

# The Relationship between Social Irresponsibility and Deviant Behavior in the Workplace: The Mediating Role of Moral Anger

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Social responsibility as an ethical framework commits a person, whether an individual or an organization, to participate in social affairs, the implementation of which will benefit society at large. Given the importance of this component, the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between social irresponsibility and deviant behavior in the workplace with regard to the mediating role of moral anger in employees of Yasuj University of Medical Sciences.

**Material and Methods:** The research method is of an applied type based on the purpose and is descriptive-survey in nature. The statistical population of this study is 141 employees of Yasuj University of Medical Sciences, which was selected as a sample due to the small size of the target population. The data collection tools were questionnaires on social irresponsibility, deviant behavior, and moral anger. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (structural equation modeling method with partial least squares approach) in SPSS and PLS software were used to analyze the data.

**Results:** The results of the findings showed that social irresponsibility has a positive and significant effect on moral anger, moral anger has a significant and positive effect on deviant behavior, social irresponsibility has a significant and positive effect on deviant behavior, and social irresponsibility has a significant and positive effect on deviant behavior, considering the mediating role of moral anger.

**Conclusion:** The complex relationships between the research variables indicate that the higher the anger and moral deviance in individuals, the greater the likelihood of aggressive behavior and social irresponsibility.

**Keywords:** *Social irresponsibility, Deviant behavior, Moral anger*

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## INTRODUCTION

Today, the increasing complexity of organizations and the increase in the number of unethical and illegal acts in the workplace have made it necessary for managers and leaders to pay attention to creating and maintaining professional ethics, responsibility, and social accountability in all organizations. Today, managers must do things that are acceptable to

society and consistent with its values, and an organization that cannot adapt to this will not be successful in the implementation stage. In order to maintain or improve its position in society, they must act more towards their social responsibility, and if they ignore it, their scope of activity will be limited [1]. Social responsibility is important for organizations in various ways, the most important of which are:

- Decision-making: Managers can have profound and important effects on different sectors of society, so managers' attention to their social responsibility when making a decision can be of great importance, because a decision that is too narrow and illogical can cause irreparable damage to society.
- If individuals and groups in organizations and institutions consider themselves responsible for various events, incidents, and crises, they will try to solve many of them in a short time and create a healthy society.

Social responsibility as an ethical framework commits a person, whether an individual or an organization, to participating in social affairs, the implementation of which will be beneficial to society at large. Social responsibility means that an individual, as a member of society, actively participates and is not indifferent to problems and dilemmas and can contribute to changes and improvements in conditions. This active participation and presence include everything from participating in environmental cleaning to cash donations or participating in social events. Social responsibility is a modern approach, and irresponsibility can pose a serious challenge to an organization in the modern world [2]. Social irresponsibility means that an individual, as a member of society, does not actively participate and is indifferent to problems and dilemmas and does not contribute to changes and improvements in conditions [3]. The simplest and most relevant way to describe the concept of social irresponsibility is to link it to responsibility, saying that it is about a business's responses to society's expectations, and that social irresponsibility is defined as the failure of a business to meet these expectations [4]. Irresponsibility can be a major driver of deviant behavior in an organization. Employee deviant behavior is intentional behavior that violates organizational norms and threatens the health of the organization and employees, or both. Some

researchers [5] have reported three categories of work behaviors that affect overall job performance: task behaviors, civic behaviors, and deviant behaviors. Of these three areas, deviant behaviors have received less attention. Deviant behaviors in the workplace are defined as a lack of compliance with the organization's norms and expectations, which have two categories: 1) Interpersonal deviant behaviors. 2) Organizational deviant behaviors. Interpersonal deviant behaviors are directed at other employees of the organization. Deviant behaviors directed at individuals, namely clients, customers, and colleagues, are divided into aggression and behavioral-verbal violence, theft, and ridicule. Organizational deviant behaviors target the workplace and the organization in all its physical, psychological, and social dimensions. Deviant behaviors directed at the organization include truancy, lateness, unscheduled absences, destruction of organizational facilities and equipment, intentional disregard for regulations, and personal use of organizational equipment [6]. Numerous other terms have been used and presented to describe the range of harmful employee behaviors in the workplace, such as counterproductive behaviors, counterproductive behaviors, antisocial behaviors, and retaliatory behaviors that have significant overlap with deviant behaviors.

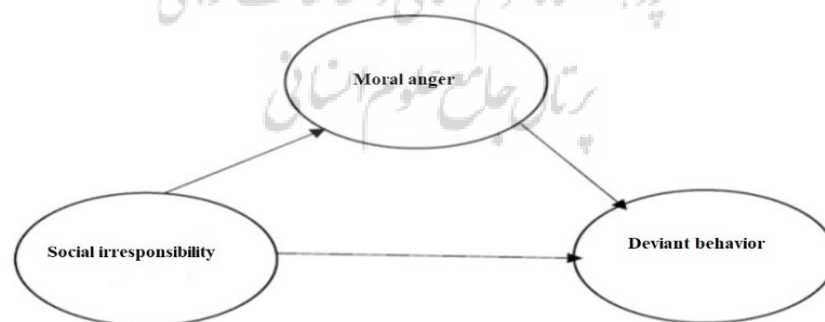
Social pressure theory suggests that employees who are exposed to general workplace pressure and irresponsibility become angry and respond in various ways, including engaging in deviant behavior [7]. Therefore, moral anger may play an important role in the relationship between irresponsibility and deviant behavior. Moral anger is an emotion that is evoked by stimuli that are evaluated as violating moral norms. The subjective experience of anger in response to such stimuli provokes the expression of behavioral responses such as gossiping, shaming, and punishing. Expression of anger can lead to

negative and positive outcomes for the individual and society [8]. Ethical rules reflect the values that govern the company, which are determined in the context of the values of stakeholders and the society in which the company operates. Ethics are more than "being good for its own sake". Every company is made up of people who are responsible for serving other people and ethics are a key component in creating human relationships. By establishing clear values and work rules, every decision made within the company can be in line with its strategic goals. In fact, the benefit of a job is not only in making money in the short term, but also in creating appropriate relationships with society and ensuring long-term profitability [9]. Anger is a complex emotion that is expressed physically and emotionally. Anger is the organism's natural reaction to situations and circumstances in which we are frustrated and feel threatened, or we believe that we will be hurt or that someone has made a mistake about us. This feeling can range from a mild unpleasant feeling to a strong feeling of anger. Anger and aggression are behaviors that aim to harm another person or their property. Aggression can take the form of verbal abuse, threats, or harmful actions. However, anger is an emotion that does not necessarily lead to

aggression; therefore, a person may become angry without necessarily engaging in aggressive behavior. Hostility is a term related to anger and aggression. Hostility refers to a set of attitudes and judgments that provoke aggressive behavior; therefore, anger is an emotion and aggression is a behavior, while hostility is an attitude that includes dislike of others and negative evaluation of them [10]. In light of what has been discussed, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between social irresponsibility and deviant behavior in the workplace, considering the mediating role of moral anger in employees of Yasuj University of Medical Sciences. Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of the study.

Based on the existing research literature, the research hypotheses are:

1. Social irresponsibility has a significant effect on moral anger.
2. Moral anger has a significant effect on deviant behavior.
3. Social irresponsibility has a significant effect on deviant behavior.
4. Social irresponsibility has a significant effect on deviant behavior with respect to moral anger.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual model of the research

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present research method is applied in terms of purpose and (descriptive-survey) in nature.

The statistical population of this study is medical science employees in Yasuj city, whose number is 141 people. Due to the small size of the

community, the census was used and the entire community was studied as a sample. The results of examining the gender status showed that of the 141 participants, 0.74% were male and 0.26% were female, and 0.14% of the respondents had work experience of less than 5 years, 0.36% between 6 and 10 years, 0.21% between 11 and 15 years, and 0.43% over 16 years. 0.43% of the respondents had a bachelor's degree, 0.57% of the respondents had a master's degree or higher.

The following questionnaires were used to collect data:

- Social Irresponsibility Questionnaire (Ahmadi 2005)
- Standard Deviant Behavior Questionnaire (Molaki 2006)

- Moral Anger Questionnaire (Abbasi and Omrani 2022)

To determine the validity of the questionnaires in the present study, face validity, convergent validity, and divergent validity were used. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to determine the construct validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability were used to determine the reliability of the questionnaires.

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (structural equation modeling method with partial least squares approach) were used in SPSS and PLS software to analyze the data.

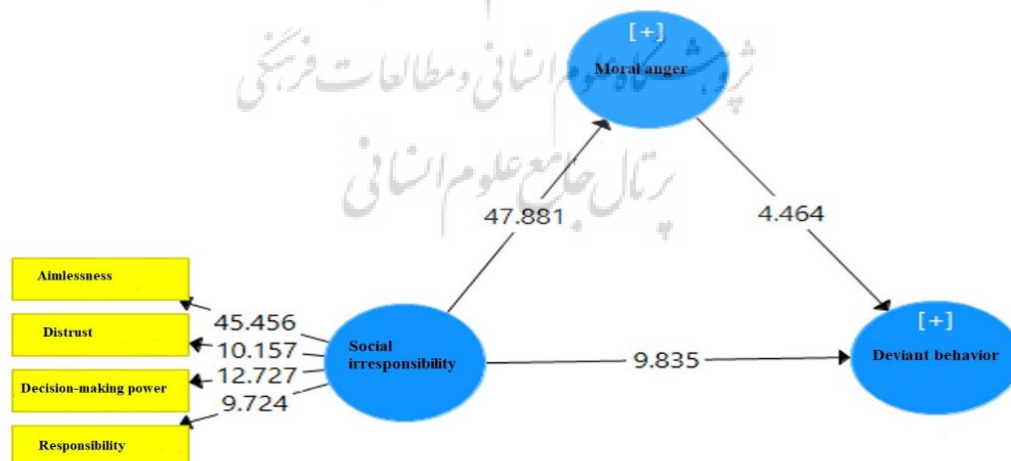
**Table 1:** Cronbach's alpha coefficient values and composite reliability

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	composite reliability
Social irresponsibility	0.881	0.919
Moral anger	0.831	0.899
Deviant behavior	0.844	0.906

## RESULTS

The relationship between the variables under study in each of the research hypotheses was

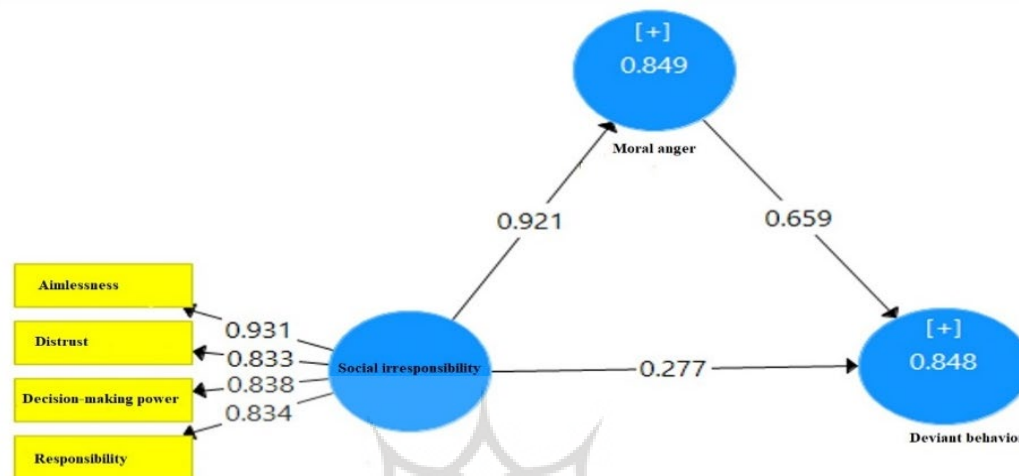
tested based on a causal structure using the partial least squares (PLS) technique.



**Figure 2.** Research model in meaningful mode

Figure (2) shows the conceptual model of the research in the meaningful state for the research variables. In the meaningful state, for the hypothesis to be confirmed, it must be outside the

range (t-statistic outside the range of negative 1.96 to positive 1.96). If it is within this range, the hypothesis will be rejected.



**Figure 3.** Research model in standard mode

Figure (3) shows the conceptual model of the research in the standard mode for the research variables. In the standard mode, it is determined how much the independent variable affects the dependent variable and whether it is positive or negative.

#### Model fit test

For this model, the value of this index is 0.018, and given that it is less than 10 percent, it can be said that the model has a good fit. As a result, the data of this study have a good fit with the factor structure and theoretical foundation of the research, and this indicates that the questions are aligned with the theoretical constructs.

**Table 2.** Model fit index

Variable	Acceptable range	Observed rate	Result
SRMR	Less than 0.08	0.018	Proper fit
D_ULS	Less than 0.95	0.893	Proper fit
D_G	Less than 0.95	0.624	Proper fit
Chi-square	More than 1.96	675.548	Proper fit
NFI	More than 0.25	0.485	Proper fit

## DISCUSSION

First hypothesis: Social irresponsibility has a significant effect on moral anger.

The results of structural equation analysis to examine social irresponsibility on moral anger showed that the significance level is less than 0.05, which indicates a significant relationship. In

addition, to determine the direction of the relationship, the beta coefficient value, which is +0.921, indicates a direct effect of social irresponsibility on moral anger. Also, the t-statistic value (+881.47) was obtained, which is greater than the critical and positive value, which is significant at the 95% confidence level.



Therefore, social irresponsibility has a positive and significant effect on moral anger. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the results of research by some researchers [8, 11-13].

Second hypothesis: Moral anger has a significant effect on deviant behavior.

The results of structural equation analysis to investigate moral anger on deviant behavior showed that the significance level is less than 0.05, which indicates a significant relationship. In addition, to determine the direction of the relationship, the beta coefficient value, which is +0.659, indicates a direct effect of moral anger on deviant behavior. Also, the t-statistic value (+464) was obtained, which is greater than the critical and positive value, which is significant at the 95% confidence level. As a result, moral anger has a positive and significant effect on deviant behavior. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the studies of some researchers [8, 11,14].

Third hypothesis: Social irresponsibility has a significant effect on deviant behavior.

The results of structural equation analysis for social irresponsibility on deviant behavior showed that the significance level is less than 0.05, which indicates a significant relationship. In addition, to determine the direction of the relationship, the beta coefficient value, which is +0.277, indicates a direct effect of social irresponsibility on deviant behavior. Also, the t-statistic value (+9.835) was obtained, which is greater than the critical and positive value, which is significant at the 95% confidence level. As a result, social irresponsibility has a positive and significant effect on deviant behavior. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the studies of some researchers [12, 15, 16].

Fourth hypothesis: Social irresponsibility has a significant effect on deviant behavior with respect to the mediating role of moral anger.

The results obtained from the structural equations show that the significance level is less

than 0.05, which indicates a significant relationship. In order to determine the direction of the relationship, the beta coefficient value of +0.153 indicates an indirect effect of social irresponsibility on deviant behavior, considering the mediating role of moral anger. Also, the t-statistic value of (+4.003) was obtained, which is greater than the critical and positive value, which is significant at the 95% confidence level. As a result, social irresponsibility has a positive and significant effect on deviant behavior with respect to moral anger. The results of these studies are consistent with the studies of some researchers [11, 12, 16,17].

The findings of this study in the field of investigating the relationship between social irresponsibility and deviant behavior in the workplace with the mediating role of moral anger in employees of Yasuj University of Medical Sciences have valuable findings, some of which we will discuss here:

Based on the first hypothesis, it is suggested that:

- The results of this study should be used in the field of social responsibility education by experts in Yasuj Medical Sciences and other cities.
- Implementing social responsibilities has positive consequences such as increasing organizational trust and satisfaction with the organization. It is suggested that Yasuj Medical Sciences should pay attention to various aspects of social responsibility when making decisions about strategic planning, resource allocation, and marketing communications.

Based on the second hypothesis, it is suggested that:

- Industrial consulting experts in Yasuj Medical Sciences should hold workshops to reduce anger and deviant behaviors.
- To reduce moral anger, individuals should examine nutrition and provide psychological counseling in the organization.

- Based on the third hypothesis, it is suggested that:
- Identify employees who engage in deviant behaviors, punish and hold them accountable, and in some cases, give them a chance to make amends.
- Based on the fourth hypothesis, it is suggested that:
- Medical Sciences managers should take on the management of some public activities to improve their social responsibility by using public relations based on social responsibility in order to leave a more favorable image of themselves and be able to reduce deviant behaviors.
- If medical sciences managers are seeking to achieve trust and reduce deviant behaviors in the organization, it is necessary to pay attention to all aspects of social responsibility in a desirable manner; This attention should be particularly focused on higher levels of social responsibility, namely the level of moral responsibility and charitable responsibility, which are non-mandatory and voluntary.

## CONCLUSION

Social responsibility as an ethical framework commits a person, whether an individual or an organization, to participate in social affairs that will benefit society at large. Social irresponsibility means that a person, as a member of society, does not actively participate and is indifferent to problems and dilemmas and cannot contribute to changes and improvements in conditions. Social responsibility is the opposite of indifference; whenever a problem or crisis arises in society, every responsible citizen considers it his duty to participate effectively in solving that problem in turn and try to solve it. Deviant behavior can be seen as a counter-action to irresponsibility and unfair behavior. However, despite the negative consequences of corporate social irresponsibility, there is little understanding of the connection

between corporate social irresponsibility and deviant behavior in the workplace. Deviant behavior of employees is intentional behavior that violates organizational norms and threatens the health of the organization and employees or both. Deviant and unethical behavior is considered a chronic disease in the organization, and these moral crises can weaken the competitive power of organizations. In such an environment that is full of irresponsibility and deviant behavior, anger is the most predictable reaction. Moral anger is at least as old as civilization itself. People get angry when they think that a moral norm has been violated. Therefore, these complex relationships indicate that the higher the anger and moral deviations in individuals, the greater the likelihood of aggressive behavior and social irresponsibility.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues (such as plagiarism, conscious satisfaction, misleading, making and or forging data, publishing or sending to two places, redundancy and etc.) have been fully considered by the writers.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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