

## Do Employees Snooze or Strike Back to Injustice?

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### Abstract

*This study aims to investigate the relationship between the perceptions of injustice and revengeful intentions among first-person (revengeful intention by the victim), second-person (revengeful intention for the sake of a close friend), and third-person (revengeful intention for the sake of an acquaintance). A questionnaire survey was used to collect data from 154 respondents. The findings showed that interactional injustice is associated positively with first-person revenge, whereas distributive and procedural injustice lead to second-person and third-person revengeful intentions. This study offers important insights about the broader impact of injustice which goes beyond the victim and explains how it ignites negative feelings among the non-victim as well.*

**Keywords.** distributive justice, interactional justice, organizational justice, perceived injustice, procedural justice, workplace revenge

### 1. Introduction

Revenge is a reciprocal action aimed to restore justice and social status by punishing the offender for harm doing (Gerber & Jackson, [2013](#)). It is a form of punishment for an undesired action (Herrmann, Thöni, & Gächter, [2008](#)) which is inflicted by harming the offender (Eadeh, Peak, & Lambert, [2017](#)) and also a reaction to unfair treatment (Gollwitzer & Denzler, [2009](#)). The intention and motivation to harm (Barnes, Brown, & Osterman, [2009](#); Forner, Zechmeister, Romero, & VanderLaan, [2002](#); Tripp, Bies, & Aquino, [2007](#); Wilkowski, Hartung, Crowe, & Chai, [2012](#)) as well as the action of harming the offender (Bordia et al., [2014](#); Eadeh et al., [2017](#); Schumann & Ross, [2010](#)) both are considered as revenge. The feeling to get even ascends when social,

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psychological, and/or economic status of an individual are damaged (Folger & Cropanzano, [2001](#)). Such damages are caused when people feel deprived of something they deserve and/or experience any sort of unfairness for which no formal platform to report grievances and to retain justice is available (Tripp et al., [2007](#)).

Injustice is caused when the psychological, social, and material well-being of the victim is hurt and moral principles are violated (Folger, Cropanzano, & Goldman, [2005](#)) for which the accused is accountable (Folger & Cropanzano, [2001](#)). Therefore, the intention to take revenge or to get even arises and the transgressor is blamed for the unfair action (Bradfield & Aquino, [1999](#)). The more the severity of the offense experienced by the victim, the stronger is the blame for the wrongdoing (Bradfield & Aquino, [1999](#)). Hence, the consequences of a negative act impact accountability (Folger & Cropanzano, [1998a](#)). Revenge is a counteraction against wrongdoing which is always directed towards the other (offender) and not to the self (Zimmer-Gembeck, Nesdale, Webb, Khatibi, & Downey, [2016](#)). Furthermore, two individuals are obligatory for the occurrence of revenge, where the avenger seeks revenge against the transgressor for the inflicted harm (Stillwell, Baumeister, & Priore, [2008](#)).

An organization is a place where different individuals interact, cooperate, and work together and revenge is witnessed at the workplace (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, [2001](#); Bies & Tripp, [2005](#); Bradfield & Aquino, [1999](#); Jones, [2009](#); Tripp & Bies, [2009](#), [2010](#); Tripp, Bies, & Aquino, [2002](#)). Literature examines workplace revenge from different perspectives such as workplace incivility (Thompson, Carlson, Hunter, & Whitten, [2016](#)), organizational injustice (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, [2006](#); Skarlicki & Folger, [1997](#); Tripp et al., [2007](#)), abusive leadership (Liu, Kwan, Wu, & Wu, [2010](#)), violation of trust among co-workers (Bies & Tripp, [1996](#)), workplace harassment (Wang, Bowling, Tian, Alarcon, & Kwan, [2018](#)), counterproductive work behaviors (Bowling & Gruys, [2010](#)), workplace aggression (Greenberg & Barling, [1999](#)) and rumors as revenge (Bordia et al., [2014](#)). Therefore, the importance of revenge at the workplace motivated the researchers to examine the occurrence of interpersonal revenge in the organizations of Pakistan.

Most of the literature (Aquino et al., [2001](#), [2006](#); Bordia et al., [2014](#); Bradfield & Aquino, [1999](#); Gollwitzer, Meder, & Schmitt, [2011](#); Jones, [2009](#); Stillwell et al., [2008](#); Tripp et al., [2007](#)) on workplace revenge focused on the victim who ultimately becomes an avenger to restore justice and to punish the transgressor. Interpersonal bonding among individuals was ignored which may distinguish the victim from the avenger. Miller ([1998](#)) discussed the strong association of individuals with their friends; therefore, the miseries their friends face may induce the feelings of discomfort among them. So, an individual may stand up to retain justice for close friends and acquaintances. This indicates the possibility that the avenger may not be a victim but is motivated to get even for friends at the workplace.

An individual might develop association with co-workers (Berman, West, & Richter, [2002](#)); therefore, revengeful intentions may develop in response to the harm experienced by any member of the organization. Two special cases in which the avenger is not the victim are considered in this study. Revengeful intention against the injustice experienced by friends is termed as second-person revenge and getting even for injustice with any other organizational member is referred to as third-person revenge in the current study. This study considers all these three possibilities of revenge (revenge by the victim, revenge for a close friend at the workplace, and revenge for an acquaintance at the workplace) separately as a consequence of three types of injustice (distributive, procedural, and interactional).

Justice is a major concern in social units where members interact with each other and develop interpersonal relationships (Folger & Cropanzano, [2001](#)). These relationships are damaged when individuals experience inequity (Folger & Cropanzano, [2001](#)). Justice at the workplace is usually related to the outcomes employees receive, procedures adopted to define and allocate these outcomes, and interpersonal interactions with co-workers (Cropanzano & Ambrose, [2015](#); Folger & Cropanzano, [2001](#); Folger et al., [2005](#); McColl-Kennedy & Sparks, [2003](#); Skarlicki & Folger, [1997](#)). Hence, 'distributive justice' is concerned with outcomes (Etim & Okudero, [2019](#); Folger & Cropanzano, [2001](#); McColl-Kennedy & Sparks, [2003](#)), 'procedural justice' is related to the procedures involved in defining those outcomes

(Cropanzano & Ambrose, [2015](#); Etim & Okudero, [2019](#); Folger & Cropanzano, [2001](#); Folger & Konovsky, [1989](#); McColl-Kennedy & Sparks, [2003](#); McFarlin & Sweeney, [1992](#)) and ‘interactional justice’ is related to interpersonal interactions (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, [2001b](#); Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, [2001](#); Kerwin, Jordan, & Turner, [2015](#); Parks, [1996](#); Reb, Goldman, Kray, & Cropanzano, [2006](#)). Violation of distributive justice leads to anger (Khattak, Khan, Fatima, & Shah, [2019](#)) and resultantly, to an individual’s retaliatory behavior (Skarlicki & Folger, [1997](#)). Dar and Rahman ([2019](#)) indicated that the violation of procedural justice leads to deviant workplace behaviors. Incivility, indicating interactional injustice, damages one’s reputation and honor and induces a reaction to get even (Cropanzano & Ambrose, [2015](#)). Considering the above rationale, this study investigates the response in terms of either snoozing or striking back against injustice by both victims and non-victims. ‘Snooze’ is an English word which refers to paying no attention or not giving response to an event and ‘strike’ means attacking violently (“Cambridge International Dictionary,” [1995](#)). This study refers to the absence of retaliation against injustice at the workplace as snoozing, whereas revengeful intention is referred to as striking against injustice. It explains the reaction to injustice as either snoozing or striking back in terms of revengeful intentions in three different situations, that is, when the reaction comes from the victim, from an individual closely related to the victim, and/or from an individual who is neither a victim nor closely related to the victim but an observer of the wrongdoing. Previous studies (Aquino et al., [2001](#), [2006](#); Bordia et al., [2014](#); Bradfield & Aquino, [1999](#)) focused on revenge as retaliation by the victim who is hurt by the wrongdoing of the transgressor. However, people are motivated to punish offenders who inflict harm to their closely related individuals (Govier, [2011](#)) with whom they have a strong bonding. Similarly, within an organization where an employee considers himself/herself a part of the social unit, s/he becomes an observer of the caused injustice and therefore, there is a probability of retaliation from any member of the social group, either victim or non-victim. However, existing literature discusses revenge in terms of the victim’s response only. Revenge in the other two cases where the avenger is not the victim still needs to be explored. The

findings of the current study add to the body of knowledge available on workplace revenge, specifically when non-victims are inclined to take revenge. This assists in identifying the dimensions of injustice that might induce revengeful intentions among the employees. In order to control the negativity of revenge at the workplace, the identification of injustice is significant and this is the practical implication of the current study.

## 2. Literature Review

Revenge is an emotional state that arises in response to injustice (Aquino et al., [2001](#), [2006](#); Bies, [2010](#); Bordia et al., [2014](#); Gollwitzer & Denzler, [2009](#); Govier, [2011](#); Julian, [2015](#); Schumann & Ross, [2010](#); Tripp et al., [2002](#); Wang, [2008](#); Wang et al., [2018](#)). The likelihood of revenge increases in organizations where procedural justice is not maintained (Aquino et al., [2006](#)). Injustice in procedures provokes aggression (Dietz, Robinson, Folger, Baron, & Schulz, [2003](#)) and counterproductive work behaviors (SimanTov-Nachlieli & Bamberger, [2020](#)) among employees. Similarly, distributive injustice (Ren, Yang, & Wang, [2015](#); Tripp et al., [2007](#)) and interactional injustice (Jones, [2004](#), [2009](#); Skarlicki & Folger, [1997](#)) induce retaliation and revengeful intentions at the workplace.

Injustice occurs in the form of procedural, distributive, and interactional injustice (McCull-Kennedy & Sparks, [2003](#)). The degree of fairness adopted in procedures used for allocating outcomes indicates procedural justice (Cropanzano & Ambrose, [2015](#); Folger & Konovsky, [1989](#)). Distributive justice is related to fairness in outcomes such as resources, rewards, and compensation given to employees (Cropanzano & Ambrose, [2015](#); Folger & Konovsky, [1989](#)). The social aspect of justice is labeled as interactional justice which allows for the quality of individual interactions to be judged in terms of respect, dignity, and honor (Cropanzano & Ambrose, [2015](#)). The violation of one's rights, unfair treatment (Gollwitzer & Denzler, [2009](#)) and aggressive behavior leads to punishing the offender (Wilkowski et al., [2012](#)). Therefore, to make the transgressor realize his/her wrongdoing, a punishment must be imposed (Bordia et al., [2014](#); Gerber & Jackson, [2013](#)). Gerber and Jackson ([2013](#)) explained the goals of punishment as “instrumental”, that is, aimed to restrict the

probability of transgression in the future and as “retributive”, that is, aimed to make the offender suffer. Moreover, punishment assists in restoring justice (Gerber & Jackson, [2013](#)). Hence, injustice stimulates the punishment against the transgressor carried out by the avenger for self-satisfaction (Govier, [2011](#)).

Four different objectives of punishment gave rise to four different theories of punishment namely retributive theory, incapacitation theory, deterrence theory, and rehabilitation theory (Cropanzano & Ambrose, [2015](#); Dubber, Hörnle, & Demleitner, [2015](#); Dutta, [2019](#)). Punishment as retribution is inflicted on the offender in response to the wrongdoing and harm they have committed (Gerber & Jackson, [2013](#); Glaeser & Sacerdote, [2000](#); Govier, [2011](#)). To guard the society against the possible harm inflicted by criminals, they are detained in jails and hence punishment is used for the incapacitation of the criminals (Carlsmith, [2006](#); Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, [2002](#)). According to the deterrence theory, the offender is punished to avoid the possibility of wrongdoing in the future (Carlsmith et al., [2002](#); Glaeser & Sacerdote, [2000](#)). Lastly, punishment is used for the rehabilitation of the criminals / harm doers so that through counseling and support they are turned into better human beings after the imposed punishment. Here, the goal of punishment expands beyond penalty (Goldman, [1982](#)). Among these four theories of punishment, retributive and deterrence theory are related to imposing penalty on harm doers. The purpose is to make them feel the pain they have caused, to make them realize the offense they have committed and to restrain them in the future. Revenge revolves around these two main objectives of punishing the offender (Gerber & Jackson, [2013](#); McKee & Feather, [2008](#)). Revenge is taken by the victim to get even when there is no formal platform of justice (Tripp et al., [2007](#)), therefore, incapacitation of the transgressor is not applicable. Moreover, revenge is more focused on the self-interest of the victim (Folger et al., [2005](#)). Hence, the rehabilitation of the offender is also out of the question in this regard (McKee & Feather, [2008](#)).

## **2.1 Perceived Injustice**

The revengeful tale originates with the perceived injustice caused by an unlawful act (Folger & Cropanzano, [1998b](#)) and is

intended to restore equity (McKee & Feather, [2008](#)), therefore, the theory of justice lays the foundation for revenge. Justice is a major concern in social setups where people interact and give credit and blame to each other (Folger & Cropanzano, [2001](#)). Injustice is felt when the victim identifies a discrepancy between a perceived and received outcome that disturbs an individual's wellbeing (Folger & Cropanzano, [2001](#)). This study focuses on injustice in the following domains.

## **2.2 Distributive Injustice**

Distributive justice is concerned with the outcomes (Folger & Cropanzano, [2001](#)). It depends on the criteria on the basis of which rewards, punishments, and resources are distributed among employees (Leventhal, [1976](#)). This justice type is used as a yardstick to evaluate the outcomes (Folger & Konovsky, [1989](#)) having economic and socioeconomic value (Cropanzano & Ambrose, [2015](#)) which employees receive (McFarlin & Sweeney, [1992](#)). Distributive justice is gauged by equality, need, and equity (Cropanzano & Ambrose, [2015](#); Leventhal, [1976](#)). Equality is attained when every individual of a social group receives equal or same outcomes (Cropanzano & Ambrose, [2015](#)). On the need scale, justice is established when the needy gets the more. Equity ensures that individuals receive the outcomes based on their input. The lack of distributive justice leads to an individual's retaliatory behavior (Skarlicki & Folger, [1997](#)). Therefore, unfairness in terms of distributive justice stimulates the intention of revenge.

## **2.3 Procedural Injustice**

Procedural justice defines the degree of fairness in procedures (Cropanzano & Ambrose, [2001](#)). An individual's perception of procedures as fair or unfair (Leventhal, [1976](#)) indicates the degree of procedural justice. McFarlin and Sweeney ([1992](#)) explained procedural justice in organizational outcomes. Procedures need to be impartial, accurate, consistent, correct, inclusive, and ethically justified to ensure justice (Cropanzano & Ambrose, [2001](#)). Any violation in terms of inconsistency, biasness, immorality, and exclusion (Tripp et al., [2007](#)) raises questions about the transparency of procedures. Negative perception of procedural justice increases the likelihood of revenge (Aquino et al., [2006](#)). Moreover, procedural injustice lays the foundations for distributive

injustice and employees assume that outcomes resulting from unfair procedures are also unjust (Skarlicki & Folger, [1997](#)). Hence, the perception of procedural injustice motivates the victims to get even to restore fairness.

#### **2.4. Interactional Injustice**

Interactional justice is based on interpersonal interactions; any violations such as personal attacks are considered as interactional injustice (Folger & Cropanzano, [2001](#)). The violation of trust, breach of contracts, lying, abusing authority, and overt criticism all result in damaging mutual contracts and interpersonal relationships and cause interactional injustice (Folger et al., [2005](#)). Actions such as incivility, rudeness, offensive comments, and social exclusion (Thompson et al., [2016](#)) develop the urge for revenge against the offender. Insulting and disrespectful behaviors, although do not indicate unfairness in procedures and outcomes, but harm an individual's self-esteem and therefore are considered injustice in interactional terms (Cropanzano & Ambrose, [2015](#)). Moreover, it is easier to blame an offender for interactional injustice as the aggressor is apparent to all (Folger & Cropanzano, [2001](#)). Therefore, interactional injustice adds fuel to the fire of revenge.

#### **2.5 Revenge**

Revenge is defined as the response to perceived injustice, abusive authority (Bies & Tripp, [1996](#); Liu et al., [2010](#)), incivility, rudeness, disregarding behavior (Thompson et al., [2016](#)), unfavorable treatment (Eisenberger, Lynch, Aselage, & Rohdieck, [2004](#)), violation of expectations / commitments (Bies & Tripp, [1996](#); Bordia et al., [2014](#)), workplace harassment (Wang et al., [2018](#)), violation of trust and rules (Bies & Tripp, [1996](#)) and damaging of personal identity and honor (Bies & Tripp, [1996](#)). Revenge constitutes the reaction to an undesired action (Herrmann et al., [2008](#); Eadeh et al., [2017](#)) and unfair treatment (Gollwitzer & Denzler, [2009](#)). Harm is caused when the social, psychological, and economic well-being of an individual are damaged (Folger & Cropanzano, [2001](#)). The harm done to either self or close ones leads to vengeful action (Govier, [2011](#)). This intention even favors hard and unfair punishment which may go beyond the harm inflicted by the transgressor (Gerber & Jackson, [2013](#)) and can take the form of a violent act against the offender (Bies & Tripp,



1996). The main purpose of revenge is to punish the guilty for violating moral values. Based on the retributive theory, revenge has a general acceptance in social setups (Govier, 2011) and is considered righteous (Tripp & Bies, 2010). Moreover, revenge is considered a justified reciprocal behavior in which negativity is manifested in response to negativity (Wang, 2008). Literature explains revenge as the motivation to get even (Barnes et al., 2009; Forner et al., 2002; Tripp et al., 2007) and as a harmful action against the offender (Bordia et al., 2014; Eadeh et al., 2017; Schumann & Ross, 2010). In this study, revenge is taken as the intention to punish the offender as a reaction (retribution) and to deter him/her from committing further harm. This study further segregates revengeful intentions in terms of first-person, second-person and third-person based on the avenger-victim relationship.

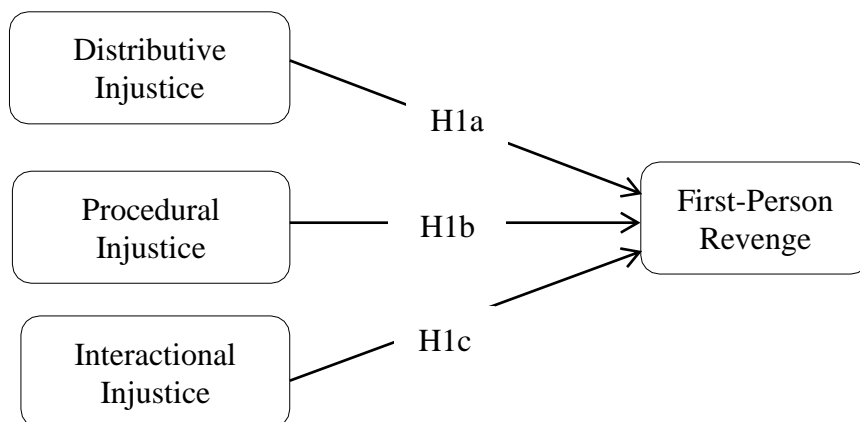
## 2.6. First-Person Revenge

The retribution theory of punishment suggests that the offender is penalized in response to the wrongdoing (Gerber & Jackson, 2013; Glaeser & Sacerdote, 2000; Govier, 2011). The victim is the one who is affected by the transgression and is motivated to get even. Moreover, to restrain the offender in the future the victim is inclined to punish him/her. Therefore, when the victim is inclined to take revenge, this situation is termed as first-person revenge in this study. In this situation, the victim of transgression acts as the aggressor to punish the transgressor in order to attain justice, therefore it is hypothesized as follows:

*H1a*: There is a relationship between distributive injustice and first-person revenge.

*H1b*: There is a relationship between procedural injustice and first-person revenge.

*H1c*: There is a relationship between interactional injustice and first-person revenge.



**Figure 1.** Injustice and First-person Revenge

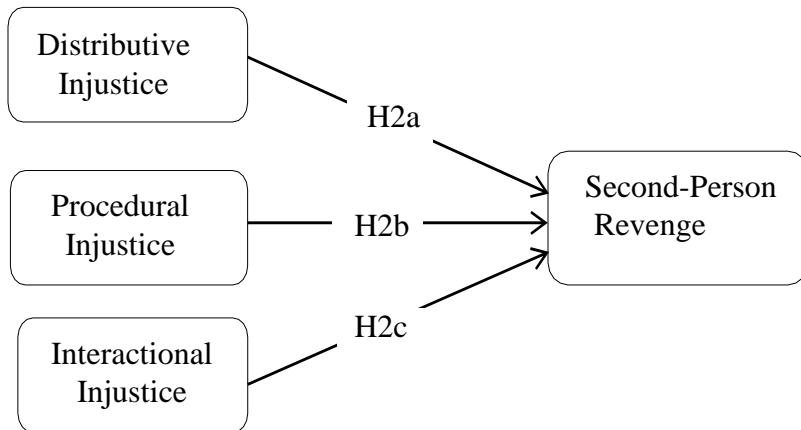
## 2.7 Second-Person Revenge

Social bonding theory states that an individual's actions are influenced by the elements of social bonds including attachment, commitment, involvement and belief (Hirschi, [2002](#)). One develops an *attachment* with “significant others”; individuals who are considered important and have influence on others (Hirschi, [1995](#)). According to this theory, a person shows *commitment* with significant others by investing time, effort and resources (Hirschi, [2002](#)). An individual *involves* him/herself in the goal attainment activities of those s/he values. Therefore, a person supports those individuals with whom s/he has a social bond and *believes* in what they say and do. Friends are among the significant others who have a strong influence on individuals (Hirschi, [1995](#)). Friendships develop at workplaces (Pogrebin, [1987](#)) as employees interact, coordinate and work together (Berman et al., [2002](#)). Therefore, an emotional bond with a friend at the workplace motivates a person to punish the offender who harmed his/her friend (Govier, [2011](#)). The current study labels this revengeful intention as second-person revenge when the aggressor is not the victim but is inclined to take revenge for a friend at the workplace. The following hypotheses represent this relationship:

*H2a:* There is a relationship between distributive injustice and second-person revenge.

*H2b:* There is a relationship between procedural injustice and second-person revenge.

*H2c*: There is a relationship between interactional injustice and second-person revenge.



**Figure 2.** Injustice and Second-person Revenge

## 2.8 Third-Person Rrevenge

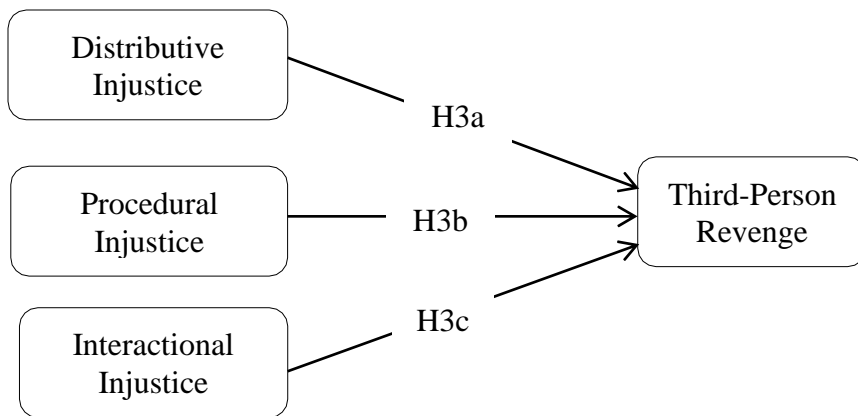
According to the social identity theory (Tajfel, Turner, Austin, & Worchel, [1979](#)), people categorize themselves into different social units to develop their social identity. In the first stage, a person categorizes him/herself into a particular group and abides by its norms. In the next phase, an individual adopts the identity of the group and becomes emotionally attached. Finally, social comparison is made between one's own group and other groups with positive distinctiveness (Hornsey, [2008](#)). Therefore, one believes that the group one belongs to is relatively moral. An employee is a part of an organization and establishes a sense of relationship with other employees by being a member of the same social unit. Consequently, conformity to organizational rules, policies, and norms is adopted by its members and any violation may result in resentment (Ashforth & Mael, [1989](#)). In such a situation, there is a probability that revengeful intention is developed by any member of the social group, either a victim or not. Hence, any member who is neither a victim nor closely related to the victim may develop the intention to take revenge to restore justice in a particular social setup. This situation is termed as third-

person revenge in this study. In the light of the above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

*H3a*: There is a relationship between distributive injustice and third-person revenge.

*H3b*: There is a relationship between procedural injustice and third-person revenge.

*H3c*: There is a relationship between interactional injustice and third-person revenge.



**Figure 3.** Injustice and Third-person Revenge

### 3. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explain revenge as an outcome of injustice at the workplace. For this purpose, injustice was examined in terms of outcomes employees receive (distributive justice), procedures leading to outcomes (procedural justice), and interpersonal interactions (interactional justice). This study interprets revenge as the intention to get even against injustice. Revenge was investigated as first-person revenge (if the victim is the avenger), second-person revenge (if the victim is a close friend of the avenger), and third-person revenge (if the victim is an acquaintance of the avenger). The three forms of injustice were taken as independent variables and revengeful intention remained the dependent variable.

#### 3.1. Measures

Data on distributive, procedural, and interactional injustice was

collected through modified OJS, which is a well-established scale (Colquitt, [2001a](#); FitzGerald, [2002](#); Shibaoka et al., [2010](#)) used to measure injustice. Distributive injustice was measured through four items including ‘Do these outcomes reflect the effort you have put into your work?’ and ‘Are your outcomes justified given your performance?’ Procedural injustice was assessed through seven items including ‘Have those procedures been free of bias?’ and ‘Have those procedures upheld ethical and moral standards?’ Finally, interactional injustice was measured through four items including ‘Have your colleagues treated you with dignity?’ and ‘Have your colleagues refrained from improper remarks or comments?’ The responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. Revenge was measured through a scale developed by Bradfield and Aquino ([1999](#)) for measuring revenge cognition. Other studies (Aquino et al., [2001](#); Liu et al., [2010](#); Thompson et al., [2016](#)) also used this instrument to measure the intention for revenge. Five items concerning revenge were asked thrice. Initially, the revenge scale was used to measure first-person revenge (if harm was done to the respondent). For second-person revenge, questions were asked regarding the harm done to the respondent’s close friend at the workplace. Third-person revenge was measured if harm was done to any organizational member. Items for first-person, second-person and third-person revenge are given in Appendix 1.

### **3.2. Sample and Procedure**

An online questionnaire was shared with 200 participants employed in the public and private sectors. The participation of respondents was voluntary as they were required to give input on a sensitive matter. Hence, they were ensured of confidentiality and anonymity. Among the total participants, 156 responded and two cases were excluded from the analysis to attain normality. Therefore, a sample size of 154 participants was chosen for this study to measure revenge. Previous studies (Aquino et al., [2001](#), [2006](#); Bordia et al., [2014](#); Eaton & Struthers, [2006](#); Gollwitzer & Denzler, [2009](#); Greenberg & Barling, [1999](#); Zechmeister, Garcia, Romero, & Vas, [2004](#)) on revenge, anger and retaliation were based on a sample size below 150.

### 3.3. Control Variables

Miller, Worthington, and McDaniel (2008) identified that revengeful intentions are higher among males. Moreover, Aquino, Grover, Bradfield, and Allen (1999) identified that employees at a lower position in the hierarchy perceive themselves to be victimized; therefore, they are likely to be motivated for revenge. Hence, the variables of gender and job position were controlled for this study. Gender and job position were measured as dichotomous variables (0 and 1).

### 3.4. Data Analysis

The analysis of data was performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### 3.5. Demographic Analysis

The sample comprised 86 male (55.8%) and 68 female (44.2%) participants. Most of the participants were married, had a post-graduate degree and belonged to the Punjab province of Pakistan. Among them, 62.3% held non-managerial positions (no employee reports to them) and 37.7% held managerial positions (employee(s) report to them).

### 3.6. Instrument Analysis

The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from a well-tested scale of justice (distributive, procedural, interactional) and revenge. The validity and reliability of the instrument were tested and ensured. Table 1 represents the instrument analysis.

**Table 1**  
*Instrument Analysis*

Variables	No. of Items	Validity Test (KMO and Bartlett's Test)	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)
Distributive Justice	4	0.71	0.82
Procedural Justice	7	0.81	0.79
Interactional Justice	4	0.78	0.80
First-person Revenge	5	0.69	0.63
Second-person Revenge	5	0.70	0.79
Third-person Rvenge	5	0.70	0.78

KMO value for each variable is above 0.5 which represents the appropriateness of factor analysis and indicates the validity of the instrument (Bertsch, 2012; Crane, Busby, & Larson, 1991; Hakan & Seval, 2011). For measuring reliability, the value of Cronbach's alpha is considered. A value closer to 1 represents the reliability of the instrument (Bonett & Wright, 2015; Gliem & Gliem, 2003; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The values of Cronbach's alpha in Table 1 depict the reliability of the instrument.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

According to descriptive statistics (Table 2), the participants of this study showed less intention of revenge. Based on the responses, it can be said that distributive (mean value=3.7), procedural (mean value=3.3) and interactional justice (mean value=4) is ensured at the workplace. The mean values show that interactional justice is highly maintained at the workplace, specifically in public service sector as most of the data was obtained from this sector.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Analysis*

Variables	N Statistic	Mean Statistic
Distributive Justice	154	3.6875
Procedural Justice	154	3.3308
<b>Interactional Justice</b>	154	<b>4.0099</b>
First-person Revenge	154	2.9395
Second-person Revenge	154	2.9789
Third-person Revenge	154	2.8289
Valid N (Listwise)	154	

Table 3 manifests the correlation between all the variables of the study. The results show that distributive justice has a significant and negative relationship with second-person (-0.217\*\*) and third-person revenge (-0.203\*). On the contrary, it has an insignificant relationship with first-person revenge. Procedural justice has a significant and negative relationship with second-person (-0.234\*\*) and third-person revenge (-0.192\*). A significant and positive relationship between

interactional justice and first-person revenge (0.208\*) was also found. However, no significant relationship was found of procedural and distributive injustice with first-person revenge; therefore, it is inferred that victims snoozed against these forms of injustice. Non-victims demonstrated the snoozing behavior in case of interactional injustice. Previous studies related the victim's revengeful intention with procedural (Aquino et al., [2006](#); Jones, [2004](#), [2009](#); Tripp et al., [2007](#)) and distributive injustice (Bies & Tripp, [1996](#), [1998](#); Jones, [2009](#); Khattak et al., [2019](#)). However, this study emphasizes the contribution of procedural and distributive injustice to induce second-person and third-person revenge among non-victims. It shows that injustice in terms of outcomes and procedures leads to a feeling of revenge among the participants. Individuals are more inclined to take revenge for their close friends at the workplace if they have faced partiality in received outcomes and procedures leading to outcomes. The inclination of revenge against injustice with any member of the organization also emerges in case of unfair outcomes and procedures. However, revenge against injustice experienced by oneself is not related to outcomes and procedures; rather, it is positively related with interactional justice. This means that the intention to take revenge emerges even if an individual is well-treated, respected and remains included in a social group. It reveals an interesting scenario that the avenger is not satisfied by actions such as cooperation, show of respect, friendly behavior etc. Such actions by the transgressor stimulate more revengeful intentions in the avenger. At this stage, only the intention for revenge was measured but there is a chance that this relationship changes when revenge is taken to get even.



**Table 3**  
**Correlation Table**

	Distributive Justice	Procedural Justice	Interactional Justice	First-person Revenge	Second-person Revenge	Third-person Revenge
Distributive Justice						
Procedural Justice	.496**					
Interactional Justice	.069	.294**				
First-person Revenge	-.020	-.056	.208*			
Second-person Revenge	-.217**	-.234**	.153	.7**		
Third-person Revenge	-.203*	-.192*	.108	.584**	.738**	

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

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

Significant relationships discovered through correlation were further examined to identify the various relationships between the dimensions of injustice and revenge types. Linear regression was performed for Model 1, Model 2 and Model 3 of this study. The regression results are as follows.

**Table 4**  
*Regression Model 1-Interactional Injustice Causing First-person Revenge*

Coefficients	R-Square	Significance of Model	Magnitude of Coefficients	Significance of Coefficients	Durbin Watson Value	VIF
	0.043	0.010			1.845	1.000
Constant			1.999	0.000		
Interactional Justice			0.230	0.010		

Table 4 shows that interactional injustice causes first-person revenge. For one unit increase in interactional justice, the intention of revenge for the sake of oneself increases by 23%. This suggests that the victim is inclined to take revenge even if interactional justice is enhanced at the workplace. It also indicates that the satisfaction of avenger is not achieved unless the accused is punished (Carlsmith et al., [2002](#); Collica-Cox & Sullivan, [2017](#)). The organization or transgressor cannot dilute revengeful intentions by building or strengthening interpersonal relationships.

**Table 5**  
*Regression Model 2a-Distributive Injustice Causing Second-person Revenge*

Coefficients	R-Square	Significance of Model	Magnitude of Coefficients	Significance of Coefficients	Durbin Watson Value	VIF
	0.047	0.007			1.989	1.000
Constant			3.825	0.000		
Distributive Justice			-0.239	0.007		

Table 5 represents linear regression between distributive justice and second-person revenge. The results show that if the respondent's close friends experience injustice in terms of outcomes, it leads to a feeling of revenge. With every unit decrease in distributive justice, the intention for second-person revenge increases by 23.9%. Hence, in case of second-person revenge,

revengeful intentions arise when distributive justice is violated (Bies & Tripp, [1996](#), [1998](#); Jones, [2009](#); Khattak et al., [2019](#)).

**Table 6**  
*Regression Model 2b-Procedural Injustice Causing Second-person Revenge*

Coefficients	R-square	Significance of Model	Magnitude of Coefficients	Significance of Coefficients	Durbin Watson Value	VIF
	0.055	0.003			1.865	1.00
Constant			3.875	0.000		
Procedural Justice			-0.280	0.003		

Table 6 represents the negative and significant relationship of procedural justice with second-person revenge. The intention of revenge increases by 28% for every violation of procedural justice. Individuals retaliate if their close friends at workplace experience biased procedures.

**Table 7**  
*Regression Model 3a-Distributive Injustice Causing Third-person Revenge*

Coefficients	R-square	Significance of Model	Magnitude of Coefficients	Significance of Coefficients	Durbin Watson Value	VIF
	0.041	0.011			1.731	1.00
Constant			3.553	0.000		
Distributive Justice			-0.205	0.011		

According to Table 7, the violation of distributive justice initiates the feeling of third-person revenge among the employees. Every unit decrease in the fair outcomes increases the likelihood of revengeful intentions by 20.5%. If any member of the organization is affected adversely by unfair outcomes, it induces the feeling of revenge. Interestingly, in this situation the avenger who is reacting against distributive injustice is not an affectee.

**Table 8**  
*Regression Model 3b-Procedural Injustice Causing Third-person Revenge*

Coefficients	R-square	Significance of Model	Magnitude of Coefficients	Significance of Coefficients	Durbin Watson Value	VIF
	0.037	0.017			1.787	1.00
Constant			3.496	0.000		
Procedural Justice			-0.210	0.017		

Procedural injustice also results into third-person revenge; for every unit decrease in justice the intention of revenge increases by 21%. In case of unfair procedures, individuals show the intention for revenge. This means that procedural justice is a major concern; if any member of the organization is harmed by biased procedures then an intention of revenge can emerge among any organizational member other than the victim.

The above results manifest that non-victims are inclined to take revenge against injustice, which has not been discussed previously. Moreover, non-victims should also be accounted for while studying revenge at the workplace.

## 5. Theoretical Implications

Previous studies explored in-depth the revengeful intention of the victim but the intention to get even by non-victims still remains unexplored. Non-victims are also a part of the organization; their perceptions regarding justice at the workplace may induce a reaction against the accused (either an individual or an organization). This study indicated the significance of three types of justice (distributive, procedural and interactional) at the workplace. Previous studies related procedural injustice (Aquino et al., [2006](#); Jones, [2004](#), [2009](#)) and distributive injustice (Ren et al., [2015](#)) with the individual intentions to take revenge by the victims (Skarlicki & Folger, [1997](#)). According to the current study, non-compliance to anyone type of justice may stimulate revengeful intentions and employees strike back, whether they are a victim or not. Female employees give more importance to distributive justice (Lee & Farh, [1999](#)). On the other hand, managers supervise their employees and their input is significant in outcome distribution (Folger & Konovsky, [1989](#)). Hence, their reaction towards distributive injustice is essential to maintain their image. Moreover, men and women both value their friendships at the workplace which provide them with emotional and career support (Morrison, [2009](#)). Similarly, employees are compassionate towards their peers (Kulik, Lind, Ambrose, & MacCoun, [1996](#)). Hence, they develop a feeling of revenge against the alleged if injustice is caused to any organizational member. Therefore, the study of revenge at the workplace should not be confined to the victim. This

paper adds the significance of non-victim avengers to the body of knowledge available on workplace revenge.

## **6. Practical Implications**

The intention to punish the accused by the victim and/or non-victim may initiate a vicious circle of interpersonal revenge which could affect the whole organization. If perceptions about injustice are not monitored and ignored, it may lead to retaliatory behaviors at the workplace even by those who have never experienced any injustice themselves. Top management has to monitor general perceptions of injustice among their employees in order to control any possible retaliation.

## **7. Conclusion**

The findings support the proposition that revengeful intentions emerge among non-victim employees. Interestingly, the respondents did not show any intention of taking revenge for themselves in response to distributive and procedural injustice. Might be, either they did not experience it or it was not apparent to them. The other possibility is that they might be the beneficiary of unfair procedures and biased outcomes. However, individuals are willing to take revenge if any close friend at the workplace is victimized because of biased procedures and outcomes. This shows the close bonding of employees with their co-workers to the extent that they are inclined to take revenge for the harm inflicted on their friends / co-workers. It also indicates the importance of distributive and procedural justice at the workplace, infringement of which can stimulate revengeful intentions even among the non-victims. Lastly, third-person revenge was found to be dependent on distributive and procedural justice; dereliction to these justice types with reference to any member of the organization stimulates revenge among the non-victim employees. Revengeful intentions can be weakened by ensuring justice at the workplace (Bobocel, [2013](#); Tripp et al., [2007](#)). Therefore, organizations have to ensure distributive, procedural and interactional justice. Moreover, a formal platform to report such violations must be established so that the guilty is punished as per law.

## **8. Limitations and Future Recommendations**

This study collected data from both private and public organizations of the service sector. The majority of responses were received from public-owned organizations. Service sector employees indicated a small possibility of injustice. Moreover, in the public sector, rules and regulations are usually defined by the related ministry and office incharges have only a limited authority to develop rules regarding outcomes. The study can be extended to the manufacturing and private sectors as well to explore the effect of injustice on interpersonal revengeful intentions. Moreover, comparison can be made between public-private and service-manufacturing sectors to see the extent to which justice is ensured and how respective employees respond to injustice.

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## **Appendix 1**

### ***Items measuring first-person, second-person and third-person revenge***

#### **When a harm caused to me: (First-person revenge)**

1. I'll make offender pay.
2. I wish that something bad would happen to offender.
3. I want offender to get what he/she deserves.
4. I'm going to get even.
5. I want to see offender hurt and miserable.

#### **When harm caused to my close friend at work: (Second-person revenge)**

6. I'll make offender pay.
7. I wish that something bad would happen to offender.
8. I want offender to get what he/she deserves.
9. I'm going to get even.
10. I want to see offender hurt and miserable.

#### **When harm caused to acquaintance at workplace OR any organizational member : (Third-person revenge)**

11. I'll make offender pay.
12. I wish that something bad would happen to offender.
13. I want offender to get what he/she deserves.
14. I'm going to get even.
15. I want to see offender hurt and miserable.