

## Effect of Idiosyncratic Deals on Unethical Pro- Organizational Behaviors: Perspective From Pharmaceutical Industry

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### Abstract

*The study aims to examine the effect of idiosyncratic business deals on unethical organizational behaviors in the drug manufacturing industry of Pakistan. The data was collected from 308 managers in the pharmaceutical services sector and exposed to regression and structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings, which are based on social exchange theory, confirm that task (TID), schedule (SID), location (LID), and financial (FID) idiosyncratic deals are all significantly positive predictors of unethical pro-organizational behaviors. The study adds to I-deals literature and has numerous practical implications. The executives should know that UPB exist and they should be the cognizant of the predictors of UPB as a way to diminish prevailing UPB. The study is important in the sense as it demonstrates that all four dimensions of I-deals will be likely to translate into UPB. The study has social implications as it is executed in pharmaceutical services sectors. The pharmaceutical firms are supposed to convey the correct and genuine information to doctors in the best interest of patients. The implications for human resource managers, as well as future directions and limitations, are also discussed.*

*Keywords: idiosyncratic deals (I-deals), social exchange theory (SET), unethical pro-organizational behaviors (UPB), pharmaceuticals*

UPB are pro-social behaviors executed in violation of norms, ethics, and established standards of morality (Umphress, Bingham, and Mitchell 2010). Workplace conducts are divided into two categories: ethical conducts and unethical conducts (Qureshi and Ahmed 2021). Harmful and beneficial UPB are examples of unethical behaviors (Zhan & Liu, 2022). UPB have gained the attention of scholars due to their conflicting nature (Zeng et al. 2021). The UPB are undesirable and unacceptable as they are unethical and ought to be discouraged (Yang et al., 2021). The UPB generate benefits only temporarily and are damaging in the long term. They harm the reputation of the organizations and cause financial losses to the organizations (Tang & Li, 2021).

Pharmaceutical services, like other service industries, are vulnerable to unethical workplace behaviors such as stealing, theft and unscrupulous misappropriation, which are detrimental to the organization's bottom line (Qureshi, A.R.;Raza 2022). In the pharmaceutical industry, there are numerous examples of UPB, such as withholding genuine information from customers about products and the company, exaggerating the benefits of a product and telling a lie in order to win the support of customers for the organization (Qureshi and Raza 2022). There is lot of research on drug related unethical practices, but research on the antecedents of unethical practices is scarce (Qureshi, Raza, and Ahmed 2022). The unethical practices in pharmaceutical industry are deeply imbedded and these companies find it hard to compete without adopting these practices (Ahmed and Chandani 2020; Qureshi, A.R.;Raza 2022; Qureshi and Raza 2022).

This study aims to examine the influence of I-deals on UPB in pharma selling, the association that has not received scholarly attention yet. Organizations use negotiated settlements to ensure the wellbeing and comfort of their employees (Hattori, Hoang, and Bich 2021). The I-deals send the message that the company is apprehensive of the individual requirements and skills of its workers (Qureshi and Raza 2022). The lens of SET (Blau 1964) provides us a base for explaining the connection of I-deals with UPB. In pertinent with SET (Blau 1964), i-deals potentially can transform to UPB in violation of ethical principles. To avoid feeling guilty about their actions, employees engage in cognitive minimization as a means of alleviating their feelings of indebtedness to the organization (Tang et al., 2021). The study incorporates all four dimensions of I-deals to develop improved comprehension and implementation of i-deals within social exchange context. In order to simplify the research problem researcher has proposed the following research question and objective;

**Research Question:** Whether idiosyncratic deals influence UPB in Pharmaceutical industry?

**Research Objective:** To examine the effect of idiosyncratic deals on UPB in Pharmaceutical industry.

The subsequent, is the structure of this article. First of all, we describe the research model and hypotheses, which are based on SET (Blau 1964), and then we discuss the findings. The following section describes the methodology then measures, and afterwards data analysis techniques used in this research. Finally, we discuss our findings, with a particular emphasis on implications, and we identify the limitations as well as future research.

### Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

#### Theoretical Evidence

The relationship of TID, SID, LID and FID with UPB is depicted in the figure 1, which follows.

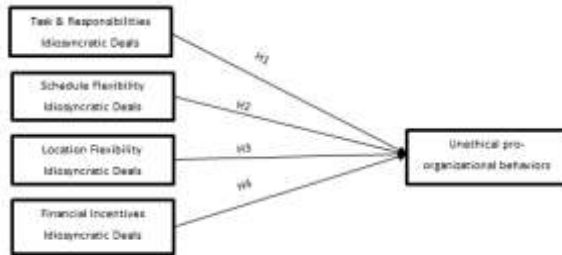


Figure 1 Research model and hypotheses

#### UPB in pharmaceutical industry

According to SET (Blau, 1964), firms and their personnel contribute in an inter-reliant association (the outcomes are built on a mixture of firms and their personnel' exertions). The social interactions between workers and their firms are driven by rules of mutuality (Umphress et al. 2010). Largely exchange inequalities are fixed in an eye for an eye or tit for tat approach: constructive dealing from the business is paid back by the workers with affirmative attitudes and conducts, while ruthless handling is replied with negative attitudes and conducts (Umphress et al. 2010).As per previous studies, workers are greatly expected to participate in UPB once they get favorable handling from the firms (Jiang et al., 2022). In the succeeding sections, we will argue precise practices of positive dealing received by workers that may drive them to execute UPB. UPB are intentional performed to benefit the business (Umphress et al. 2010). The UPB are contradictory in nature as they are performed in violation of ethics, norms with the purpose of supporting the organization(Qureshi and Ahmed 2021). UPB may benefit the organization but they can cost the firms (Zeng et al. 2021). The organization might lose the customers, face litigation, irreparable financial damages and damage to repute (Zhan & Liu, 2022). The workers may hide the genuine information from the clients, or over exaggerate the information regarding product or even tell a lie to woo the support of customers (Qureshi and Ahmed 2021). Other instances of UPB include selling of expired or damaged products to the customers or withhold a refund to a customer mistakenly overpriced (Lian et al. 2022) .

The pharmaceutical companies appear to ignore the benefits of patients and are engaged in pushing the market (Khowaja and Feroz 2020). The moral act of an action cannot be judged by the consequences as the consequences cannot be predicted, intention is important (Miranda 2016). We should treat others as we want ourselves be treated, not through interests but through convictions (Miranda 2016). The modern business world in severe competition ignore upholding the moral principles which are advocated in all religions and philosophers (Miranda 2016). Three words are very important in the discussion of ethics namely honesty, integrity and values. The ethics were considered associated with value system of person (Miranda 2016). Once following the path of honesty and integrity used to be considered the way of life. The doctors on entering their medical profession were expected to follow laid down moral principles, teachers

were supposed to adhere to ethical standards and lawyers to follow rules of justice to defend their clients (Miranda, 2016). The time has come to think about ethics. We have made so many compromises in this era of intense competition on quantity and quality (Qureshi and Raza 2023). The consumers are purchasing reduced quantities in oversight adding profits to sellers. Fake medicines are being sold in the market at the cost of their lives heavily cheating the consumers (Khowaja and Feroz 2020). The artificial milk that contains urea, soap, oil what not, has become big industry creating an overall unethical business environment (Miranda 2016). The commitment to ethics definitely pays off. Johnson & Johnson, a big pharmaceutical issued call to take back stocks of Tylenol after knowing seven deaths who administered this drug contaminated with poison (Miranda 2016). This move cost the company some 50 million after taxes. But the company has recovered the losses, regained the trust and confidence of millions of its customers (Miranda 2016).

The company is prospering while adhering to ethical standards. The company might have destroyed that time but it availed of the opportunity to boost its image in the eyes of its customers worldwide (Khowaja and Feroz 2020). It is also relevant for the individuals who can adhere to moral standards with faith and honesty, can still raise the business. The cost of indulging in unethical practices when environment is favorable is high manifolds as you cannot regain trust once it is lost (Khowaja and Feroz 2020). There could be the differences in norms in various countries of the world as there are nuances in the practice of ethical standards but concepts regarding ethics are same everywhere all over the world (Miranda 2016). As it is learnt from ethical companies, that path of ethical standards is full of difficulties but it is beneficial and rewarding in the long run (Miranda 2016). The unethical practices in pharmaceutical industry are very common (Qureshi, A.R; Raza 2022). There are two aspects, drug related unethical practices and drug promotion related unethical practices (Ahmed & Chandani, 2020). There is lot of research on drug related unethical practices, but research on how to discourage unethical drug promotion related unethical practices is scarce (Ahmed & Chandani, 2020). The unethical practices in pharmaceutical industry are very deep rooted and these companies find it hard to compete without indulging in these practices, it is because the unethical practices have become an integral part of the drug promotion (Gul et al. 2021). Unethical practices in pharma industry have become acceptable norms and these unethical practices are carried out in collaboration with doctors, pharmacies, government, private hospitals at the cost of patient well-being (Ahmed & Chandani, 2020). The unethical promotion of the drugs include giving monetary benefits to doctors on monthly basis, sponsoring within country visits, sponsoring foreign visits, providing the doctors give away, medical equipment, furnishing doctor homes and doctor chambers (Ahmed & Chandani, 2020). According to a study on the liaison between medical and pharmaceutical professionals, the pharmaceutical industry has made medical professional corrupt (Ahmed & Chandani, 2020). They persuade the doctors to extensively prescribe their drugs when better and cheaper medicines are available in the market, as a reward doctors receive birth day parties, wedding receptions, recreational visits to foreign countries along with families, even providing them cars all at the cost of patient wellbeing (Ahmed & Chandani, 2020). As the drug companies cannot legally advertise their products, they on one hand persuade the doctors to prescribe their products, at the same time they influence the consumers through press releases, and web pages and use patient groups, chartrooms (Ahmed & Chandani, 2020). Although both pharma companies and physicians are responsible for unethical practices, these are pharmaceutical firms who initiate unscrupulous unethical practices and then doctors are blamable for the continuance of these unethical practices (Gul et al. 2021). Doctors themselves demand rewards for patronizing the drugs and are reluctant to prescribe the drugs of firms who do not fulfill their demands (Ahmed & Chandani, 2020). The multinational pharmaceutical firms resort to aggressive unethical marketing practices to recover heavy expenditures on research & development of new molecules (Gul et al. 2021). The national pharmaceutical firms have the choice of procuring the cheap raw material from any country and they don't have to spend heavy money on research & development, therefore their products have low prices (Ahmed, 2014). There are many unethical practices in health sector that are differentiated into monetary and non-monetary unethicality (Cohen, 2007). The illegal and unethical marketing practices are growing in health sector (Cohen, 2007). The use of public offices for the private practice is common (Qureshi et al. 2022). Ghost workers staff absenteeism and

shaving of duty hours are routinely exercised ignoring moral standards (Qureshi et al. 2022). Kickbacks, illegal fees, clever book keeping, over invoicing overpayments thefts, pilferage are on the rise without paying attention to morality (Cohen, 2007).

Various estimates, some as high as 30%, have been put forward about counterfeit drugs selling on the world market (Cohen, 2007). Major countries involved in producing and shipping such drugs are the same, which are big producers of drugs anyway (Cohen, 2007). Counterfeit drugs may or may not contain the same substance, in the same quantity, and of the same quality, and may lead to unexpected consequences (Cohen, 2007). However, like addictive substances (Drugs), this is multibillion dollar business and is not easy to counter (Cohen, 2007). Quality of a product is not a constant which would be automatically always maintained (Cohen, 2007). Each production batch needs the same meticulousness to maintain quality. Health regulators are required to monitor all elements of supply chain/production to ensure quality (Cohen, 2007). It starts from raw material sources, covers production, quality testing at all stages, and logistics till it reached the patient properly (Qureshi and Raza 2022). A lot remains to be desired in this long spectrum in developing countries, such as Pakistan.

### ***Idiosyncratic deals***

Drawing from the Blau's (1964) social exchange works, researchers proposed that i-deals have the possibility to impact worker approach and performance since they hint that the firm is determined to preserving a high-grade exchange association (Kong et al., 2020). Social exchange mentions voluntary acts that are driven by the pay backs employees are anticipated to fetch from others (Taser et al. 2021). In a social give-and-take association, the enticements a company offers go outside short-range financial rewards (Rosen et al., 2013). They embrace a drawn-out attention to worker's welfare as well as an interest in the worker's career inside the organization (Sun et al., 2021). Furthermore, while the preliminary act of contribution in social interactions is voluntary and complementation is anticipated, it is not pre-defined or conceivable (Qureshi and Raza 2022). Reasonably, these exchanges are founded on what one party has to give to the other (Qureshi, A.R;Raza 2022). For instance, workers may extend struggle and faithfulness to their firms, while companies may offer reimbursement, acknowledgment, and career progression prospects (Rosen et al., 2013).

The effects of SET are obvious through all i-deals works (Anand et al. 2018). SET postulates that workers who generate distinct voluntary efforts may not be assured of any categorical reciprocation, however might be encouraged to make contributions by anticipated imminent returns (Anand et al. 2018). Social exchange relations frequently cultivate because the employer and worker are codependent, with one party in a role of assisting the other realize objectives (Hattori et al., 2021). Likewise, i-deals grow since they are reciprocally beneficial to the worker and the company (Rosen et al., 2013).

I-deals typically encompass a negotiation drill whereby a worker requests for, and gets, a wanted arrangement (Ilie 2012). Subsequently, the company encourages or keeps intact that respected employee (Kong et al., 2020). Since both parties exhibit different preferences, personalized negotiation delivers the prospect for a win-win situation to the satisfaction of both parties (Rosen et al., 2013). In the following sections we describe that these four dimensions are likely to translate into UPB with indifference to established ethical standards.

### ***TID and UPB***

Task & Responsibilities i-deals refer to the discussions the employees hold with their supervisors for extra responsibilities or tasks that can better develop their skills or desired position that makes use of their exceptional abilities (Rosen et al., 2013). The i-deals literature is rooted in SET (Blau 1964), which focuses on the dynamics of resource interactions that happen between workers and the proprietor (Anand et al. 2018). From workers' perspective i-deals send message regarding the excellence of their mutual connection with the proprietor (Popoola 2022). In exchange, founded on the custom of reciprocation, indicators of recognition and support by the businesses may form workers' attitudes and conducts (Lian et al. 2022). Drawing from SET (Blau 1964), employees enters into personalized negotiations with their employer regarding the job tasks and responsibilities (Hattori et al. 2021). We argue that when employees are offered the opportunities to take the desired responsibilities in commensurate with their talents, these employees feel obliged to maintain the mutual relationships and are likely to transgress the moral principles and predisposed to execute UPB. The managers may ask the subordinates to perform the certain tasks outside of the formal job requirements or employee may himself demand the

management for additional responsibilities referring to their exceptional contributions to the organization (Qureshi and Raza 2022). Previous research demonstrates that exposure to a person's unethical behavior can prompt an alike behavior among their coworkers (Zeng et al. 2021). Thus we argue that task & responsibilities i-deals have the potential to lead to UPB because of cognitive minimizations. Higher the task & responsibilities i-deals, greater are the chances of workers engaging in UPB. Thus we hypothesize

**H<sub>1</sub>: TID are positively related to UPB.**

### **SID and UPB**

Schedule i-deals refer to the dialogues that employees initiate with their supervisors for considering the personal needs in their work schedule or accommodating off-the-job hassles in allocating work hours (Rosen et al., 2013). Eminent scholars established a measuring instrument of i-deals discussed by workforces and also investigated the attitudinal results of i-deals (Rosen et al., 2013). They demonstrated that task responsibility and schedule i-deals were the very strong precursors of attitude responses (Rosen et al., 2013). Furthermore, staffs who obtain i-deals may participate in intentional activities that provide benefits to the business, such as OCB, as a technique of repaying back the caring dealing they acquired (Ilie 2012). SET (Blau 1964) provides us the base to best explain the relationship between schedule flexibility i-deals and UPB. We contend that as the supervisors make adjustments in the work schedule of employees or attend to off the job demands, the employees feel motivated to pay back to the organization to nurture the relationships with the organization. Employees believe this reciprocation is essential to have the relationships full of trust and appreciation (Zhan & Liu, 2022). Such types of adjustments are very common in pharmaceuticals where the managers allow the employees to execute non work related issues out of formal job requirements and employees often adjust their schedules (Khowaja and Feroz 2020). Definitely, UPB includes actions of commission and omission. These unethical doings injure customers in the name of the firm, threatening the considerate and just faces of individual-based moral self-image (Yang et al. 2021). It is likely that employees transgress the ethical standards while supporting the organization letting them engage in UPB (Lian et al. 2022). Therefore we contend that greater the SID, grater is the probability of employees' engaging in UPB. Therefore we hypothesize

**H<sub>2</sub>: SID are positively related to UPB**

### **LID and UPB**

Location flexibility i-deals refer to the personalized exclusive arrangement that employees seek from their managers to perform a portion of work somewhere outer to the central office (Rosen et al., 2013). The beneficiaries of i-deals pay back the encouraging handling they acquired by involving in optional behavioral outcomes that support the business (Ilie 2012). UPB is also an optional conduct that is executed to support the business (Tang et al., 2021). Based on SET (Blau, 1964), receivers of i-deals may give back the benefits of being granted the advantageous work settings by participating in unethical actions with the intent to benefit the business. SET (Blau, 1964) helps us to illuminate the association between LID and UPB. SET (Blau, 1964) entails that when one party extends the benefit to other party, the second party feel indebted to pay back in order to preserve the relationships. If the second party does not reciprocate the relationships would be deprived of recognition and approval (Qureshi and Raza 2022). LID frequently exists in pharmaceutical services sector for example sales people are offered their desired territories to suit their individual preferences. We argue that when managers allow the subordinates to perform the job other than the main office keeping in view the distinctive needs of the particular employee, he or she is likely to execute UPB in violation of established standards of morality. Prior research suggests that the employees engaging in UPB are inclined to cleanse their transgressions and pretend as if these acts are desired by the organizations (Wang et al., 2021). We contend that higher are LID to suit individualized preferences of employees, the more are prospects that employees engage in UPB. Therefore we hypothesize

**H<sub>3</sub>: LID are positively related to UPB.**

## ***FID and UPB***

Financial incentives i-deals describe a negotiating scenario in which employees want to ensure a compensation agreement to meet their personal needs or seek pay raise in return to extraordinary contributions to the organization (Rosen et al., 2013). The organization is concerned in keeping and encouraging a greatly appreciated worker (Anand et al. 2018). In exchange for his or her contributions, the worker demands a promising service terms, that is allowed by the business (Singh and Vidyarthi 2018). More precisely, some workers may discuss merely a limited facets of their service agreement, while other employees might tailor their service engagements to a larger degree by discussing nearly all their terms of service: remuneration, job tasks, schedule, location flexibility (Qureshi, A.R;Raza 2022). In pertinent with SET (Blau 1964) when employees are granted individualized compensation arrangement outside of formal policies, they feel obliged to reciprocate the organization. We argue that it is probable that the employees will transgress the moral principles and execute UPB. The employees think they are not doing wrong but helping the organization as a way to escape self-censure (Yang et al., 2021). Preceding research has submitted that workers might detect associates involved in UPB, however evaluate this positively (Tang et al., 2021). This might happen since, though undoubtedly unethical, UPB has the possibility to rouse the effective working of the organization and its members (Tang et al., 2021). The reimbursement practices such as annual increments, extra tours, desired salary packages and incentives on targets are frequent in pharmaceutical sales sector, where the individuals are compensated exceptionally. We argue that higher the FID, the more are prospects that employees execute UPB. Therefore we hypothesize

***H<sub>4</sub>: FID are positively related to UPB.***

## **Research Methodology**

### **Study design and sampling**

Data was collected from pharma sales managers firms in Pakistan through a questionnaire-based survey. A letter attached to each survey form clarified that the questionnaires were being used for educational intents and that all information would be kept confidential. 350 pharma sales managers were requested to respond to the survey using the convenience sample method. Nearly 88% (n=308) of the workers finished it. The questionnaire comprises 22 questions, thus based on the item ratio rule (10:1) (Randall & Gibson, 2013); sample size would be 220. To eliminate non-responsiveness or generalizable problems and to reduce sample error, we utilized a sample size of 308 respondents for this investigation.

### **Measurement of variables**

**I-deals.** Four dimensions of I-deals were measured with a sixteen-item measure, six of task i-deals, five of financial, three for schedule and two for location i-deals established by Rosen et al., (2013). The alpha value was 0.91 TID, 0.91 for SID, 0.88 for LID and 0.89 for FID respectively. All items assessed respondents' disposition to execute i-deals and UPB on a 5-point scale extending from 1 representative of strongly disagree to 5 representing strongly agree.

**UPB.** This variable was assessed with a six-item measuring tool established by Umphress et al., (2010). The alpha value was .88.

**Control variables.** We incorporated several demographic factors (age, education gender and seniority) as control variables.

### **Sample Description**

245 males (80%) and 63 females (20%) answered the survey's questions, for a total of 308 respondents. More than half respondents are graduates (n= 182, 59%) and the remaining either a MS/M.Phil. (n=32, 10%) or an undergraduates (n=94, 31%). The bulk of the sales managers are between 20 and 29 years old (n= 210, 68%). Almost half of the respondents have 5 to 10 years of work seniority (n=136, 44.2%); the others have 1 to 5 (n=95, 31 %) or above 11 years' experience (n=77, 25%).

Tables 1&2 display the descriptive statistics, reliability and correlation test values. We used the Harman single factor check (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Entire scale constituent items load into a latent variable that describes 47.89% of the whole variance, below the 50% threshold, signifying no issue of common bias. Furthermore all the scales show acceptable internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Multicollinearity is not concern as the correlation amongst variables is less than 0.70 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996).

Table 1. Descriptives

S. No	Variables	means	SD
1	UPB	3.35	.92
2	TID	3.17	.99
3	SID	3.32	1.22
4	LID	3.20	1.34
5	FID	3.28	1.01

Table 2. Correlations (r) and Reliability Values

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	UPB	(.88)								
2	TID	.66**	(.91)							
3	SID	.63**	.57**	(.91)						
4	LID	.68**	.60**	.60**	(.88)					
5	FID	.58**	.52**	.50**	.51**	(.89)				
6	Gender	-.096	.034	.017	.021	.045	NA			
7	Age	-.075	.023	-.021	-.111	.005	.006	NA		
8	Experience	.121	-.028	-.037	.143	-.007	.079	.635	NA	
9	Education	.031	-.018	.053	.017	-.049	.009	-.045	.121	NA

\*\* p ≤ 0.01, \* p ≤ 0.05. Cronbach's alphas (α) are in parentheses.

Sex: 1 = males, 2 = females

Age groups: 1= 20-29, 2= 30-39, 3= 40-49, 4= 50-59, 5= 60 or above

Academics: level 1= undergraduates, 2= graduates, 3= M.S/M.phil.

Seniority in years: 1= 1-5, 2= 5-10, 3= 11-15, 4= 16-20

The measurement model is said to be a prerequisite of the structural model (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Table 2 displays that the suggested 5-factor model results designate good fit values ( $\chi^2 = 257.941$ ,  $df = 199$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.296$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.031$ ,  $CFI = 0.98$ ,  $NNFI = 0.98$ ) that meet the criteria of suggested standards ( $\chi^2/df < 3$ ,  $RMSEA < 0.08$ ,  $NNFI > 0.95$ ,  $CFI > 0.95$ ) (Hu & Bentler, 1999). As revealed in Table 2, single-factor model offers a poor fit ( $\chi^2 = 1375.823$ ,  $df = 209$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 6.583$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.135$ ,  $CFI = 0.732$ ,  $NNFI = 0.704$ ). Henceforth, we decided to retain the proposed 5-factor model as it specifies the best fit values. Figure 3 displays the structural and measurement models.

Table 2 Results of confirmatory factor analyses

Variables	$\chi^2$	Df	Ratio $\chi^2 / df$	CFI	NNFI	RMSEA
One-factor a	1375.823	209	6.583	0.732	0.704	0.135
Two-factor b	1237.639	208	5.950	0.764	0.738	0.127
Three-factor c	910.212	206	4.419	0.838	0.819	0.106
Four-factor d	486.705	203	2.398	0.935	0.926	0.067
Five-factor e	257.941	199	1.296	0.986	0.984	0.031

a. UPB, TID, SID, LID and FID, all as one-factor

b. UPB, in one factor, TID, SID, LID and FID in second factor

c. UPB in one factor, TID in other factor, SID, LID and FID in third factor

d. UPB in one factor, TID in second factor, S-ideals in third factor, LID and FID in fourth factor

e. UPB, TID, SID, LID, FID each in distinct factor

The 6 items of the UPB scale were placed to PCA with SPSS 23. Preceding the execution, the aptness of data for this analysis was considered. Assessment of the correlation table showed the existence of all numbers above .3. PCA indicated the presence of one component with eigenvalue surpassing 1, explaining 62.13 of the variance. The single component solution reported a total of 62.13 % of the variance. The interpretation of the single component was in harmony with earlier research on the UPB scale (Umphress et al. 2010).

The 16 items of i-deals scale were put to principal components analysis (PCA) in SPSS 23. Before executing, the appropriateness of data for this analysis was evaluated. Examination of the correlation matrix showed the occurrence of many coefficients of .3 and above. PCA identified the

manifestation of four components with eigenvalues above 1, explaining 74.64 % of the variance. The interpretation of the four component was in agreement with previous research on the i-deals scale (Rosen et al., 2013).

As presented in Table 3 below (AVE  $\geq$  0.5, CR values  $>$  0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and item factor loadings  $\geq$  0.5), the convergent validity is wholly met. The fact that the square root of AVE is bigger than the correlations of constructs is further shown by Tables 1 and 3, which both demonstrate that the study fulfills the discriminant validity.

Table 3. *Presenting Factor Loading and Scale Validities*

Variables	Items	Loading	CR	AVE	Square root of AVE
UPB	UPB1	.791	0.88	0.55	.74
	UPB2	.733			
	UPB3	.767			
	UPB4	.709			
	UPB5	.663			
	UPB6	.772			
TID	TID1	.771	0.91	0.62	.79
	TID2	.815			
	TID3	.799			
	TID4	.750			
	TID5	.779			
	TID6	.800			
SID	SID1	.870	0.91	0.77	.88
	SID2	.890			
	SID3	.879			
LID	LID1	.914	0.88	0.78	.88
	LID2	.850			
FID	FID1	.810	0.89	0.62	.79
	FID2	.798			
	FID3	.839			
	FID4	.747			
	FID5	.746			

#### Data Analysis and Results

We tested our predictions through SEM using SPSS 23 and AMOS 23.. For the purpose of assessing and testing theories, we created a structural model. The findings exhibit that the model met the requirements for excellent fit ( $\chi^2/df = 2.259$ , RMSEA= 0.064, CFI=0.94, NNFI=0.93, GFI=0.89, AGFI=0.86).

Table 4 displays the results of our analyses meant to test the four hypotheses, and Figure 2 illustrates them using the research model. T-ideals are linked to UPB ( $\beta= 0.269$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), which does support Hypothesis 1. S-ideals are linked to UPB ( $\beta= 0.14$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), which does support Hypothesis 2. L-ideals are linked to UPB ( $\beta= 0.289$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), which does support Hypothesis 3. F-ideals are linked to UPB ( $\beta= 0.195$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), which does support Hypothesis 4. The results support the theory and earlier research on the relationship (Blau, 1964; Ilie, 2012; Jiang & Zhang, 2020).

Table 4. *Strategy Wise Hypothesis Testing*

Hypotheses	Hypothesized Paths	( $\beta$ )	t-value	P-value
H1	TID $\rightarrow$ UPB	0.269	5.191	***
H2	SID $\rightarrow$ UPS	0.14	2.987	***
H3	LID $\rightarrow$ UPB	0.289	6.353	***
H4	FID $\rightarrow$ UPB	0.195	3.560	***



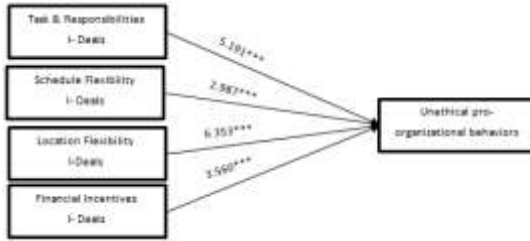


Figure 2 Research framework and hypotheses

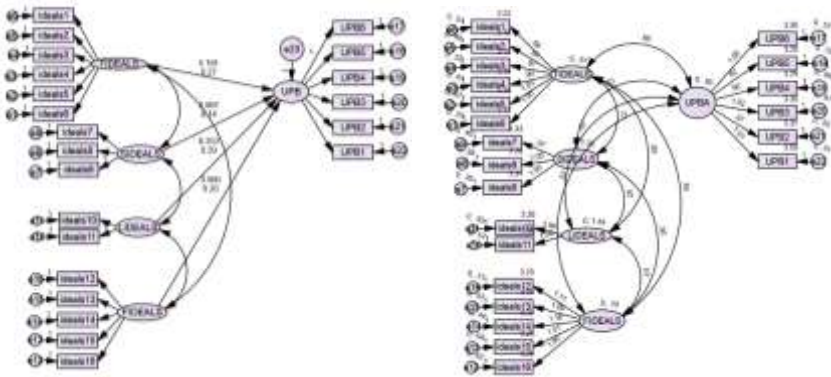


Figure 3 Structural & measurement models

### Discussion and Implications

The study has demonstrated that i-deals can lead to UPB in accordance with SET (Blau 1964). Whereas i-deals result in favorable employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, increased commitment, OCB and decreased turn over, managers and organizations can make increased use of i-deals to improve the behavioral outcomes (Anand et al. 2018; Kong et al. 2020; Singh and Vidyarthi 2018); they should also consider its potential of letting employees engage in UPB (Ilie, 2012; Jiang & Zhang, 2020). The study is the first that demonstrates that all the four dimensions of i-deals have significant positive effect on UPB. We argue that employees use i-deals as social exchange relationships and this perception transforms into UPB. We were able to explain that organizational managers should cultivate a culture of ethical standards and should be cognizant of dark sides of granting i-deals (Lian et al. 2022; Popoola 2022). The UPB may be beneficial for the short duration to internal stakeholders but can have disadvantageous effects on the external stakeholders (Tang et al., 2021). When the employees are provided i-deals, they perceive they are getting something special from their supervisors, they keenly tend to pay back to supervises (Taser et al. 2021). I-deals help the managers and organizations to develop personalized relationships with the employees (Sun et al. 2021). Employees feel that organization takes care of their wellbeing and is interested in their happiness (Qureshi, A.R;Raza 2022). This research adds to i-deals literature by demonstrating the detrimental effects of i-deals. The managers must ensure that i-deals do not transform into UPB and put efforts to convert UPB into more constructive behaviors such as OCB (Ilie 2012). The managers should avoid offering i-deals to the employees themselves rather they ask the HRM to perform this job (Qureshi, A.R;Raza 2022). Moreover, since data were collected from pharmaceutical firms in Pakistan, the outcomes might not show generalizability in other environments. Prospective investigators must attempt to repeat this investigation external to Pakistan in other work settings. Although we built theoretical arguments on the route of

association between the variables, the cross-sectional scheme of this research abstain us from asserting causal associations. The employees are important stakeholders in success of i-deals when they pay attention to moral issues.

We also contribute to SET by highlighting that i-deals can translate into UPB as the employees tend to uphold the exchange relationships. Our study has other essential theoretical implications for i-deals literature. We demonstrate that i-deals exhibit significant positive relationship with UPB suggesting that there might be downsides of i-deals. Organizations extend i-deals for overall wellbeing of the employees (Sun et al. 2021). However our study suggests that these personalized negotiations are likely to translate into UPB at the cost of ethical standards. The present investigation adds to the existing empirical scholarly works on UPB Yang et al., 2021; Zeng et al., 2021; Zhan & Liu, 2022). We have examined additional predictors of UPB, such as variables rooted in SET (Blau 1964).

This study provides a valuable insight into better understanding and implementation of i-deals within organizations. From a managerial perspective, it is very important to know why i-deals are important. The outcomes that i-deals are positively connected to UPB are very crucial. I-deals support the organizational managers to build personalized connections with the skilled workers. The HR should develop the analytical and cognitive abilities of the employees so that i-deals do not transform into UPB. The HR should ensure that employees are working under ethical leadership and ethical climate. The selection should be based on responses to moral issues through integrity and psychometric tests. The morally focused workers should be positioned at important positions. The employees should be rewarded on the basis of performance and ethical behaviors.

We recommend that rather than handling unaccompanied, managers must place moral matters to the consideration of their juniors, and work as team to resolve them, so employees are able to vicariously acquire from their managers how to handle moral problems at work (Zeng et al. 2021). Furthermore, to decrease unethical behavior in their organizations, managers might deliberate recruiting employees with high levels moral thoughtfulness.

### **Conclusion and Future Research Directions**

Our research has limitations, just like any other study. As a result, we provide several recommendations for further research. First of all, our research has focused on UPB among pharmaceutical sales managers, which may vary somewhat from UPB in other professions where personnel may have less opportunities and less freedom to engage in such activities. Salespeople are known for their high levels of independence and autonomy in their handling of their sales duties and their ease in recognizing the benefits they may bring to the company. Selling is a unique career (i.e., sales quantities). It may be the case that salespeople are more likely to engage in UPB due to their increased likelihood of doing so, making them more likely to recognize its appeal than those in other professions. Therefore, we advise future study to benefit from looking at similar links in different industries. We also request an expansion of future research to look at how worker autonomy affects UPB.

The participants in our research were pharma sales managers from Pakistan, thus social homogeneity may have an impact on how broadly applicable our findings are. Given the prevalence of collectivism in Pakistani culture, employees may put a greater emphasis on supporting the company at work. Future research will be needed to see if the link in our results can be applied to businesses with Western values. In this situation, a sense of organizational support is more likely to evoke emotions of debt and organization-related anxiety. As a result, we recommend that future research include perceptions of organizational support and debt in our investigation. However, studies conducted in Western countries first revealed the negative aspects of debt and immoral actions(Qureshi and Ahmed 2021). The positive correlation between debt and immoral conduct in individualist cultures is suggested by these data, but more research is needed to validate this. Future research on the relationship between perceived debt and unethical behavior is crucial in

order to determine if debt may cause unethical behavior and whether unethical activity can reduce debt. Repeating our findings using a longitudinal study design using a variety of sources, including supervisors and workforces, as well as cross-lagged modeling to examine the underlying relationships proposed by this theoretical framework may be more fruitful for future research. Last but not least, we justify the use of a seven-point Likert-type scale to increase the degree of variation in the components, which may ultimately broaden the scope of explanation for results.

We conclude that i-deals are important predictor of UPB within social exchange context. Although i-deals are implemented to nurture an environment of recognition and approval with the employees, the managers should be mindful of the gloomy aspects of i-deals. The HRM can ensure that in this competitive labor market, where organizations are interested to keep the appreciated skilled employees by tailoring work arrangements that suit employee requirements and preferences, the employee characteristics do not translate into undesirable UPB. This research has established i-deals an important predictor of UPB in pharmaceutical organizations; therefore HRM of pharmaceutical organizations ensures that employees with i-deals do not transgress ethical standards. The HRM has to play a crucial role in diminishing emergent UPB in pharmaceuticals.

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