

# **Illegitimate Tasks and Employee Deviant Silence: The Role of Revenge Motive and Moral Identity**

**Rahman Khan**

Edinburgh Napier University, United Kingdom  
rahmankhan\_86@yahoo.com

**Ghulam Murtaza**

Kedge Business School, France  
ghulam.murtaza@iae-aix.com

**Qurat-ul-ain Talpur**

Paris School of Business, France  
quratulain.talpur@gmail.com

**Aqila Noor**

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia  
aqeelanoor1982@gmail.com

**Athar Hameed Butt**

Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
a.h.butt@wiut.uz

**Lutf ur Rehman**

Universite de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour  
mirlutf@gmail.com

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## **Abstract**

This research explores the role of illegitimate tasks on employees' deviant silence behavior. Additionally, it examines the revenge motives of employees as a mechanism to explain this relationship. In addition, it establishes whether the moral identity of employees moderates the link between illegitimate tasks and deviant silence. To test the hypothesized relationships the research team conducted two studies. An experimental field study design (Study 1) confirmed that illegitimate tasks are significantly related to deviant silence. A time-lagged study (Study 2), where data was collected across three time points, confirmed the direct relationship between illegitimate tasks and deviant silence, and an indirect relationship through the revenge motives of employees. The moderating role of moral identity on the direct relationship between illegitimate tasks and deviant silence was also established. These findings have important theoretical and practical implications.

*Keywords.* Illegitimate tasks, deviant silence, moral identity, social exchange, reciprocity beliefs.