

# **ILLEGITIMATE TASKS AND THEIR IMPACT ON WORK STRESS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ANGER**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Illegitimate tasks pose a threat to one's job identity thus constituting of a stressor. This paper examines the stressor strain relationship of illegitimate tasks and the strains it causes namely burnout and resentment. Furthermore, mediating role of social stressor, lack of organizational justice, role of conflict and anger was examined. A questionnaire was adapted and data was collected from volunteering participants all of whom were teachers. Exploratory factor analysis and Confirmatory factor analysis were conducted to test the model fitness with the data collection. According to the tests run the reliability of all the constructs was acceptable. The results yielded showed that anger mediated illegitimate tasks and feeling of resentment and burnout, similarly so did organizational justice. However among the other mediators, social stressor showed mediation between illegitimate tasks and resentment, role conflict showed mediation between illegitimate tasks and burnout. Future recommendations have also been suggested.

**Keywords:** Anger Management; Illegitimate Tasks, SOS Theory; SEM Model.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Illegitimate task performs as a task related stressor. This stress stems from the threat to ones' identity by tasks considered either to be unreasonable or unnecessary (Björk, Bejerot, Jacobshagen, & Härenstam, 2013). These two facets of illegitimate tasks are linked to one's professional role identity. The role identity being at the base of the definitions given to illegitimate task, also takes part in defining the "Stress as Offence to Self-theory" (SOS theory). Illegitimate tasks are specified by the employee's perception that they shouldn't have to do them (N. K. Semmer, Jacobshagen, Meier, & Elfering, 2007; N. K. Semmer, McGrath, & Beehr, 2005). Ruling out tasks as unnecessary and unreasonable are major facets of illegitimate task. However, as mentioned above illegitimate tasks are considered so, depending on their contextual meaning. The same task has the tendency to be considered legitimate or illegitimate owing to the circumstance. A similar task may also be illegitimate for one and legitimate for the other depending on the social meaning it implies to the role of the individual. Tasks that do not conform to the norms are considered illegitimate. The non-conformity of these tasks may not necessarily be tied to their intrinsic implication or characteristic. As the tasks it may not be demeaning but the social message that it implies has derogative social signals.

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This research bases its foundation on notions such as SOS theory, justice theory and role identity theory as it dives into the relationship of illegitimate tasks and wellbeing/strain. This relationship will be mediated by anger. Illegitimate task has been associated with counterproductive worker behaviour such as aggression (N. K. Semmer, Tschann, Meier, Facchin, & Jacobshagen, 2010). In this study we will not be studying illegitimate tasks and aggressive behaviour as a direct relationship however the latter will be examined as a mediator between illegitimate tasks and other stressors.

Research lacks a lot of literature on illegitimate tasks (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015). In this aspect it is a rather newer topic. For validating and strengthening a topic such as illegitimate tasks, it is necessary to carry out number of empirical studies supporting or determining its peripheral and core concepts (Björk, Bejerot, Jacobshagen, & Härenstam, 2013). Various studies still need to validate the outcomes of illegitimate tasks as a stressor (N. K. Semmer et al., 2007) and its effects on counter-productivity (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015). These studies will however are more in the need to be carried out considering various mediators and moderators. The relationship between stress and illegitimate task are among the initial studies made on the topic. Further studies are needed for adding to the concept with complexities such as mediations and moderations. Confirming the psychometric properties of new theoretically derived concepts is much needed in reference to illegitimate task. Further investigating the plausible determinates of illegitimate tasks is an excellent field of research which still demands insight and exploration (Björk et al., 2013). Studies still need to confirm the actions that counteract illegitimate tasks in organisations (Björk et al., 2013). Previously most of the data accumulated on stress and stressor models paid more attention to the classic stressors while the social stressors have been neglected for a long time (Dormann & Zapf, 2002). Despite the lack of data available on illegitimate tasks, the first hint of stress created by tasks, considered unnecessary for a certain job was hinted by Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970). This was hinted in the form of role stress. Another study by Motowidlo, Packard, and Manning (1986) also gives a glimpse of the illegitimate tasks and stress. As they studied the stress faced by nurses in their everyday routine they included non-nursing tasks as one of the variables of stressor. Regardless of these studies there is yet the need to fully elaborate such findings in terms of illegitimate tasks (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015). E. M. Eatough et al. (2015) study shows a direct relationship between illegitimate task and stress level, as fluctuations in one factor caused fluctuations in the other. Another study showed high cortisol levels in the employees when dealing with illegitimate tasks, cortisol being an indicator of stress in one's body (Kottwitz et al. 2014). Stocker, Jacobshagen, Semmer, & Annen, (2010) study show a direct relation between job dissatisfaction and illegitimate tasks. Similarly, other studies conducted around the world, showed repeated associations of illegitimate tasks with emotions like dissatisfaction and strain. In USA and Switzerland, Diary studies confirmed the association of a similar kind (Björk et al., 2013; E. M. Eatough et al., 2015).

However with today's research advancement in this field some preliminary data has been gathered that supports illegitimate task as a stressor. None the less there is a need for more evidence on the related topic. New stressor concepts in terms of illegitimate tasks are yet to be investigated and proved as worthwhile contributions (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015). The existing study provides a great scope for further investigations.

## **2. BACKGROUND AND THEORY**

### **2.1. *Illegitimate Task***

Illegitimate tasks are not necessarily difficult in execution neither are they aversive tasks, they are classified as illegitimate due to their contextual meaning for a person, place, time or situation (Semmer

et al. 2007). Thus tasks considered legitimate for a clerical staff member may be considered illegitimate for an upper management staff member. The whole concept of illegitimate tasks revolves around social contexts. Thus, illegitimate tasks as defined by Björk, Bejerot, Jacobshagen, & Härenstam, (2013) are tasks that are considered, unreasonable or unnecessary. According to (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015) illegitimate tasks are seen as stressors in two aspects, one is the form of identity threatening stressor (Thoits, 1991) and the other as a lack of fairness (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001) that in turn constitute of reactions such as anger and resentment. In this research paper we study illegitimate tasks and its relationship with two strains namely burnout and the feeling of resentment. Resentment with one's organisation is considered to be most pertinent strain when researching illegitimate tasks (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015). A large number of other studies have shown correlation between feelings of resentment and low job satisfaction with illegitimate tasks (Stocker, Jacobshagen, Semmer, & Annen, 2010). Thus the following hypothesis is proposed,

*H1: Illegitimate task are positively related with resentment.*

When characterizing illegitimate tasks the intrinsic qualities, difficulty level or averseness are not the main aspects to be considered (N. K. Semmer et al., 2007; N. K. Semmer et al., 2015). The aspect under consideration is mainly the content it holds for the person, place or situation under question (N. K. Semmer et al., 2007). Hence it holds contextual meanings. Illegitimate tasks are, to the extent that they do not conform to the norms and that they cannot be expected of certain individuals (N. K. Semmer et al., 2010).

According to N. K. Semmer et al. (2015) illegitimate tasks can be explained by the following example of a nurse, who is asked to open the window for a patient, to let in fresh air. If the patient is well enough to do the task himself, the nurse would consider it as unreasonable and may be even offending, however if the patient is too ill to do so the task will be perceived by the nurse as legitimate as caring for the patient is a nurses core task. Most studies also showed that tasks were considered illegitimate by employees mostly if they were related to peripheral task (Semmer, Jacobshagen, & Meier, 2006). But it is not always the case. Another example by N. K. Semmer et al. (2015) explains that even core tasks may sometimes be considered as illegitimate if they become unnecessarily repetitive, for instance a teacher would perceive repeating a lesson as an illegitimate task if it were to be done for an inattentive student. Not all peripheral tasks are considered illegitimate however if they impede or hamper the core activities one might think otherwise (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015).

## **2.2. *Illegitimate Task Stressor***

Illegitimate task as a work stressor was first studied by Rizzo et al. (1970) and Motowidlo et al. (1986) while studying the notion of role stress (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015). Illegitimate task has been associated as a social stressor as social stressor render issues like sleep deprivation (E. Eatough, 2013) however some have rendered it as a concept on its own owing to its distinct characteristics of social stressors (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015). The ascription of illegitimate tasks as a social stressor comes from the thought of it being a result of malevolence (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015). a wide range of strains have been related to stressors in general (Sonnentag & Frese, 2013); hence a similar expectation has been placed in illegitimate task. Furthermore it is also noted that, the construct of social meaning in social stressors is somewhat direct while that in illegitimate tasks is indirectly conveyed. This research contends that illegitimate tasks are a form of stressor that affects the well-being of individuals beyond the effects of other occupational stressors. In order to explain illegitimate tasks as a separate stressor notion, it is necessary to explain or prove a variance beyond established stressors hence it is concluded,

## *H2: Illegitimate tasks carry positive relationship with social stressors.*

This research will investigate specific strains such as burnout and feelings of resentment. According to the demands-resources model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001), demands can be translated as illegitimate tasks relating it with burnout, consisting of two facets, disengagement and emotional exhaustion. So the following hypothesis is presented.

## *H3: Illegitimate task are positively related with burnout.*

In the organisation, social stressors are translated as a lack of appreciation or as a sign of disrespect constituting a threat to self (Kottwitz, Grebner, Semmer, Tschan, & Elfering, 2013). Studies have also found, that social stress triggers psychotic episodes among many people (Nuechterlein & Dawson, 1984) along with a low self-esteem which has been marked as a precedent of social stress (Kesting, Bredendahl, Klenke, Westermann, & Lincoln, 2013). These findings are also supported by the Vulnerability-stress models. Social stress has also been shown to impact on self-esteem which then leads to many medical conditions as well. Self against offenses in the work-place such as disrespectful social interactions, illegitimate tasks (i.e., unreasonable or unnecessary tasks), and illegitimate stressors (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015). In this study in order to understand the effects of illegitimate task as a separate stressor it is mandatory to control for distributive injustice, role conflict and social stressors, because these are theoretically seen as competing stressors. One feels betrayed when a Psychological contract created between employee and employer is broken. This may be done so by means of unfairness encompassing any of the fields of (In) justice. If we assume illegitimate tasks to be a kind of social stressor then they may be expected to impact on well-being/strain of individuals hence we expect them to be associated with well strains such as feelings of resentment and self-esteem. Feelings of resentment being pertinent to illegitimate task is a typical reaction to lack of fairness in organisation (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Self-esteem is also considered a pertinent strain to illegitimate task stressor as these tasks pose a threat to role identity leading to threat to ones' self (N. K. Semmer et al., 2007). Hence the following hypothesis is presented;

## *H4: Social stressors are positively related to organisational resentment.*

According Dormann and Zapf (2004) a typical indication to not be able to perform work efficiently is burnout constituting of emotional exhaustion and disengagement. Worker's chronic exposure to a typical set of situations or conditions results in symptoms of burnout specifically those "who do 'people-work' of some kind" (Christina Maslach & Jackson, 1981). *Despite similar noxious effects as other stress reactions, the unique feature of burnout is that its stress results from the social interactions between helpers and their recipients"* (CH Maslach & Jackson, 1982). Most of the psychological theories of stress, explain, social stressors in terms of features or qualities, events, episodes or even behaviours associated to strain (either psychological or physical) related to a social nature. Many of the studies conducted on social stressor use conflict theory as a foundation (Appelberg, Romanov, Honkasalo, & Koskenvuo, 1991). Burnout has also been reported to be caused by the lack of organizational reciprocity (Bakker, Schaufeli, Sixma, Bosveld, & Van Dierendonck, 2000; Leiter & Schaufeli, 1996). This is due to the perception of non-reciprocity experiences as lack of fairness. The scale that was created by Donovan, Drasgow, and Munson (1998) is used to measure unfair treatment in organizations; this scale was developed as a result of unfair treatment being related to dissatisfaction. Similarly the study by Tepper (2000) shows that unfair behavior of supervisors s associated with anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion. Hence it is assumed that,

## *H5: Social stressors are positively related to burnout.*

*H5 (a): Social stressor mediates between illegitimate task and resentment.*

*H5 (b): Social stressor mediates between illegitimate tasks and burnout.*

### **2.3. Illegitimate Task and SOS Theory**

The concept of illegitimate tasks arises from the *Stress as Offense to Self-theory* which bases itself on justice theory and role theory. Self against offenses in the work-place such as disrespectful social interactions, illegitimate tasks (i.e., unreasonable or unnecessary tasks), and illegitimate stressors (i.e., pressure to use inadequate tools to accomplish work tasks).

The SOS theory suggests that an individual gains stress in a situation that causes threat to one's self esteem (Lazarus, 2006), which in many cases is also described as self-worth (Semmer et al. 2007). Stress is also referred to as a prerequisite to the threat of one's goals (Lazarus, 2006). The SOS theory also states that stress is a result of disrespect (Semmer 2005), similarly a task that is considered unreasonable or unnecessary (illegitimate) is seen as a sign of disrespect, ultimately causing stress. The self-esteem is then divided into two types, the personal esteem and the social esteem. The social stressor among which "illegitimate task" holds an important position, has the tendency to threaten one's social esteem (Semmer et al. 2007). Recent studies show that performance is influenced by implications of an individual's self-esteem. Self-esteem has two categories one is the social esteem (what others think of you) and the other is the personal esteem (what you think of yourself) (Lazarus, 2006). Failure to complete ones tasks or assignment has the potential to damage ones personal as well as social self-esteem (Lazarus, 2006). According to Björk, Bejerot, Jacobshagen, & Härenstam (2013), self-esteem can be tarnished by the feeling of disdain through illegitimate tasks or stressor. As some tasks carry a negative stigma (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999) carrying them out would be demeaning to one's self esteem. One's self esteem is affected by illegitimate tasks as such tasks may hinder in the way of good performance. Self-esteem has been said to be influenced by one's work experience (Semmer, Jacobshagen, Meier, & Elfering, 2007). Demand-control-support and effort-reward theories differentiate between the two notions of *Stresses through insufficiency* from the concept *Stress as disrespect*; discussing the concepts of personal and social self-esteem (Björk, et al., 2013).

The "Stress-as-Offense-to-Self" concept (N. K. Semmer et al., 2007) supposes that at the core of every stressful experience lies the fear of a threat to self. The notion of illegitimate tasks as a stressor is rather new and it discusses the idea of tasks that an individual should not be doing or expected to do. This is because these tasks are either not in the range of the individuals' job role or the tasks should not be done at all (N. K. Semmer et al., 2010). Such tasks create a threat to the self which are a threat to one's role identity. As discussed above, the concept of illegitimate tasks refers to tasks that should not be done by individuals at a certain job role. This creates role conflict. Role conflict creates or is associated with strain. At the base of the SOS theory, it is assumed that a stressor damages the self-esteem. According to (Pierce & Gardner, 2004) tasks in their designs are laced with various social messages as well, yet they may also relate to the self beyond achieving any performance goals (N. K. Semmer & Beehr, 2014). However the social messages associated to these tasks are contextual and they are what create a base for this research. They may affect the self as they have a possibility of being negative in terms of stigma or positive when it comes to prestige. Some tasks carry an intrinsic social message (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).

### **2.4. Illegitimate Task and Role Conflict Theory**

The role theory suggests that each social role consists of a set of rights and duties accordingly. In an organisation the rights and duties at a certain level of job define ones role. When norms of that role are

not conformed with, it creates role conflict. Illegitimate tasks do not conform to the norms of a job (N. K. Semmer et al., 2010) thus creating a rift between role identity and tasks, hence it could be safely said that the role conflict through illegitimate tasks are phenomena that go hand in hand. Such tasks create a threat to the self which are a threat to one role identity. Hence the following hypothesis;

*H6: Illegitimate tasks carry a positive relationship with role conflict.*

A large number of studies relate stress positively with illegitimate tasks while it is negatively related job satisfaction (Björk, Bejerot, Jacobshagen, & Härenstam, 2013). Stress by illegitimate tasks has also been shown to affect counter-productivity work behaviour (Semmer, Tschan, Meier, Facchin, & Jacobshagen, 2010). The tasks related stressors such as illegitimate tasks are seen to impede performance of an otherwise efficient individual (Semmer et al. 2015). This effect of illegitimate task as a task oriented stressor in one other than the threat it possesses to one's self esteem. Tasks that apparently seem normal may have contextual demeaning messages or may be inappropriate with regards to one's organisational role (Semmer et al. 2015).

Tasks are either core or peripheral tasks, illegitimate or legitimate task is an issue related to specifically core or peripheral tasks (Semmer et al. 2015). In this aspect, it is most defined as the task that is not associated with one's occupational identity or core tasks (Björk, Bejerot, Jacobshagen, & Härenstam, 2013). Illegitimate tasks are characterized by their ability to violate the norms that are associated with one's professional core role requirement (ibid). Demeaning work in an organisation implies a threat to one's professional identity. Role identity is related to more than social expectations of what they should be, yet in many cases ones' professional role can be submerged in their social role or become a greater part of it (Haslam & Ellemers, 2005; Warr, 2011). This usually happens when ones' professional role provides a meaning or purpose to their lives (Thoits, 1991) sometimes these professional roles become an element of the global identity that they hold (Stryker & Burke, 2000), and, thus, of the self (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). Thus, tasks that are illegitimate hold the potential to pose threat to the identity of an individual. Even though, the possibility of detaching or distancing oneself from the role exists (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; N. Semmer & Schallberger, 1996). Generally a professional role is seen as a valuable asset of the self-identity and is valued (Brown, 2000; Meyer, Becker, & van Dick, 2006). This is the reasons many tend to go on defence mode when something negative is said about their professional role, this is more often noted in people who do "dirty work", in order to justify it (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). In a study conducted on teachers it was seen that they tended to lose the sense of professionalism and their work was tainted as a result of resentment that they acquired from the feeling of powerlessness (Schmidt, 2000). This was not only the result of feeling powerlessness but they also felt loss of integrity and lowered self-esteem. A lowered self-esteem in this case was the result of role conflict. The study also explains how the adoption of a new role identity (to which they could not conform) led to stress, anxiety and resentment (Schmidt, 2000). Hence it can be said that,

*H7: Role conflict is positively related to organizational resentment.*

One might infer that identity and role associations and the conformity to professional identity provoke a sense of pride and self-esteem. Consequently any threat to that professional identity induces stress (Stets, 2005; Thoits, 1991; Warr, 2011) this stress is created as a result to defend the positive image of that identity (Epstein, 1998; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Stressful events are a cause of exhaustion. Similarly the study conducted by Tepper (2000) shows that unfair behavior of a supervisors has an association with anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion. In many of his studies Burnout has also been reported to be caused by the lack of organizational reciprocity (Bakker et al., 2000; Leiter & Schaufeli, 1996). This is due to the perception of non-reciprocity experiences as lack of fairness. Thus,

*H8: Role conflict is positively related to burnout.*

*H8 (a): Role conflict mediates between illegitimate task and resentment.*

*H8 (b): Role conflict mediates between illegitimate tasks and burnout.*

## **2.5. Justice Theory**

Justice theory is attributed to the fairness within the organisational life. Fairness in organisational life has three aspects to which may be either distributive or procedural or interactional. If any of the tasks assigned is considered to be assigned in an unfair manner constituting disrespectful behaviour it gives rise to distributive or procedural or in this case interactional injustice as a result if illegitimate tasks (Semmer et al. 2015). Previous research discussed the aspect of organisational stress in regard to fairness or organisational justice (Colquitt & Shaw 2005). Thus it can be concluded that the prevalence of illegitimate tasks in the organisation may have a link with the prevalence of injustice or lack of justice in the organisation. Hence,

*H9: An illegitimate task holds a positive relationship with lack of Organisational justice.*

The notions of Justice, or fairness, are a broad area of study (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001). Justice constitutes of three facets, Distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. Among these the first is associated with results or outcomes. So if we imply tasks to the outcomes we would conclude illegitimate tasks to constitute distributive injustice. Procedural injustice will however be considered the case, when employees perceive that the assignment of tasks among employees was distributed unfairly. While interactional injustice would be encountering disrespectful behaviour. Lack of justice is also a stressor (Greenberg, 2010). Lack of justice is associated with various social messages, this implies a threat to one's social self-esteem (Cropanzano et al., 2001) and one's "identity judgements" (Tyler & Blader, 2003). Consequently the perception of disrespect is associated with lack of fairness with one, in his/her organisation. Hence the following hypothesis is proposed;

Maslach and Leiter coined the definition of job burnout characterizing it with emotional exhaustion, cynicism which occurs when employees cannot respond effectively to their job demands due to pressure arising from it. Similar studies undertaken in health care industry show that organizational justice and burnout show a very high correlation (Jin, Zhang, & Wang, 2015). The study showed a negative correlation among the two variables. The same two variables have been tested on not only individual levels but also at work unit level showing a strong negative correlation (Moliner, Martínez-Tur, Peiró, Ramos, & Cropanzano, 2005). Organizational justice and its relation with various aspects of wellbeing have been investigated on individual as well as group and work level with all the investigations showing a high negative correlation with injustice. Thus this research paper will investigate the following hypothesis,

*H10: Organisational justice is negatively related to burnout.*

Lack of Organisational justice can be attributed to aversive situations; such events have a deep influence on an individual's thoughts and subsequently behaviour (Berkowitz, 1989, 1993). These taking place of aversive events have the possibility to lead to the feeling of resentment towards one's organization (Berkowitz, 1993). Similarly Schweiger, Ivancevich, and Power (1987) proved in their study that a lack of interactional justice was a source of resentment towards the sources. It has also been noted that feelings of resentment towards the organization arise when one perceives' procedural injustice this could

lead to hostile reactions toward the organization (Greenberg, 1987). Individuals that endure organizational injustice have the capability to react in a hostile manner and not engage in obstructionism or overt aggression. The same study also showed that a Perceived lack of control on ones' work that resulted from inequitable outcomes and procedures resulted in resentment toward the organization, often showing a manifestation of anger and aggression (Jawahar, 2002). According to experimental researches conducted by Van den Bos and Miedema (2000) it was conclude that participants denied procedural injustice exhibited anger and resentment. Studies show, that a lack of justice created negative feelings among participants. Other studies also showed that a lack of organizational justice was associated with organizational resentment (Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999). Hence the following hypothesis is presented,

*H11: Organisational justice is negatively related to organisational resentment.*

*H 11(a): Lack of organisational justice mediates between illegitimate task and resentment.*

*H 11(b): Lack of organisational justice mediates between illegitimate tasks and burnout.*

## **2.6. Illegitimate Task and Anger**

Work place aggression is a result of work stress created by stressors within organisations. At many places work place aggression arises from interpersonal conflict, similarly it has been seen that most association made with work stressors include interpersonal conflict, as a low degree of justice has consistently been found (Fox, Spector, & Miles, 2001). Links have been found associating illegitimate task to anger. Anger has also been seen as a common reaction to unfairness or injustice in the organisation (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). While an essential component of illegitimate tasks include unreasonable tasks, that facets a lack of fairness. A few studies conducted very recently in the US showed that illegitimate tasks showed fluctuations in anger and job satisfaction (Eatough et al., 2015; Semmer et al., 2015). Similarly the studies that were conducted in Switzerland in about the same time showed illegitimate tasks showed fluctuations in self-esteem (Semmer et al., 2015). Reactions such as resentment and anger have also been noted, reactions that cater to the psychology of an individual, as an illegitimate task in the sense of distributional injustice may be perceived as lack of fairness. According to Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) the most typical reaction to unfairness is anger, hence formulate the hypothesis that,

*H12: Illegitimate task is positively related to anger.*

According to N. K. Semmer and Meier (2009) individuals who show less agreeableness or low trust on others show and ability to react even more strongly on illegitimate tasks. (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015) also hinted in his study that individuals who possessed more anger might react more to illegitimate tasks, while some might give a similar reaction with the feeling of a lowered self-esteem and shame. Lower self-esteem is reported to create higher states of aggression, where it is also reported vice versa (Einarsen, 2000). Many causation theories explain two way cause relationship (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015). According to Washull and Kernis (1996) fifth graders showed higher levels of anger with unstable self-esteem, as a result of a threatened self-due to the interpersonal aversive events.

The feeling of resentment of an individual towards his organisation is a resultant of unfair procedures being administered (Cropanzano & Folger, 1989), as mentioned time and again the most reasonable response to unfair treatment is anger (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Roese (1997) also argues that anger leads to counterfactual thinking, as to what could have been a more (Skarlicki, Folger, & Tesluk,

1999) favourable alternative, which is a predictor of resentment. Therefore it follows that anger is indirectly related to the state of one’ resenting his/her organisation, hence the following hypothesis is proposed;

*H13: Anger is positively related to organisational resentment.*

A study conducted by (Muscatello et al., 2006) showed that oncology and professionals showed higher levels of burnout and exhaustions and also expressed a higher level of anger as well as anger outburst on the environment and situation. This anger out bursts was attributed to having stressful day to day routine which caused both anger and burnout. Another children’s study characterized fatigue as an intern factor of anger outbursts (Goodenough, 1931). A study conducted on health care professionals also revealed that burnout and stress caused disruptive behaviour, with one of the behaviours being anger outbursts at fellow and subordinates (Brown, Goske, & Johnson, 2009). Hence the following hypotheses are proposed;

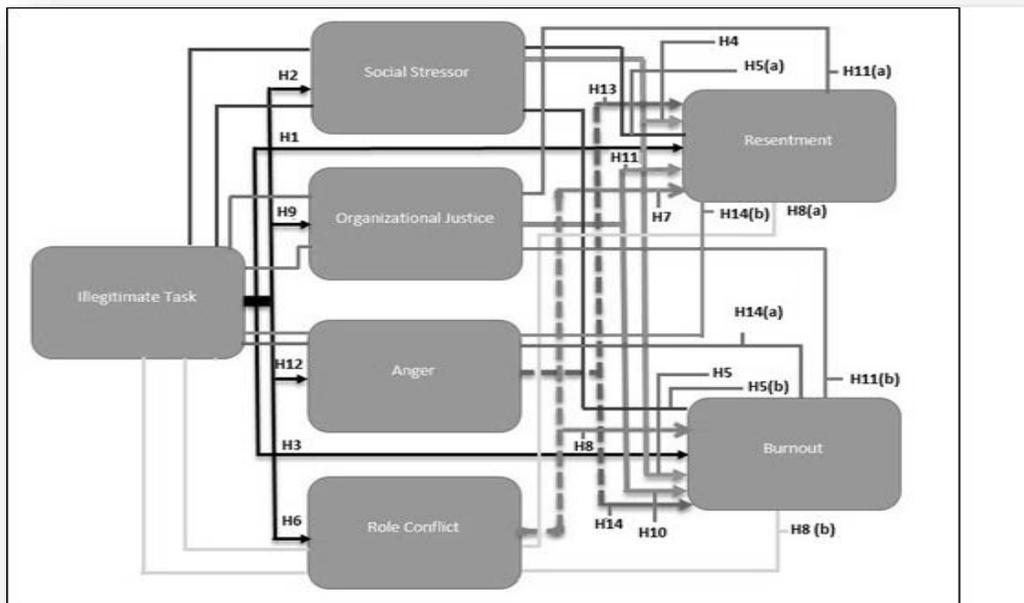
*H14: Anger is positively related to burnout.*

*H14 (a): Anger mediates between illegitimate tasks and burnout.*

According to (Khan, Quratulain, & Crawshaw, 2013) angered employees seem to be more motivated towards manifesting behaviours that show organisational resentment when put in situations that lack procedural justice. Scenarios that account for unjust decision about task distribution, constitutes illegitimate tasks best explained in the context of justice theory (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015). Hence the following hypothesis is proposed;

*H14 (b): Anger mediates between illegitimate tasks and resentment.*

**Figure 1: Conceptual Model**



### 3. METHOD PROCEDURE AND SAMPLE

The research has been conducted on a sample of teaching staff in private schools within Rahim Yar Khan. The selected sample was from the registered private schools above primary level. The number of registered private schools offering higher education in the city of Rahim Yar Khan was 57 with staff ranging from between 4000 and 5000. They were presented with the questionnaire along with a detail of what the survey is about. Only after the consent of the school authorities were these surveys conducted. In some of these schools the questionnaires were handed over to one of the school Heads who was then responsible for distributing and collecting them back. However in most of the schools after permission the researcher passed on the questionnaires directly to the teachers and the collection was also done personally. Only those teachers were given the questionnaire who had given prior consent to participate in the research survey. Before collecting back the questionnaire a follow up call and visit was made to the teachers. This, according to general guideline of researchers is a mandatory step and increases the rate of response (Malterud, 2001).

### 4. MEASURES

Study participants completed the survey and these survey questionnaires were finally handed back to us within a month's time. The survey questionnaires were used to assess all the variables of the study. Illegitimate tasks were measured using the *Bern Illegitimate Task Scale* (BITS). The scale consists of items, four measuring unnecessary tasks and four measuring unreasonable tasks. This scale starts with questions such as, "Do you have work tasks to take care of, which keep you wondering if ..." followed by statements such as "... should be done by someone else?"

For all measures we used a response format of ranging from 1 \_ Not at all to 5 \_ to a great extent. The questionnaire was specifically designed in such a way that it would be easier for teachers to understand it. Similar terms and jargons are used nowadays in private schools; hence the questionnaire was adapted best to their suitability. For feelings of resentment (Geurts, Buunk, & Schaufeli, 1994) scale was used, while burnout was measured using Demerouti et al. (2001) scale. Organisational injustice was evaluated using the scale of Niehoff and Moorman (1993) which has 15-items each representing one of the facets of organisational injustice. These 15 questions were measured using a five-point Likert scale. The last variable under discussion, anger, is a mediator and was measured using the 19-item scale adopted from Sukhodolsky, Golub, and Cromwell (2001). The KMO value for the variables was 0.816 which is above the required making the sample size sufficient for running an exploratory factor analysis.

### 5. RESULTS

#### 5.1. *Validity*

According to the table 1 given below all the factors are loading on their particulars. The table shows the factors loading on their hypothesised particulars. The standard error of these constructs was also two times more than the standard error.

#### 5.2. *Discriminant Validity*

The discriminant validity for the variables was achieved with the help of the correlation of measurement model. Any range less than 1.0 is an acceptable range among the research construct. Among the research

constructs of the correlation matrix the ranges deemed. Among the research constructs of the correlation matrix the ranges deemed acceptable should be less than 1.0 but greater than the standard error doubled.

**Table 1: Measurement of Convergent Validity**

Latent Constructs	Item	Un-standardized Regression weights	Standard Error	Squared Standard Error
Organisational Justice	OJ_13	1.000	.111	0.012321
	OJ_12	1.283	.102	0.010404
	OJ_14	1.178	.093	0.008649
	OJ_15	1.073	.110	0.0121
	OJ_6	1.337	Nil	0
Resentment	R_5	1.000	.097	0.009409
	R_4	1.306	.095	0.009025
	R_2	1.122	.091	0.008281
	R_1	1.050	Nil	0
Anger	A_7	1.000	.148	0.021904
	A_8	1.539	.130	0.0169
	A_9	1.379	Nil	0
Illegitimate tasks	IT_8	1.000	.103	0.010609
	IT_5	.777	.118	0.013924
	IT_1	1.025	.120	0.0144
	IT_7	1.063	Nil	0
Role conflict	RC_2	1.000	.162	0.026244
	RC_1	1.307	.158	0.024964
	RC_4	1.324	Nil	0
Social stressor	SS_1	1.000	.099	0.009801
	SS_3	.934	.076	0.005776
	SS_2	.630	Nil	0
Burnout	B_9	1.000	.111	0.012321
	B_8	.963	.119	0.014161
	B_7	.999	.111	0.012321

### 5.3. Statistical Analyses

Structural equation modelling has become a necessary analytical technique of social sciences research work (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). The only agreed upon issue is the use of SEM in researcher however interpreting SEM and the fit indices and its cut offs are an issue debated among researchers till date (Hooper et al., 2008). In this portion of the chapter SEM will be used to determine the relationship among the independent and dependant variables and to check the hypothesis in regard to the mediator. Next in this chapter the hypothesized model will be drawn with the help of the structural model.

Figure 2 shows the initial SEM model for which the fit indices are given in the table below (table 3). This was the initial model conceived by SEM which required some improvements as predicted by the fit indices.

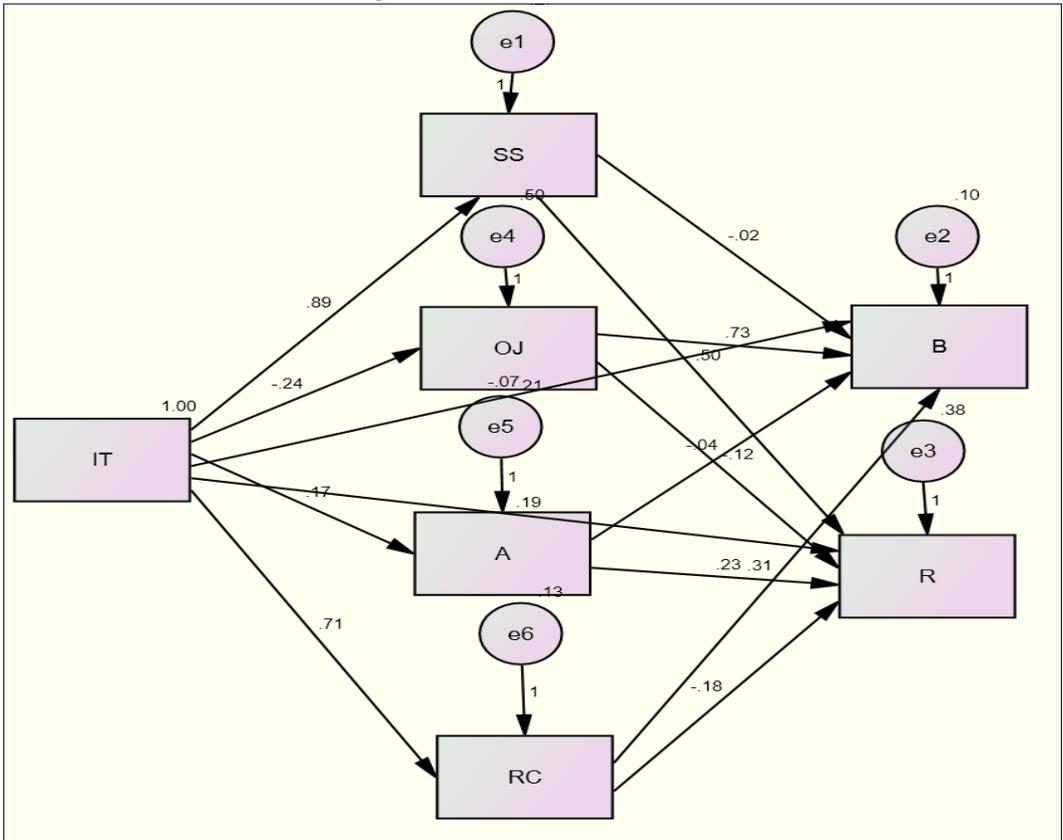
Table 3 shows the fit indices of the initial SEM model. As per the cut offs or desirable ranges shown in the table, none of the acquired values reach the desired ranges or values which shows a poor fir model. For improving this model the next step involved consulting the modification indices. With the help of

the modification indices covariance paths were added to the error term of the model. Then the model was tested again. The following shows the results of the SEM rerun (diagram 2 and table 4).

**Table 2: Correlation among the Research Constructs**

Factor	OJ	R	A	IT	RC	SS	B
<b>OJ</b>	1.000						
<b>R</b>	-.173*** (.042)	1.000					
<b>A</b>	-.131*** (.030)	.160*** (.033)	1.000				
<b>IT</b>	-.106 (.041)	.256*** (.051)	.075 (.030)	1.000			
<b>RC</b>	.022 (.034)	.189*** (.044)	.056 (.028)	.336*** (.058)	1.000		
<b>SS</b>	-.103 (.048)	.370*** (.062)	.180*** (.039)	.412*** (.067)	.393*** (.066)	1.000	
<b>B</b>	.413*** (.061)	-.095 (.044)	-.097 (.031)	-.022 (.045)	.105 (.041)	-.004 (.053)	1.000

**Figure 2: Initial Structural Model**





As shown in the diagram the results of the fit indices acquired after the co-variances were added are favourable. These favourable results show a good fit.

Table 4 shows the improved results after the structural model was revised; the RMSEA shows an improvement as a decrease is noticed from 0.366 to 0.251. Another one of the fit indices also showed improvement as the CFI of the model increased from 0.769 to 0.946. The NFI also showed an improvement as an increase in the value was seen from 0.767 to 0.944 the previous value was below the desired value while the value attained after the revision was in accordance to the cut off ranges. The goodness of fit index i.e., the GFI also showed improvement from 0.780 to 0.949. The previous value was below the desired value which should be greater than 0.800. Subsequently the adjusted goodness fit index also showed improvement after revision with the values rising from 0.642 to 0.831 with the desired ranges falling to a cut off value of 0.800. Due to these improvements in fit indices of this model, the revised model was utilized for the analysis. Further analysis of the model was conducted for hypothesis testing. The detailed discussion of hypothesis testing will be provided in the next section with a table entailing necessary details such as parameter estimates, standard error, critical ratio and corresponding p-values.

**Table 5: Parameter Estimates for Finalized Structural Model**

Path	Unstandardized Estimates	Standard Error	Critical Ratio	P-value
SS ← IT	.885	.029	30.531	***
OJ ← IT	-.240	.040	-6.079	***
A ← IT	.172	.026	6.684	***
RC ← IT	.707	.021	34.154	***
B ← IT	-.071	.045	-1.558	.119
R ← IT	.192	.089	2.143	.032
B ← SS	-.016	.045	-.348	.728
B ← OJ	.732	.029	25.100	***
R ← OJ	-.116	.057	-2.023	.043
R ← A	.232	.091	2.545	.011
B ← A	-.039	.046	-.832	.405
R ← RC	-.183	.120	-1.520	.129
B ← RC	.307	.061	5.013	***
R ← SS	.502	.088	5.682	***

*Note:* \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* p<0.001; SS= social stressor, IT= Illegitimate tasks, OJ= Organizational justice, A= Anger, RC= Role Conflict, B= Burnout, R= Resentment.

## 6. TESTING MEDIATING EFFECTS

In order to check the hypothesis of this study the relationships of the variables was determined by conducting many regression analysis. In order to check the mediation effects SEM was applied which checks mediation in three steps (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In the first step SEM tested the relationship between independent variable and the mediating variable which in this case are illegitimate tasks and social stressor, organisational justice anger and role conflict (respectively). The second step of SEM includes validating the relationship between the independent variable and the dependant variables that are burnout and resentment. In the third step of SEM includes testing the mediating effects of the mediating variables between the independent variables and the dependant variables. In this case the independent variable is illegitimate tasks, the mediating variables include, social stressor, role conflict,

organisational justice and anger. In order to measure the mediating effects of the mediators indirect effects were measured by using bootstrapping (Cronbach, 1951).

**Table 6:** Parameter Estimates for Mediation Testing

Relationship	Direct without Mediator	Direct with Mediator	Indirect
IT → SS → B	-.077 (.168)	-.103 (.002)	.777
IT → SS → R	.633 (***)	.243 ***	.001
IT → OJ → B	-.077 (.168)	-.090 ***	.032
IT → OJ → R	.633 (***)	.248 ***	.001
IT → A → B	-.077 (.168)	-.103 ***	-.001
IT → A → R	.633 (***)	.254 ***	.007
IT → RC → B	-.077 (.168)	-.104 (.028)	.001
IT → RC → R	.633 (***)	.253 (.003)	.154

*Note:* \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ; SS= social stressor, IT= Illegitimate tasks, OJ= Organizational justice, A= Anger, RC= Role Conflict, B= Burnout, R= Resentment.

After applying the technique of bootstrapping the results given in table 4.22 reveal that anger successfully mediates the relationship between illegitimate task and burnout and illegitimate tasks and resentment. Similarly the organisational justice plays a successful role as mediator between illegitimate task and burnout and illegitimate tasks and resentment. While social stressor only mediated the relationship between illegitimate task and resentment and role conflict also showed mediation between illegitimate task and burnout.

## 7. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The final model extracted after the SEM is what determines the results for testing the hypothesis (fig 4.8). When discussing the hypothesis results it is necessary to repeat the objective of the research in order to give a clearer picture of what the study was aimed at and what consequences have finally been acquired, thus making it easier for the reader to understand the flow of the study. This section will therefore continue to explain the results by first describing the objectives that were explained initially in the paper. The objectives of this research were as follows,

1. To critically examine the stressor strain relationship between illegitimate tasks and resentment and burnout.
2. To investigate if anger buffers the stress and strain relationship of the above mentioned stressor and variables of strain.
3. To critically analyses social stressor, lack of distributive justice and role conflict as buffers between the stress and strain relationship.

In order to achieve these objectives for the research, several hypothesis were devised. These hypothesis and their conclusions will be further studied in the next section.

### 7.1. Objective 1

The first objective which consisted of critically examining the stressor strain relationship between illegitimate tasks and resentment and burnout, was achieved through the following hypothesis,

*H1:* Illegitimate task are positively related with resentment.

H3: Illegitimate task are positively related with burnout.

According to the tests that were run it was clearly indicated that illegitimate tasks were positively related to feelings of resentment. Similarly to other studies that were conducted by Stocker et al. (2010) and (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015) that the feeling of resentment increased when individuals were consistently subjected to illegitimate tasks. Table 4.17 shows that one among the two hypotheses is being supported by the results. However the results did not support the second hypothesis which stated, that illegitimate task is positively related with burnout. Hence among the two hypotheses testing the stressor strain relationships only one was proved.

**Table 7: Summary of Objective 1**

	Path	Unstandardized Estimates	Critical Ratio	P-value	Results
<i>Objective 1</i>	H1 IT → R	-.051	-1.379	***	Supported
	H3 IT → B	.571	14.572	.168	Not Supported

*Note:* \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* p<0.001; SS= social stressor, IT= Illegitimate tasks, OJ= Organizational justice, A= Anger, RC= Role Conflict, B= Burnout, R= Resentment.

Despite hypothesizing the stressor strain relation the results yielded were quite surprising as the stressor (illegitimate tasks) did not show much contribution to the strain (burnout).

## 7.2. Objective 2

In order to achieve the next objective which consisted of investigating if anger buffers the stress and strain relationship of the above mentioned stressor and variables of strain, the following hypothesis were constructed,

H12: Illegitimate task is positively related to anger.

H13: Anger is positively related to organizational resentment.

H14: Anger is positively related to burnout.

H14(a): Anger mediates between illegitimate task and burnout.

H14(b): Anger mediates between illegitimate tasks and resentment.

The table below shows the results of the deduced hypothesis, among which one is not supported by the results.

**Table 8: Summary of Objective 2**

	Path	Unstandardized Estimates	Critical Ratio	P-value	Results
<i>Objective 2</i>	H12 A → IT	.172	6.684	***	Supported
	H13 R → A	.232	2.545	.011	Supported
	H14 B → A	-.039	-.832	.405	Not Supported
	H14(a) IT → A → B			.001	Supported
	H14(b) IT → A → R			.007	Supported

*Note:* \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* p<0.001; SS= social stressor, IT= Illegitimate tasks, OJ= Organizational justice, A= Anger, RC= Role Conflict, B= Burnout, R= Resentment.

As can be seen in the table above the hypothesis stating that anger has a relationship with illegitimate tasks, is proved as the results of the survey, support this claim. The next hypothesis claiming that anger has a relation with resentment is also supported by the results of the survey. Similarly the hypothesis stating that anger plays a role as a mediator has been confirmed, as the results support its role as a mediator between illegitimate tasks and resentment and illegitimate tasks and burnout.

### 7.3. Objective 3

The third objective of this study aims at critically analysing social stressor, lack of distributive justice and role conflict as buffers between the stress and strain relationship. The stressor strain relationship has been explored by many researchers. In this study the stressor is illegitimate tasks while the strains include resentment and burnout. This relationship has tested in the first two hypotheses, in which the relationship between illegitimate task and resentment was proved however results failed to prove the relation between illegitimate tasks and burnout. The coordinating hypothesis to the third objective claims a relationship between the mediator and the dependant variables. The mediators under discussion are role conflict, social stressor and organisational justice, while the dependant variables are resentment and burnout. The third objectives also hypothesize the mediation role of the three mediating variables between the independent and the dependant variables.

**Table 9:** Summary of Objective 3

	Path	Unstandardized Estimates	Critical Ratio	P-value	Results
	H2 SS → IT	.885	30.531	***	Supported
	H4 R → SS	.502	5.682	***	Supported
	H5 B → SS	-.016	-.348	.728	Not Supported
	H5 (a) IT → SS → R			.001	Supported
	H5 (b) IT → SS → B			.777	Not supported
	H6 RC → IT	.707	34.154	***	Supported
	H7 R → RC	-.183	-1.520	.129	Not Supported
Objective 3	H8 B → RC	.307	5.013	***	Supported
	H8 (b) IT → RC → B			.001	Supported
	H8 (a) IT → RC → R			.154	Not supported
	H9 OJ → IT	-.240	-6.079	***	Supported
	H10 B → OJ	.732	25.100	***	Supported
	H11 R → OJ	-.116	-2.023	.043	Supported
	H11 (b) IT → OJ → B			.032	Supported
	H11 (a) IT → OJ → R			.001	Supported

*Note:* \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* p<0.001; SS= social stressor, IT= Illegitimate tasks, OJ= Organizational justice, A= Anger, RC= Role Conflict, B= Burnout, R= Resentment.

As shown in the table above, all but two hypotheses are supported by the results of the survey findings. Hypothesis 2, tests a relationship between the independent variable and the mediator social stressor. The findings of the survey support this hypothesis with a P-value of \*\*\*. The next hypothesis (H4) which tests a direct relationship between social stressor and the dependant variable resentment was also supported by the results as the p-value was shown to be \*\*\*. The next hypothesis (H5) tested the relationship between social stressor and burnout which unfortunately was not supported by the results of the survey with a P-value of 0.728. The next hypothesis (H5 a) claimed a relationship between the mediating variable role conflict and the independent variable, which was supported by the results of

survey as shown in table the p-value obtained was \*\*\*. Similarly the third mediating variable also proved to have relation of organisational justice with the independent variable showing a P-value of \*\*\*. Role conflict and its' relationship with resentment were not supported yielding a P-value of 0.129, while the other independent variable burnout did prove a relation with role conflict with a P-value of \*\*\*. On the other hand the third mediating variable showed a relation with both the dependant variables resentment and burnout tested by H11 and H10, with P-values 0.43 and \*\*\* respectively.

Role conflict constituted the hypothesis H8(a) and H8 (b) among which only one was proved, H8 (b) with P-value .001. The 'P-value of H8 (a) which tested the mediation of role conflict between illegitimate tasks and resentment was not supported as the P-value yielded was <0.05 (154). The third mediating variable organisational justice was a part of H11 (a) and H11 (b) that were supported with p-values 0.001 & 0.032 respectively.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Illegitimate tasks as a stressor is a fairly new topic and needs further attention (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015). The results of this study shows that anger as a mediator shows considerable amount of influence between illegitimate task, burnout and resentment. Other than that, role conflict, lack of organisational justice and social stressors played the role of mediator between illegitimate task, burnout and resentment. The results showed that lack of organisational justice work as a mediator between illegitimate tasks and the strains; burnout and resentment. However role conflict did mediate between illegitimate tasks and burnout. Social stressor showed mediation effect between illegitimate task and resentment. But the new mediator which we introduced (anger) showed mediation between illegitimate tasks and the strains; burnout and resentment.

## 9. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Creating a perfect job design for any career is a big motivational factor for attracting talented individuals. Illegitimate tasks hamper a perfect job design. Assigning illegitimate tasks communicate intricate social messages. Some of these may pose potential damages to the social or job roles of the sufferer. Therefore supervisors and managers must pay attention to these social cues. According to Cropanzano et al. (2001) offence caused by illegitimate tasks are reduced when accompanied by explicit justification for those tasks. These justifications may be circumstantial.

Illegitimate tasks, as proven by researches are a factor of demonization and other negative feelings such as resentment towards your organisations. All such feelings are not only detrimental for the organisations but the individual as well. Professionals in the public sector have shown an inadmissible ease with illegitimate tasks in their organisations. Illegitimate task has become a relevant concept in most public sector organisations (N. K. Semmer et al., 2015).

Limitation of any survey is the total dependence on self-report which may cause common method biasness. However this discrepancy was managed with the help of the Common Latent Factor method. Besides the limitations in methodology the study itself has theoretical limitations as it was conducted with only the teaching sector as a sample population. Furthermore teachers from only the public sector were chosen. The sample population lacks cultural diversity as well as all samples were drawn from Pakistan only. The narrowly drawn samples make the study non generalizable. Thus it would suffice to say that more studies on the topic with diverse samples are needed and are aimed to be conducted. Future

studies can study the direct impact of illegitimate task on feeling of being offended as an extension of the *stress on self*. Similar to anger, other emotional reactions should be investigated in future studies such as, lower self-esteem, guilt or shame. Other than this, future studies may help to predict the results of controls other than role conflict, social stressor, lack of organisational justice and anger. Physiological contracts can be used as mediator between illegitimate task and the resulting strains. Though psychological contracts are not based on tasks however the similarity in both is in the underlining factor; expectations.

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