of 520 questionnaires were administered and 424 were retrieved putting the recovery rate at 81.5 per cent.

#### 4.2 Descriptive Analysis

This part is subdivided into two parts. The first part deals with sample characteristics of respondents using the controls whilst the second part combines descriptive summary for controls, independent variables and dependent variables.

As presented in Table 4.1, Female respondents dominated the study by approximately 53.5% whilst Male participants constituted approximately 46.5%. This finding confirms the assertion that the health sector in Ghana is dominated by female workers. This result is further affirmed by the number of respondents who were nurses. As has been the perception, the nursing profession is dominated by females. Until recently, few Males went into nursing. Approximately

60.6 per cent of respondents were nurses, followed by Doctors 16 per cent. Laboratory technicians and Administrators constituted 13.4 per cent and 9.9 per cent respectively.

In terms of Age, the analysis shows that the highest majority were within the age group of 29 and 39 years; 222(52.4%), followed by those below 28 years, 122 (28.8%). By this result, the health sector workforce can be described as youthful.

The study also found that majority of respondents have worked with their respective institutions for a period between 2 to 5 years, 240 (56.6%) followed by those who have spent between 6 to 9 years in employment, 65 (15.3%). Approximately 55 (13%) respondents have spent 10 to 15 years in the present employment. A significant number of respondents were also first degree holders, 190(44.8%) followed by HND and Masters Holders, 91 (21.5%) and 82 (19.3%) respectively. The study was dominated by junior staff which supports the unit of analysis for Abusive supervision. The sample characteristics give a fair distribution to support hypotheses outlined for the study. A general summary of the data is presented in Table 4.1 below:

The second part of the analysis was to perform a descriptive analysis of the survey data to obtain summarised information of the characteristics of the observed variables. Further analysis was also performed to observe for differences in psychological contract violation (PCV), abusive supervision (AS), Gossip and Cynicism between Type 1 (A) and Type B (2) hospitals. This provided the first step in gaining an in-depth understanding of the level of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision, gossip and cynicism among health workers in Ghana. The results are presented in Table 4.2 and 4.3 respectively.

**Table 4.1: Respondent profile**

	<i>n</i>	%

Gender	Male	197	46.5
	Female	227	53.5
Age	Below 28	122	28.8
	29-39	222	52.4
	40-50	76	17.9
	More than 50	4	.9
Education	HND	91	21.5
	1 <sup>st</sup> degree	190	44.8
	Masters	82	19.3
	Diploma	53	12.5
	Lab. Technician	8	1.9
Experience (Duration)	Less than 2years	64	15.1
	2-5	240	56.6
	6-9	65	15.3
	10-15years	55	13.0
	16 and above	64	15.1
Profession	Lab technician	57	13.4
	Nurse	257	60.6
	Adm. Assistant	42	9.9
	Doctor	68	16.0
Category of Employee	Junior staff	386	91.0
	Senior staff	38	9.0
Institution	Type A (1)	262	61.8
	Type B (2)	162	38.2

Source: Author, 2016

**Table 4.2: Descriptive Summary for Combined data**

Variables	N	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
-----------	---	------	--------	-----------	---------	---------

Gender	424	.46	.00	.499	0	1
Age	424	1.91	2.00	.706	1	4
Education	424	2.29	2.00	.999	1	5
Experience (Duration)	424	2.26	2.00	.870	1	4
Profession	424	2.29	2.00	.892	1	4
Category of Employee	424	1.09	1.00	.286	1	2
Institution	424	1.38	1.00	.486	1	2
Psychological contract violation (PCV)	424	3.8272	3.500	1.18255	2	7
Abusive Supervision	424	4.0713	4.250	.99530	2	7
Job Related Gossip (JRG)	424	4.6663	4.750	1.01310	2	7
Non Job Related Gossip (NJRG)	424	4.0584	4.000	.97591	2	7
Employee Cynicism	424	4.4611	4.500	1.13559	2	7

Source: Author (2013)

It can be deduced from the Table 4.2 above that on the Likert scale ranging from (1) “Never ” to (7) “Always; **Job related gossip** seems to be high among health workers in Ghana with a mean of 4.6663, and a median of 4.750. This is clearly higher than Non-job related gossip with a mean of 4.000 and median of 4.0584.

Using a likert scale of 1-7 (1=Nerver, 7=Always), Table 4.2 above shows that Cynicism was high among health workers in Ghana with a mean of 4.4611 and a median of 4.500. Examining the level of Abusive supervision, the study found an averagely high level of abusive supervision under 1-7 likert scale with a mean of 4.0713, minimum of 2 and a maximum of 7.00. The standard deviation was 0.99530. Psychological contract violation (PCV) recorded a mean of 3.8272 approximately 4 (scale 1-7). The median and standard deviations were 3.500 and 1.18255 respectively.

Focusing on institution characteristics, the study found a fair balance of Type 1(Hospitals in Kumasi) and Type 2 (Hospitals outside Kumasi) Hospitals in the sample as shown on the Table 2.2 above. However the Mean, median and standard deviations were 1.38, 1.00 and .486 respectively indicating that health workers who participated in the study largely gravitated towards Type 1 institutions. The next step was to find out how the data deviate in terms of Type 1 and Type 2 hospitals in order to explore deeper understanding of the characteristics of the variables. To do this the data was split into two in terms of whether respondent was in Type 1 hospital or Type 2 and the Means compared. Results of computations as illustrated on the Table 4.3 below portray that the Mean of each variable is different between the groups indicating that the intensity in activities are not the same.

**Table 4.3: Means Variations between Type 1 and Type 2 Health workers**

Variable	Nature	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT VIOLATION (PCV)	TYPE 1	262	2.00	7.00	3.8655	1.09281
	TYPE 2	161	2.00	7.00	3.7671	1.31996
ABUSIVE SUPERVISION	TYPE 1	262	2.00	7.00	4.0868	1.00851
	TYPE 2	161	2.00	7.00	4.0435	.97851
JOB RELATED GOSSIP (JRG)	TYPE 1	262	2.00	7.00	4.6775	1.08609
	TYPE 2	161	2.00	7.00	4.6460	.88766
NON JOB RELATED GOSSIP (NJRG)	TYPE 1	262	2.00	7.00	4.0830	.97504
	TYPE 2	161	2.00	7.00	4.0140	.98037
EMPLOYEE CYNICISM (ECN)	TYPE 1	261	2.00	7.00	4.4579	1.12517
	TYPE 2	161	2.00	7.00	4.4783	1.15461

Source: Author (2013)

Analysis of Table 4.3 above shows that the means associated with Type 1 health workers are slightly higher than those associated with Type 2 health workers for all variables except for Cynicism. For employee cynicism, health workers associated with Type 2 (workers outside

Kumasi) were characterised by slightly higher levels of cynicism as compared with those in Kumasi. The Mean for Type 2 Cynicism was 4.4783 (std. 1.15461) whilst that of Type 1 was 4.4579 (std. 1.12517). This is attributable to weak supervision or abusive supervision culminating in high levels of cynicism and highly perceived psychological contract violation which could be linked to lack of incentives and appropriate conditions of service to motivate health workers in this category.

### **4.3 Correlation Matrix**

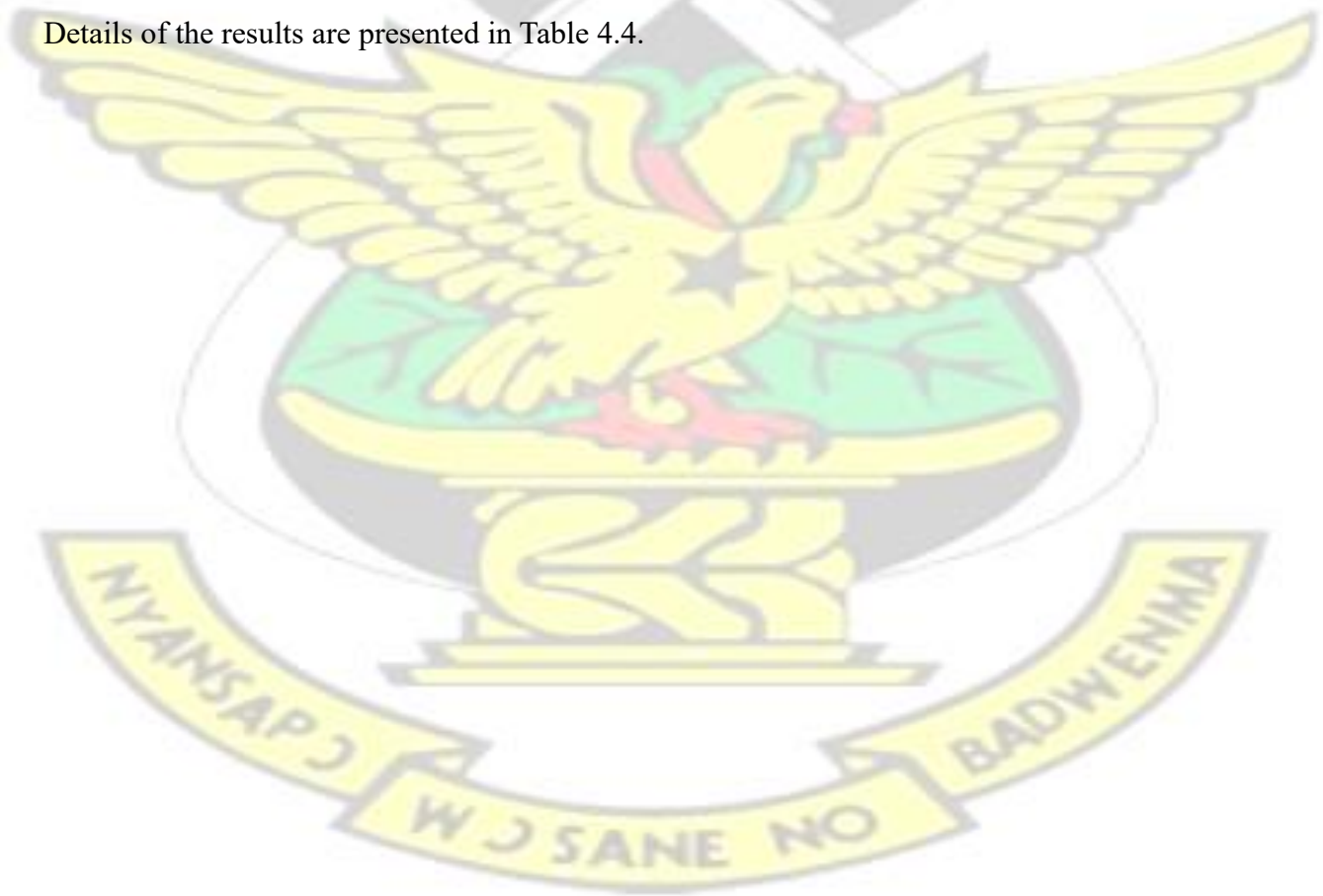
The use of the Pearson's product moment correlation was applied to calculate the magnitude and direction of associations between variables. Table 4.4 below illustrates the correlation coefficients estimated for each variable. It is observed that some variables showed a positive and significant relationship whilst others show negative and significant relationship. A few relationships were statistically insignificant. Comparing the variations of psychological contract violation and Cynicism, it was found that psychological contract violation has the strongest association with Cynicism (0.410). This is followed by Non-Job related gossip with  $R = 0.320$  then Abusive supervision (0.265). It is observed that Job related gossip has a positive and significant association with Employee Cynicism (0.252).

Furthermore, the results on the Table 4.4 below shows that there is a positive and significant and inter relationship among the psychological contract violation, abusive supervision, Job relate and non-job related gossip. The study found that the PCV correlated positively and significantly with Abusive supervision ( $r=0.503$ ) followed by PCV and NJRG (0.361) after that was PCV and JRG ( $r=0.274$ ). Out of the two independent variables, PCV showed a stronger association with Job related gossip (0.274) than abusive supervision abusive (0.165). In the case of the association of

PCV and AS with NJRG, the study found PCV positively and significantly associated with nonjob related gossip (see Table 4.4 below).

In examining the association between the control variables and cynicism, the study found some low but significant negative associations in some instances with cynicism (ECN). Gender had a positive and significant association with employee cynicism (0.238); respondents' age negatively correlated with cynicism (-0.286). Education also correlated with Cynicism negatively (-0.226) and was significant. How long respondents have worked with health sector also had some weak and negative association with Cynicism. Respondents' profession whether a nurse, doctor or administrator also negatively correlated with cynicism but was insignificant. Similarly, the Type of Hospital (1 or 2) though recorded positive association with cynicism, it was insignificant.

Details of the results are presented in Table 4.4.



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**Table 4.4: Correlation Matrix**

Variables	GEN	AGE	EDUC	EXPE R	PROF	CAT	INST	PCV	ABUS E	JRG	NJRG	ECN
GENDER	1											
AGE	-.338**	1										
EDUCATION	.042	.030	1									
EXPERIENCE	-.259**	.501**	.197**	1								
PROFESSION	-.166**	.090	.041	.123*	1							
CATEGORY	-.143**	.298**	.084	.343**	.029	1						
INSTITUTION	-.051	-.010	.052	-.041	-.045	.025	1					
PCV	.496	-.122*	-.426**	-.036	-.129**	-.057	-.041	1				
ABUSIVE S.	-.024	-.047	-.399**	.000	.025	.013	-.020	.503**	1			
JRG	.083	-.150**	-.182**	-.133**	-.070	.014	-.014	.274**	.165**	1		
NJRG	.149**	-.318**	-.209**	-.149**	.001	-.042	-.032	.361**	.241**	.196**	1	
ECN	.238**	-.286**	-.226**	-.080	-.232**	-.077	.011	.410**	.265**	.242**	.320**	1

Note: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author (2016)



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#### 4.5 Model Estimation and Results

Models 1 and 2 as presented in Table 4.5 shows the regression results using OLS and Structural Equation Modeling. In model 1, the researcher excluded controls to check whether characteristics such as Gender, Age, Education, Experience, Profession, Category of employee and Institution (Type 1 &2) account for deviation in cynicism among workers.

The researcher assessed the magnitude and significance level of the estimated structural paths using a one-tailed t-test such that values are significant at the 5% level if the t-values are greater than 1.65. As the restricted model 1 in Table 4.5 illustrates, psychological contract violation positively correlated with employee cynicism ( $r=.27, t=5.33, p<.05$ ). Still in the restricted model, the study found no significant relationship between Abusive supervision and cynicism ( $r=.07, t=1.20, p>.05$ ). There was positive and statistically significant relationship between psychological contract violation and job related gossip (JRG) ( $r=.22, t=4.74, p<.05$ ). Similarly, the relationship between psychological contract violation (PCV) and non-job related gossip (NJRG) was positive and statistically significant ( $r=.26, t=6.14, p<.05$ ). Interestingly, the relationship between abusive supervision and job related gossip though positive was insignificant ( $r=.04, t=.66, p>.05$ ). Similar findings were made between abusive supervision and non-job related gossip (see Table 4.5 below).

In the unrestricted Model 2 where controls were added, the study found no significant variation or departure from the restricted model 1. Just as indicated in the first model, the relationship between PCV and ECN was positive and significant. Again, that of PCV, job related gossip and non-job related gossips were statistically significant and positive. Abusive supervision still remained statistically insignificant for both JRG and NJRG (see Table 4.5 below).

**Table 4.5: SEM and Regression Results**

Dependent variable: Cynicism

Variables and hypothesis	Restricted Model 1: No controls			Unrestricted Model 2: Controls		
	$\beta$ (t)	P	VIF	$B$ (t)	P	VIF
Gender				.342(3.39)**	.00	1.67
Age				-.32(-3.85)**	.00	1.61
Education				-.090(-1.64)	.10	1.55
Experience				.185(2.79)**	.01	1.45
Profession				-.214(-3.98)**	.00	1.41
Category				-.071(-0.41)	.68	1.30
Institution				.082(0.86)	.38	1.19
Job related gossip	.134 (2.64)**	.01	1.09	.107(2.21)*	.03	1.18
Non Job related gossip	.211(3.87)**	.00	1.17	.142(2.64)**	.01	1.13
Psychological contract violation	.270 (5.30)**	.00	1.51	.213(4.20)**	.00	1.07
Abusive supervision	.068 (1.19)	.23	1.35	.085(1.53)	.13	1.02
R2	.218			.313		
Adjusted R2	.211			.295		
F-statistics (DF)	29.19			17.11		
Prob>F	.00			.00		
<b>Hypothesized Paths H1:</b>						
PCV --->ECN	.27(5.33)**	.00		.213(4.26)**	.00	
H2: AS ---> ECN	.07(1.20)	.23		.086(1.55)	.12	
H3: PCV --->JRG	.22(4.74)**	.00		.219(4.74)**	.00	
H4: PCV --->NJRG	.26(6.14)**	.00		.265(6.14)**	.00	
H5: AS --->JRG	.04(.66)	.50		.037(0.66)	.50	
H6: AS--->NJRG	.08(1.52)	.13		.077(1.52)	.13	
H7: JRG --->ECN	.133(2.66)**	.01		.107(2.24)**	.03	
H8: NJRG --->ECN	.211(3.90)**	.00		.143(2.67)	.01	
<b>Fit indices</b>						
$\chi^2$ (d. f.)	4.80(1)			64(15)		
P	.03			.00		
CFI	.98			.83		
TLI	.83			.66		

RMSEA	.09	.09
SRMR	.02	.04

---

Note: t-values are in the parenthesis; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

#### 4.5.1 Hypothesis testing

A dozen of methods have been proposed for testing hypotheses about mediation (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002). By far the most commonly used is the causal steps strategy, popularized by Baron and Kenny (1986), in which the investigator estimates the paths of the model, using OLS regression or SEM, and assesses the extent to which several criteria are met. Job related gossip and Non-job related gossip are mediators if PCV and AS significantly accounts for variability in ECN, PCV and AS significantly accounts for variability in ECN, JRG and NJRG significantly accounts for variability in ECN when controlling for PCV and AS, and the effect of PCV and AS on ECN decreases substantially when JRG and NJRG are entered simultaneously with PCV and AS as predictors of ECN. As Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1998) noted, the latter criterion will be satisfied when the first and third criteria are satisfied and when the signs of the effects are consistent with the proposed mediation process. Baron and Kenny's (1986) influential paper on mediation analyses stated three necessary but not sufficient conditions that must be met in order to claim that mediation is occurring. For mediation conditions: X is significantly related to M; M is significantly related to Y.; the relationship of X to Y diminishes when M is in the model. In other words, each of the three constructs must show evidence of a nonzero monotonic association with each other, and the relationship of X to Y must decrease substantially upon adding M as a predictor of Y (Kenny, Kashy & Bolger, 1998; MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002).

Table 4.6 and 4.7 presents the mediation results for model 1 and 2. The results however indicated the model with control (Model 2) was not significantly different from the first model (1). The fit indices for Model 1 were stronger compared to Model 2 hence it is appropriate use model 1 estimates.

**Table 4.6: Mediation analysis: (direct and indirect effects assessment)**

Path	Restricted model (without controls)			Form of mediation
	Direct effect (D)	Indirect effect (I)	Total effect (D+I)	
H9: PCV--->JRG--->ECN	.27(5.33)*	.22* * .13* = .03	.300	*Partial
H10:PCV--->NJRG--->ECN	.27(5.33)*	.264* * .21* = .055	.325	*Partial
H11:AS --->JRG--->ECN	.07(1.20)	.037 * .133* = .01	.0004	No mediation
H12: AS--->NJRG--->ECN	.07(1.20)	.078 * .211* = .016	.001	No mediation

Note:\* mediation significant at 1%; PCV: Psychological contract violation; AS: Abusive supervision; ECN: Employee Cynicism; JRG: Job related gossip; NJRG: Non Job related gossip

Source: Author, 2016.

**Table 4.7: Mediation analysis: (direct and indirect effects assessment)**

Path	Unrestricted model (with controls)			Form of mediation
	Direct effect (D)	Indirect effect (I)	Total effect (D+I)	
H9: PCV--->JRG--->ECN	.213(4.26)*	.219* * .107* =.023	.236	*Partial
H10:PCV--->NJRG--->ECN	.213(4.26)*	.265* * .143* =.038	.008	*Partial
H11:AS --->JRG--->ECN	.086(1.55)	.037 * .107*=0.01	.0004	No mediation
H12: AS--->NJRG--->ECN	.078(1.55)	.078 * .144* =.016	.001	No mediation

Note: \*mediation significant at 1%; PCV: Psychological contract violation; AS: Abusive supervision; ECN: Employee Cynicism; JRG: Job related gossip; NJRG: Non Job related gossip. Source: Author, 2016

The path diagrams for the restricted and unrestricted model are presented at appendix I and II respectively.

#### 4.5.2 Results of hypothesized Constructs

A total of 12 hypothesis were tested: the study hypothesised that Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) significantly predicts Employee Cynicism; Abusive Supervision (AS) significantly affects Employee Cynicism (ECN); Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) significantly predicts Job Related Gossip (JRG); Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) significantly predicts Non Job Related Gossip (NJRG), Abusive Supervision (AS) significantly predicts Job Related Gossip (JRG); Abusive Supervision (AS) insignificantly predicts Non Job Related Gossip (NJRG). It is further hypothesised that Job-related Gossip significantly predicts Employee Cynicism (ECN); Non-job-related gossip significantly affects Employee Cynicism (ECN). Job related gossip was also hypothesised to significantly mediate Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism (ECN) relationship; Non Job related gossip was also hypothesised to mediate between Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism (EC) relationship; Job related gossip was also expected to significantly mediate between Abusive Supervision (AS) and Employee Cynicism (EC) relationship and finally, Non Job related gossip was hypothesised to significantly mediate between Abusive Supervision (AS) and Employee Cynicism (ECN) relationship.

As shown on Table 4.5 above, the study found a positive and statistically significant relationship between PCV and ECN ( $B=0.27$ ,  $t=5.33$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Hypothesis 1 was supported.

The second hypothesis was to test the relationship between AS and ECN. As priori, the researcher expected abusive supervision to strongly affect cynicism. This was however not supported. The study found no significant relationship between Abusive supervision and cynicism ( $\beta =.07$ ,  $t=1.20$ ,  $p>.05$ ). Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Psychological contract violation was hypothesized to significantly predict job related gossip. The study found positive and statistically significant relationship between psychological contract violation and job related gossip (JRG) ( $\beta = .22, t=4.74, p<.05$ ). Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Psychological contract violation was also hypothesized to positively predict non-job related gossip. As presented in Table 4.5 above, the study found a positive and statistically significant relationship between psychological contract violation (PCV) and non-job related gossip (NJRG) ( $B=.26, t=6.14, p<.05$ ). Hypothesis 4 was also supported.

The researcher envisaged that when workers experience abuse at the work place, they more likely would want to talk about such abuses to others especially at the work place; hence abusive supervision was hypothesized to positively and significantly predict job related gossip. The study found that the relationship between abusive supervision and job related gossip though positive was insignificant ( $\beta = .04, t=.66, p>.05$ ). Hypothesis 5 was not supported.

In the next hypothesis, abusive supervision was not hypothesised to significantly predict non-job related gossip. The study found that the relationship between abusive supervision and non-job related gossip though positive, was not significant ( $\beta = .08, t=1.52, p>.05$ ). Hypothesis 6 was supported.

The researcher expected job related gossip to positively and significantly affect employee cynicism. The study found a significant positive relationship between job related gossip and employee cynicism ( $\beta = .133, t=2.66, p<.05$ ). Hypothesis 7 was also supported.

Could non-job related gossip culminate into employee cynicism? The researcher hypothesized a significant association between the two variables. The findings suggest that non-job related gossip significantly predicted cynicism ( $\beta = .211, t=3.90, p<.00$ ). Hypothesis 8 was supported.

The researcher also expected job related gossip to positively and significantly mediate between PCV and employee cynicism. This hypothesis was supported by the research finding; thus, there was a positive and statistically significant relationship between psychological contract violation and employee cynicism. The direct path ( $\beta = .27, t=5.33$  and  $p<.05$ ). The indirect path was also statistically significant. The mediation identified was partial. Thus hypothesis 9 was supported.

For Hypothesis 10, non-job related gossip was hypothesised to significantly mediate between psychological contract violation and employee cynicism. The findings suggested a significant direct path ( $\beta = .27, t=5.33, p<.05$ ), the path from PCV--->NJRG was also significant and the same for NJRG---> ECN. Based on the assumption of Baron and Kenny's (1986), the study concludes that there is a partial mediation. Hypothesis 10 was supported.

The study also sought to examine the mediation role of job-related gossip in abusive and cynicism relationship. In this case Job related gossip was hypothesised to significantly mediate between abusive and cynicism relationship. The analysis revealed an insignificant direct path between AS ---> ECN ( $\beta = .07, t=1.20, p>.05$ ). It is thus concluded that job related gossip did not mediate abusive supervision and cynicism relationship. Hypothesis 11 was therefore not supported.

In the final hypothesis, non-job related gossip was hypothesised not to significantly mediate between abusive and cynicism relationship. The study found no significant direct ( $\beta = .07, t=1.20, p>.05$ ) and indirect path. It is therefore concluded that no mediation exists in AS--->ECN relationship using non-job related gossip. Hypothesis 12 was also supported.

A summary of the hypothesised construct is presented on Table 4.8 below.

**Table 4.8 Summary of hypothesized construct**

	<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Significant/ Not significant</b>	<b>Supported/ Not Supported</b>
H <sub>1</sub>	Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) positively and significantly predicts Employee Cynicism	<b>Significant</b>	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>2</sub>	Abusive Supervision (AS) positively and significantly affects Employee Cynicism (ECN)	Not significant	Not Supported
H <sub>3</sub>	Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) positively and significantly predicts Job Related Gossip (JRG)	<b>Significant</b>	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>4</sub>	Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) positively predicts Non Job Related Gossip (NJRG)	<b>Significant</b>	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>5</sub>	Abusive Supervision (AS) significantly affects Job Related Gossip (JRG)	No significant	Not supported
H <sub>6</sub>	Abusive Supervision (AS) insignificantly predicts Non Job Related Gossip (NJRG)	<b>Not significant</b>	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>7</sub>	Job-related Gossip positively and significantly affects Employee Cynicism (ECN)	<b>Significant</b>	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>8</sub>	Non-job-related gossip significantly affects Employee Cynicism (ECN)	<b>Significant</b>	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>9</sub>	Job related gossip positively and significantly mediates between Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism (ECN) relationship	<b>Significant</b>	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>10</sub>	Non Job related gossip significantly mediates the relationship between Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism (EC).	<b>Significant</b>	<b>Supported</b>

H <sub>11</sub>	Job related gossip significantly mediates between Abusive Supervision (AS) and Employee Cynicism (EC) relationship.	Not Significant	Not supported
H <sub>12</sub>	Non Job related gossip insignificantly mediates between Abusive Supervision (AS) and Employee Cynicism (ECN) relationship.	<b>Not significant</b>	<b>Supported</b>

Source: Author, 2016.

#### 4.6 Discussions

The study sought to examine the effects of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision and gossip on employee cynicism among health workers in Ghana. Specifically, it was posited that psychological contract violation significantly impacts employee cynicism, it was also theorized that abusive supervision contributes to cynicism and that job related gossip mediates psychological contract violation, abusive supervision and cynicism relationships. A number of interesting findings were made. In line with previous studies, all the variables (PCV, AS, JRG & NJRG) positively correlated with Cynicism for both Type 1 and Type 2 respondents. Comparing the variations of psychological contract violation and Cynicism, it was discovered that psychological contract violation had the strongest association with Cynicism (0.410) followed by Non-Job related gossip with  $R = 0.320$  then Abusive supervision (0.265). It was also observed that Job related gossip had a positive and significant association with Employee Cynicism (0.252).

As stipulated, a number of assumptions were raised and tested by the study. In all, 12 hypotheses were raised based on varied expected impact of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision, job related and non-job related gossip on employee cynicism among health workers in Ghana. Nine (9) hypotheses were consequently confirmed by the study. First, the research confirmed the proposition that Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) significantly predicts

Employee Cynicism. Similar findings were made by Robinson and Morrison, 1995, Dean et al., 1998, Pate et al., 2000 and Conner and Sparks, 1996. Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) also predicted Job Related Gossip (JRG). As discussed in literature, when violations occur (a sign of unbalanced exchange), individuals are prone to feel frustrated and disappointed. Such frustrations and disappointments may consequently be converted into job related gossip (Dulac, 2008). Very likely, when the organisation fails to deliver on its obligations, victims are likely to feel frustrated at work, have poor attitude towards their jobs and exhibit other forms of negative behaviours towards the organisation. At the extreme, employees may use gossips to cope with their negative emotions and feelings.

The study however found that Abusive Supervision (AS) did not significantly predict Employee Cynicism (ECN). Although previous studies support the relationship between abusive supervision and cynicism, thus when employees perceive the relationship with their leader or supervisor as valuable they may reciprocate by displaying more positive behaviours. Again, supervisors' leadership style has been found to be positively related to employee behaviour (Bauer and Green, 1996; Rosen et al., 2011). Thus when employees perceive a lack of valued outcomes by their supervisor, they are more likely to reciprocate in a negative way in order to restore the balance (Moss et al., 2009). The study argues why the relationship between abusive supervision and cynicism was insignificant. First, it is important to know the threshold abuse that can translate into cynicism. In this study the researcher is of the view that although some level of abuse is prevalent among health sector workers, it may be below the threshold required for higher levels of cynicism to occur. The question however is what constitutes abuse threshold? The second condition may be attributed to cultural factors as many Ghanaians are hesitant when it comes to reporting abuses for

fear of victimization and other consequences which may even come from their immediate supervisors or employers.

Similarly, even though the study expected Abusive Supervision (AS) to significantly affect Job Related Gossip (JRG), the result was not supported. With reference to the theory of Attribution, employees who encounter such abuses may speculate whether it is caused by their own behaviour, traits or performance, or by external factors such as situational characteristics, organizational norms, and factors related to the supervisor. So if the worker feels he or she might be the cause, they may decline to mention it to others which preclude job related gossip.

The study also found that Job related gossip partially mediated the relationship between Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism (ECN). However, this was not supported for Abusive Supervision (AS) and Employee Cynicism (EC) relationship. Thus nonjob related gossip does not influence the relationship between abusive supervision and cynicism among health workers. For instance, talking about a third party or an issue that has no bearing on the job or individuals at the workplace should not affect the behaviour of a worker who has suffered an abuse and subsequently lead to cynicism although possibility may exist. On the contrary, non-job related gossip was found to positively and significantly mediate between psychological contract violation and employee cynicism.

The next chapter presents summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations for the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary findings, conclusion and recommendations for the study. As enumerated in the previous chapters, 12 main hypotheses were developed for the study. The sequence of presentation follows the objectives stipulated in the introductory chapter.

#### 5.2 Summary of findings

The researcher examined the differences in psychological contract violation (PCV), abusive supervision (AS), Gossip and Cynicism between Type 1 (A) and Type B (2) health workers. This provided the first step in gaining an in-depth understanding of the level of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision, gossip and cynicism among health workers in Ghana. Type 1 health workers denotes workers who work in the city of Kumasi and Type 2, connotes health workers outside Kumasi. Summary of findings are presented as follows.

##### 5.2.1 Descriptive Statistics

Using a combined data and a likert scale ranging from (1) “*Never* ” to (7) “*Always*”; Job related gossip seems to be high among health workers in Ghana with a mean of 4.6663, and a median of 4.750. This is clearly higher than Non-job related gossip with a mean of 4.000 and median of 4.0584. Again, the study found that cynicism was high among health workers in Ghana with a mean of 4.4611 and a median of 4.500. The level of Abusive supervision was found to be averagely

high with a mean value of 4.0713, minimum of 2 and a maximum of 7.00. The standard deviation was 0.99530. Psychological contract violation (PCV) recorded a mean of 3.8272 approximately 4 (scale 1-7). The median and standard deviations were 3.500 and 1.18255 respectively.

Focusing on institution characteristics, the study found a fair balance of Type 1 (health workers in Kumasi) and Type 2 (workers outside Kumasi). However the Mean, median and standard deviations were 1.38, 1.00 and .486 respectively indicating that health workers who participated in the study largely gravitated towards Type 1 institutions (workers in Kumasi).

The study also found that Mean values associated with Type 1 health workers were slightly higher than those associated with Type 2 health workers for all variables except Cynicism. For employee cynicism, health workers associated with Type 2 institutions (workers outside Kumasi) observed slightly higher levels of cynicism as compared with those in Kumasi. The Mean for Type 2 Cynicism was 4.4783 (std. 1.15461) whilst that of Type 1 was 4.4579 (std. 1.12517). This is attributable to weak supervision or abusive supervision culminating in high levels of cynicism and highly perceived psychological contract violation which could be linked to lack of incentives and appropriate conditions of service to motivate health workers in this category.

Comparing the variations of psychological contract violation and Cynicism, it was found that psychological contract violation has the strongest association with Cynicism (0.410). This was followed by Non-Job related gossip with  $R = 0.320$  then Abusive supervision (0.265). It was also observed that Job related gossip has a positive and significant association with Employee Cynicism (0.252).

In examining the association between the control variables and cynicism, the study found some low but significant negative associations in some instances with cynicism (ECN). Gender had a positive and significant association with employee cynicism (0.238); respondents' age negatively correlated with cynicism (-0.286). Education also correlated with Cynicism negatively (-0.226) and was significant. How long respondents have been in the service also had some weak and negative association with Cynicism. Thus new recruits or health workers are more likely to engage in cynicism than long serving health workers. Respondents' profession whether a nurse, doctor or administrator also negatively correlated with cynicism but was insignificant. Similarly, the Type of Hospital (1 or 2) though recorded positive association with cynicism, it was insignificant.

### **5.2 2 Model Estimation Findings**

Two Models: 1 and 2 were estimated using OLS regression and Structural Equation Modeling. In model 1 (restricted), the researcher excluded controls to check whether the absence of Gender, Age, Education, Experience, Profession, Category of employee and Institution (Type 1 &2) account for cynicism variations.

The researcher assessed the magnitude and significance level of the estimated structural paths using a one-tailed t-test such that values are significant at the 5% level if the t-values are greater than 1.65. In the restricted model 1, the study found that psychological contract violation positively correlated with employee cynicism ( $r=.27$ ,  $t=5.33$ ,  $p<.05$ ). There was however no significant relationship between Abusive supervision and cynicism ( $r=.07$ ,  $t=1.20$ ,  $p>.05$ ). A positive and statistically significant relationship was found between psychological contract violation and job related gossip (JRG) ( $r=.22$ ,  $t=4.74$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Similarly, the relationship between psychological contract violation (PCV) and non-job related gossip (NJRG) was positive and statistically

significant ( $r=.26$ ,  $t=6.14$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Interestingly, the relationship between abusive supervision and job related gossip though positive was insignificant ( $r=.04$ ,  $t=.66$ ,  $p>.05$ ). Similar findings were made between abusive supervision and non-job related gossip.

In the unrestricted Model 2 where controls were added, the study found no significant variation or departure from the restricted model 1. Just as indicated in the first model, the relationship between PCV and ECN was positive and significant. Again, that of PCV, job related gossip and non-job related gossip were statistically significant and positive. Abusive supervision still remained statistically insignificant for both JRG and NJRG.

### **5.2.1 Results of hypothesized Constructs**

A total of 12 hypotheses were tested. The study found a positive and statistically significant relationship between PCV and ECN ( $B=0.27$ ,  $t=5.33$ ,  $p<.05$ ). **Hypothesis 1 was supported.**

The second hypothesis was to test the relationship between AS and ECN. As priori, the researcher expected abusive supervision to strongly affect cynicism. This was however not supported. The study found no significant relationship between Abusive supervision and cynicism ( $\beta =.07$ ,  $t=1.20$ ,  $p>.05$ ). **Hypothesis 2 was not supported.**

Psychological contract violation was hypothesized to significantly predict job related gossip. The study found positive and statistically significant relationship between psychological contract violation and job related gossip (JRG) ( $\beta =.22$ ,  $t=4.74$ ,  $p<.05$ ). **Hypothesis 3 was supported.**

Psychological contract violation was also hypothesized to positively predict non-job related gossip. As presented in Table 4.5 above, the study found a positive and statistically significant

relationship between psychological contract violation (PCV) and non-job related gossip (NJRG) ( $B=.26$ ,  $t=6.14$ ,  $p<.05$ ). **Hypothesis 4 was also supported.**

The researcher envisaged that when workers experience abuse at the work place, they more likely would want to talk about such abuses to others especially at the work place; hence abusive supervision was hypothesized to positively and significantly predict job related gossip. The study found that the relationship between abusive supervision and job related gossip though positive was insignificant ( $\beta =.04$ ,  $t=.66$ ,  $p>.05$ ). **Hypothesis 5 was not supported.**

In the next hypothesis, abusive supervision was not hypothesized to significantly predict non-job related gossip. The study found that the relationship between abusive supervision and non-job related gossip though positive, was not significant ( $\beta =.08$ ,  $t=1.52$ ,  $p>.05$ ). **Hypothesis 6 was supported.**

The researcher expected job related gossip to positively and significantly affect employee cynicism. The study found a significant positive relationship between job related gossip and employee cynicism ( $\beta =.133$ ,  $t=2.66$ ,  $p<.05$ ). **Hypothesis 7 was also supported.**

Could non-job related gossip culminate into employee cynicism? The researcher hypothesized a significant association between the two variables. The findings suggest that non-job related gossip significantly predicted cynicism ( $\beta =.211$ ,  $t=3.90$ ,  $p<.00$ ). **Hypothesis 8 was supported.**

The researcher also expected job related gossip to positively and significantly mediate between PCV and employee cynicism. This hypothesis was supported by the research finding; thus, there was a positive and statistically significant relationship between psychological contract violation and employee

cynicism. The direct path ( $\beta = .27, t=5.33$  and  $p<.05$ ). The indirect path was also statistically significant. The mediation identified was partial. **Thus hypothesis 9 was supported.**

For Hypothesis 10, non-job related gossip was hypothesised to significantly mediate between psychological contract violation and employee cynicism. The findings suggested a significant direct path ( $\beta = .27, t=5.33, p<.05$ ), the path from PCV--->NJRg was also significant and the same for NJRG--> ECN. Based on the assumption of Baron and Kenny's (1986), the study concludes that there is a partial mediation. **Hypothesis 10 was supported.**

The study also sought to examine the mediation role of job-related gossip in abusive and cynicism relationship. In this case Job related gossip was hypothesised to significantly mediate between abusive and cynicism relationship. The analysis revealed an insignificant direct path between AS ---> ECN ( $\beta = .07, t=1.20, p>.05$ ). It is thus concluded that job related gossip did not mediate abusive supervision and cynicism relationship. Hypothesis 11 was therefore not supported. In the final hypothesis, non-job related gossip was hypothesised not to significantly mediate between abusive and cynicism relationship. The study found no significant direct ( $\beta = .07, t=1.20, p>.05$ ) and indirect path. It is therefore concluded that no mediation exists in AS-->ECN relationship using non-job related gossip. Hypothesis 12 was also supported.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study concludes that Job-related gossip was high among health workers in Ghana with a mean of 4.6663 approximate 5, and a median of 4.750. This is clearly higher than Non-job related gossip with a mean of 4.000 and median of 4.0584. Cynicism was also relatively high among health workers in Ghana with a mean of 4.4611 and a median of 4.500. The level of Abusive supervision was moderately high with a mean value of 4.0713, minimum of 2 and a maximum of 7.00.

Psychological contract violation was also moderate. The study also concludes that Psychological contract violation (PCV), Abusive supervision (AS) and Gossip (JRG & NJRG) were averagely higher among Type 1 health workers (workers in Kumasi) compared to Type 2 health workers (workers outside Kumasi) except Cynicism.

The study further concludes that Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) predicts Job Related Gossip (JRG) while the hypothesis that Abusive Supervision (AS) significantly affects Employee Cynicism (ECN) was not supported especially in the present data set although previous studies support the relationship between abusive supervision and cynicism (Bauer and Green, 1996; Rosen et al., 2011). Similarly, no significant relationship was found between Abusive Supervision (AS) and Job Related Gossip (JRG); thus workers did not necessarily engage in job related gossip because of abuse supervision.

Finally, the study concluded that both Job related and Non Job related gossip partially mediated Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) and Employee Cynicism (ECN) relationships. However, Job related and Non-job related gossip did not mediate Abusive Supervision (AS) and Employee Cynicism (ECN) relationships.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

On the basis of the above findings, the following recommendations are made.

First, there is need to bridge the gap between Type 1 and Type 2 health workers especially when it comes to resource allocation and motivational needs of those who work in communities with inadequate facilities. It is no surprise that many health workers decline posting to such communities. The establishment of rural health fund could be considered.

It is also recommended that the largest employer within the health sector (Government of Ghana) works at correcting perceived psychological contract violations observed by the study. As highlighted, psychological contract violation was moderately high which partly explain the rate of worker agitations experienced within the health sector. As reported by the Daily Graphic August 9, (2015), previous strike actions in the sector included groups such as the Ghana Medical Association (GMA), Pharmacists, Midwives and Nurses. Cynicism was also relatively high among health workers in Ghana. The level of Abusive supervision was however moderate.

Management of health institutions in the country are also encouraged to periodically appraise the performance of supervisors especially on dimensions such as abusive supervision. This is crucial as it has potential of affecting the quality of health service.

Finally, management of health institutions must discourage their staff from disclosing confidential patient records or estopped from engaging in gossips that have dire consequences for the hospital.

#### **5.4 Areas for further research**

The following are recommended for further investigation.

1. The interactive effect of Psychological contract violation and Abusive supervision on Employee Cynicism among health workers in Ghana.
2. The effect of abusive supervision on the quality of health service delivery in Ghana.
3. A comparative analysis of cynicism among senior and junior officers within the health sector.

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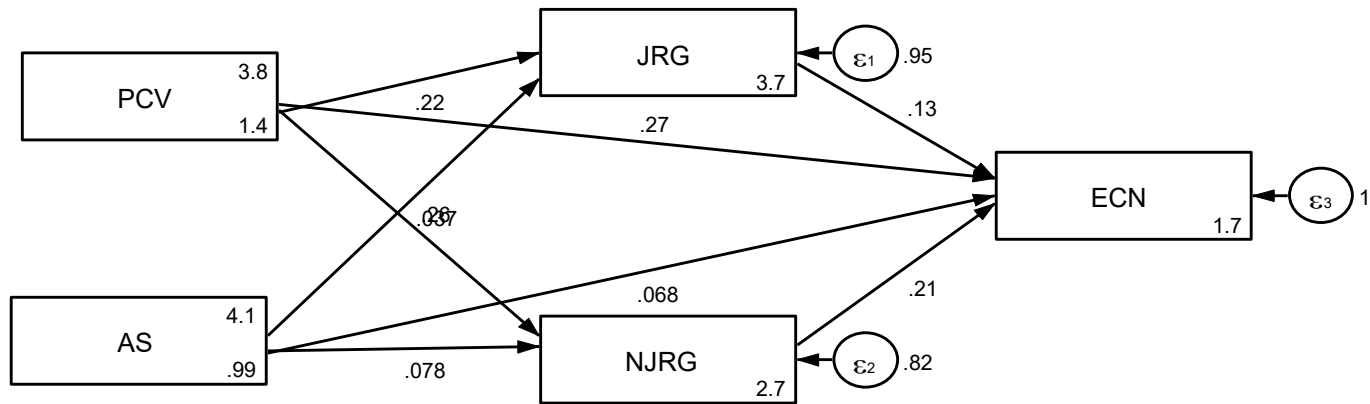
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## APPENDIX I

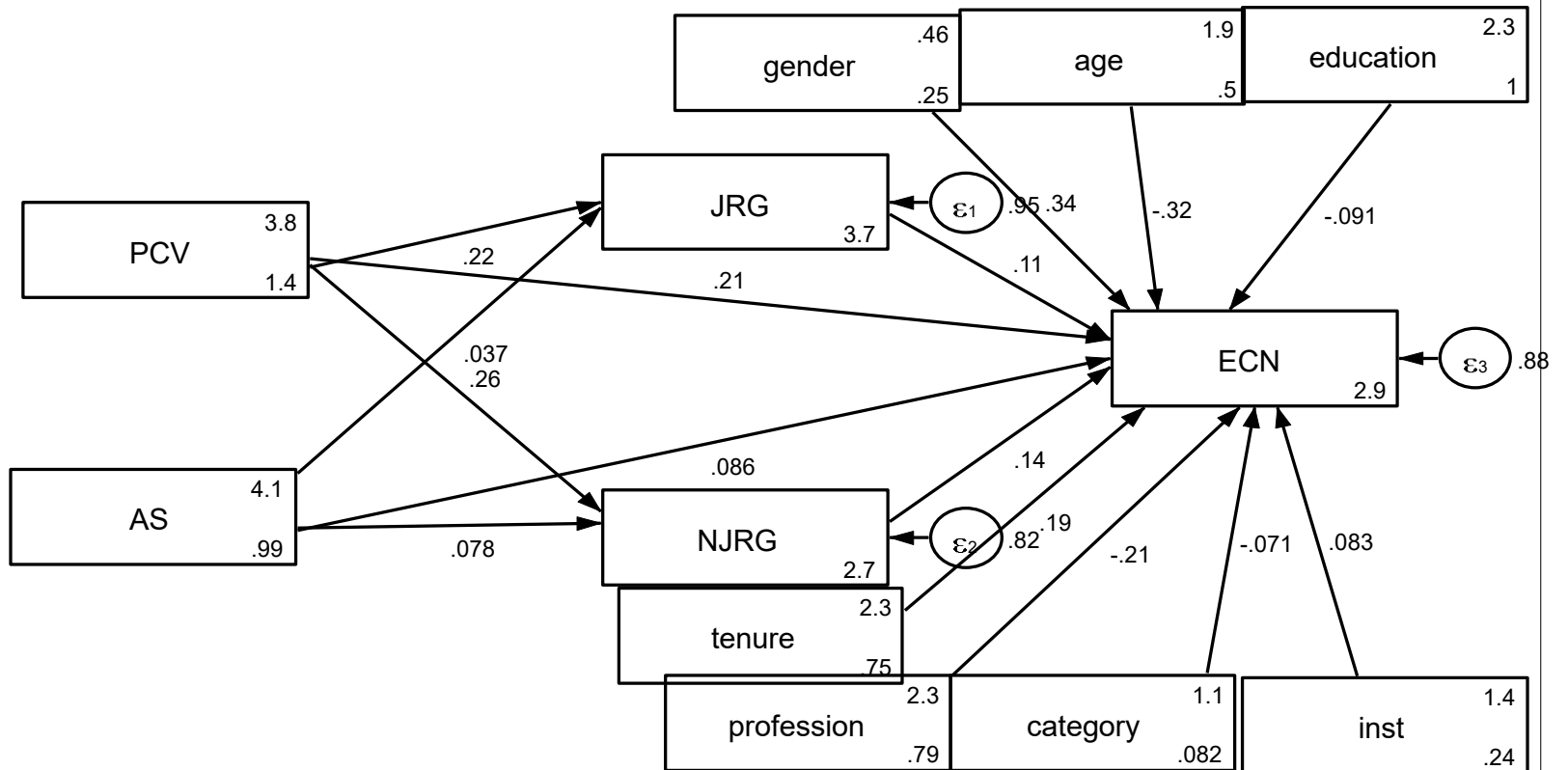
### Model 1: Restricted Model



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## APPENDIX II

### Model 2: Unrestricted Model



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## APPENDIX III

### QUESTIONNAIRE

This research aims at examining the effects of psychological contract violation, abusive supervision and gossip on employee cynicism among health workers in Ghana. The work is strictly for academic purpose. Participants are therefore assured of utmost confidentiality. The questionnaire is structured into 5 parts taking cognisance of the fact that most health-workers have a busy schedule. In view of this, the questionnaire has been simplified and expected to take a maximum of 15 minutes to complete. We are grateful for your time and willingness to participate in the survey.

#### **PART A: PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT VIOLATION**

In this part, respondents are required to indicate **(v)** the extent to which they believe their employers have fulfilled promises made to them using a seven point scale ranging from **(1) “Much Strongly Disagree to (7) “Much strongly Agree”**.

N	Assessing employer’s commitment to keeping promises made to employees	Much strongly disagree				Much strongly agree		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	I have not received everything promised to me in exchange for my contributions							
2.	My employer has broken many of its promises to me even though I have upheld my side of the deal							
3.	I feel extremely frustrated by how I have been treated by my organization							
4.	I feel that my organization has violated the contract between us							
5.	I feel betrayed by my organization							
6.	I feel a great deal of anger toward my organization							
7.	I’m beginning to have some regrets working with this organisation							

## **PART B: ABUSIVE SUPERVISION**

Here, respondents are required to assess the behaviour of their supervisors using the likert scale anchored **1= Not at all recorded, 7=Very much so**

N	Assessing supervisors' behaviour towards employees	Not at all recorded				Very much so		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	My boss ridicules me							
2.	My boss gives me the silent treatment							
3.	My boss puts me down in front of others							
4.	My boss invades my privacy							
5.	My boss does not allow me to interact with my coworkers							
6.	My boss shouts at me even in public							
7.	I feel intimidated any time I stand before my boss							

## **PART C: GOSSIP (JOB-RELATED GOSSIP & NON-JOB-RELATED GOSSIP)**

In this part, respondents are required to assess the following items using a 7 point likert scale where: **1 = Never, 7 =Always**

N	What is your response to the following questions?	Never				Always		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	<b>Job-related gossip</b>							
1.	Have you recently talked about colleague's excellent job performance?							
2.	Have you recently talked about colleague's diligence and dedication to work?							
3.	Have you recently talked about colleague's credibility in job role and experience?							
4.	Have you recently talked about colleague's good interpersonal skills?							
5.	Have you recently talked about colleague's demonstration of job morality?							
6.	Have you recently talked about colleague's poor job performance?							
7.	Have you recently talked about colleague's inexperience and poor job knowledge?							
	<b>Non-job-related gossip</b>							
1	Have you recently talked about colleague's recent joyful life events such as purchasing a house or car?							

2	Have you recently talked about colleague's recent sorrowful life events such as illness or car accident?								
3	Have you recently talked about colleague's new friendship or love relationship?								
4	Have you recently talked about colleague's poor interaction with children?								
5	Have you recently talked about colleague's divorce, separation and marital problems?								
6	Have you recently talked about colleague's engagement or getting married?								
7	Have you recently talked about colleague's good relationship with family?								

**PART D: EMPLOYEE CYNICISM**

In this part, respondents are required to state the extent to which they agree with the following items using a 7-point likert scale where:

1 = extremely disagree, 7 = extremely agree

N	Assessing employees' attitude to workplace	Extremely disagree			Extremely Agree			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	In the place/company I work for.....							
1	I dislike people when they play games against my performance							
2	Most colleagues at the workplace do not treat their job as important							
3	Most colleagues report late without any excuse							
4	Some colleagues idle about all day without working							
5	There is constant misunderstanding between junior staff and senior management							
6	There is less incentive to work							
7	Most people pretend to work only when their supervisors are watching							

**PART E: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

1. Gender             Female             Male
2. Age (please specify).....
3. Education             HND             First degree             Masters
4. Working tenure (years):  less than 1yr     2-5yrs     6-9yrs     10yrs and above
5. Profession:  Laboratory technician     Nurse     Administrative Assistant     Doctor
6. Category of employee:  Junior staff             Senior staff

7. Department: .....

8. Name of institution: .....

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