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## Workplace Ostracism and Counterproductive Work Behavior: A Moderated Mediation Approach

<sup>a</sup> Asad Abbas, <sup>b</sup> Syed Mubashar Raza, <sup>c</sup> Asad Abbas, <sup>d</sup> Naila Anjum

<sup>a</sup> Assistant Professor, MFK Noon Business School, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan

Email: [asad.muhammad@uos.edu.pk](mailto:asad.muhammad@uos.edu.pk)

<sup>b</sup> MBA Scholar, Kharazmi University Tehran, Iran

Email: [mubasharraza1992@gmail.com](mailto:mubasharraza1992@gmail.com)

<sup>c</sup> Lecturer, Department of Economics, COMSATS University, Islamabad, Vehari Campus, Pakistan

E-mail: [asad@cuivehari.edu.pk](mailto:asad@cuivehari.edu.pk)

<sup>d</sup> M.Phil. Scholar, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan

E-mail: [nailaanjum959@gmail.com](mailto:nailaanjum959@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Association between individuals at work is an important determinant of an individual's workplace deeds and attitudes. Positive working relationship is integral to achieve better performance, job satisfaction, organizational welfare and citizenship behavior. Workplace ostracism, in contrast, pessimistically influences workplace attitude and behaviors. Social exclusion may draw hostile reaction poor choices and procrastination. It may cause psychological distress, divergence and workplace aggression.

Thus the main objectives of this research are to investigate the relationship among workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior (CWB). We also investigate the relative importance of workplace ostracism (OST) for job tension (JT) and the mediating effect of job tension on relationship between workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior (CWB). In this research we test the moderating effect of perceived supervisory support (PSS) on workplace ostracism and job tension relationship.

**Design:** A moderated mediation analysis approach using process macro has been employed in order to investigate the relationship of ostracism and counterproductive work behavior mediated by job tension and moderated by the perceived supervisor support.

**Findings:** Results of moderated mediation analysis reveal a positive and significant relationship between workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior. Job tension also mediates this relationship. Supervisor support however negatively moderates the relationship of ostracism and job tension indicating positive impact of support on job tension and subsequently on counterproductive work behavior.

**Implications:** Finding entail important implications for corporate management and policy makers in terms of counterproductive behavior and performance of employees if they are ostracized at workplace the productivity and behavior are adversely affected and performance suffers. Ostracism augments job tension and subsequently brings negative outcomes. Perceived supervisor support, however, reduces the gravity of negative consequences, reduces tension and improve employee's behavior.



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**\*Corresponding Author's email address:** asad.muhammad@uos.edu.pk

## **1. Introduction**

The place of work is an important social framework to consider wherever individuals expend lots of their time and work together with each other. It is essential for workers to sustain optimistic functional association because the value of the association is capable to greatly influence an individual's workplace deeds and attitudes. In view of the fact that job has become extremely inter-reliant as organizations often implement teamwork. In order to attain organizational performance, it is necessary that working relationships should be helpful and collaborative. Therefore, it is important to maintain positive working relationships in order to achieve better performance.

Fox & Stallworth (2005), stated that workplace is one of the most significant social contexts wherever ostracism take place. Thus workplace ostracism has got some concentration as studies have acknowledged that workplace ostracism pessimistically influences workplace attitudes and behaviors. Human beings have a strong aspiration for encouraging and long lasting associations, however the need to belong is more spreading and primary reason. Being a part of the group guarantees the existence of an entity because a group assures that all individuals have food and protection (Khalid et al. 2024).

Being ostracized and ignored from any group is the sign of death and the life of the ostracized employee is vicious and short (Suoyno et al., 2024). If employees don't get the response of our messages, not invited to any social gathering then we are stunned or even emotionally damaged. Ostracism is a general observable fact that individuals face most in the organizations. Ostracism is a component of human life and can appear in a variety of forms for example expel and deportation are more intense whilst avoiding eye contact and being given the silent treatment are smallest (Ferris et al., 2008; Henle et al., 2023).

The reasons for ostracism that are categorized into purposeful and non-purposeful are defined by Sommer et al., (2001) and Williams, (1997). Purposeful ostracism means that happen when a person who is ostracizing is conscious about his or her functioning to socially include others and did all so deliberately. This kind of ostracism shows the inactions from the performer's point of view. The most eminent kind of purposeful ostracism is silent treatment (Williams, 1997) which is used to deliberately harm the target, get revenge and punish. Purposeful ostracism supports the performer which includes keeping away from others in order to guard one self and to the group members. When a person avoids from others then they do so maybe to avoid from disagreement or from repulsive feelings (Nagina et al., 2022).

Non purposeful ostracism takes place when performers are unconscious about their actions that they are indulging in such type of behavior that they socially reject other peoples. In reality this type of ostracism is more widespread (Sommer et al., 2001). Organizational tension arises from job related stressors, for instance, restrictions on workers capability to perform their tasks or social tension like interpersonal conflict, rigid deadlines, and higher workloads (Spector & Jex, 1998; Al-Atwi et al., 2024).

Hobfoll (1989) depicts that employees need personal and emotional resources, for instance, time in order to face these stressors. Non purposeful exclusion occurs when worker within these atmospheres probably unintentionally neglecting others. Ostracism can be explained as any behavior wherein any individual or group rejects or paying no attention to other individuals or on groups (Van Beest, Williams, & Van Dijk, 2011) is a worldwide experience that goes beyond with the passage of time and has been found in almost every well-known civilization (Gruter & Masters, 1986).

As said by Ferris et al., (2008) outcomes of different studies verify that in a social context majority of people are expelled in one form or another or even have been ostracized by themselves. Ostracism has been observed to be a specifically hurting incident.

Medicinal studies have investigated that when any individual experience the social rejection then the similar intellect structures are agile by physical pain were activated which are producing social pain (MacDonald & Leary, 2005; Eisenberger, et al., 2003). Ostracism has been found to be a common instance in almost all social frameworks (Williams, 1997). Therefore, it is not amazing that human beings have the tendency to perceive the smallest instances of ostracism (Spoor & Williams, 2007).

Specifically, in organizations workplace ostracism has invasive and destructive occurrence (Fox & Stallworth, 2005). Study of Hitlan et al., (2006) amongst 5,000 employees illustrate that in the preceding 6 months about 13% of the respondents had been excluded at workplace. Conversely, in spite of the fact that research on workplace ostracism has been getting increased consideration in recent times (Amin & Wang, 2024; Gogia et al, 2024; Robinson, O'Reilly, & Wang, 2013), in reality, ostracizing behavior are mainly considered to be a subtle form of unacceptable behavior and have been considered in wider studies for example social undermining, rudeness, unacceptable behavior. A lot of studies have been done on ostracism which was found in the surroundings of organizations. Wittenbaum, Shulman, & Braz (2010), accomplished that working in cluster moderates the emotional outcomes of Ostracism.

Twenge, Catanese, & Baumeister (2002), concluded that ostracized employees are more likely to make poor choices and to be more procrastinate, as numerous studies revealed that social exclusion may draw out hostile reactions from the targets (Williams, 2009; Williams, Shore, & Grahe, 1998). Ostracism has also been found to be indirectly related with job satisfaction, welfare, organizational citizenship behavior (Wu, 2011), loyalty, OCB, extraction and directly related to deviant behavior. It has also been established that ostracism negatively influence performance (Kerr et al., 2008) and raise strain and nervousness (Zadro, Williams, & Richardson, 2005).

For organizations counterproductive work behavior is an expensive phenomenon which costs billions of dollars which is extra to individuals associated costs for example higher turnover and lower self-confidence (Frost, 2007; Greenberg, 1998). According to (Cortina, Magley, Williams, Langhout, 2001) even low intensity and harmless CWB is capable to have effects on the targets including higher level of psychological distress and lower job withdrawal and dissatisfaction.

In a world of competition, the behavior of employees has appeared to be an essential issue of organizational performance (Gruys & Sackett, 2003). It means that what employees articulate and perform in organizations (Robbins & Coutler, 2002; Sims, 2002; Hiriappa, 2008). Such types of behaviors can be classified into those that give advantages to the organizations and also those that can damage the organization. The earlier gives positive contribution to the organizational performance while the later is unfavorable to organizational performance (Spector & Fox, 2002).

Such negative and improper behaviors and attitudes have been named in a different way by different authors. For example, workplace aggression, fury, psychological brutality, divergence, robbery, (Barling et al., 2009; Spector, 1978; (Keashly, 1998), (Hollinger, 1986; (Greenberg, 1990), Hoel et all 1999). All of these types are termed as CWB. Counterproductive work behavior is an element of job performance which has been described by Fox & Spector (2005) as the set of deeds damage the employees and to organization and also recognized as workplace deviance. It is not to be puzzled with workplace incivility or deeds that deviate from the organizational standards (Bunk & Magley, 2013) instead of that it is an intentional set of deeds that the workers carried out with the aim of damaging the businesses (Conlon et al., 2005; Fox & Spector, 1999; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). The intentional temperament

of counterproductive work behavior draws out from workers who are deficient in inspiration to fulfill the demands of the organization (Kaplan, 1975).

The objectives of such types of actions are diverging, the deeds may be targeted to the organization which is called organizational counterproductive work behavior or they can target the individuals which is called interpersonal counterproductive work behavior. An investigation by Bennett and Robinson (2000) supported the partition of the dimensions of CWB into organizational counterproductive work behavior and interpersonal counterproductive work behavior. Further Meta analyses carried out by Dalal et al. (2005) demonstrate that ICWB and OCWB are interrelated. The separation of OCWB and ICWB is constructive in explaining the distinct targets of CWB. This well-defined separation permits us to acquire an improved understanding of why particular types of CWB are occurred. Spector et al. (2006) anticipated five major types of CWB such as production deviance (performing job wrongly or leisurely, weak in pursuing orders); withdrawal (delays, early existing job, taking unnecessary and longer breaks); sabotage (loss of material goods and of tools, spoil the environment of the organization and waste of supplies); theft (wrongly reporting worked hours, and taking goods from the workplace); abuse (making nasty statements, making offensive gestures and damaging others). Whereas, other investigators have divided the construct of CWB into more than five dimensions.

Job tension is defined as ‘the emotional response of the employees to turbulence in the apparent job atmosphere’ (Chisholm et al., 1983, p. 387). Many scholars have used this description in current investigations (Harvey et al., 2007). Job tension ascribe the effects of traumatic situations in the place of work (Pool, 2000), which is a significant mediator among work stressor and job outcomes (Hochwarter et al., 2007) and also used in numerous studies to show the effect of tension (Klenke-Hamel & Mathieu, 1990).

For a prosperous organization effective supervision is essential. Perceived supervisory support is defined as the extent to which employees feel that their supervisors give importance to their contributions and also think about their happiness. A manger with highly supervisory support is one that makes worker to feel heard, valued and cared about. Organizational research has recognized that high supervisory support results in positive outcomes such as higher job contentment increased OCB, reduced job tension, better association with workers, better workers beliefs about support, reduced disagreement and turnover. We are familiar comparatively slight about how employees deal with ostracism in workplaces or other surroundings (Scott et al., 2013).

While the prospective advantages of social support are extensively studied between health organizations, doctors and famous journalists studies investigates the outcomes of social support in organizational sites has gained ambiguous outcomes. A number of studies demonstrate that supportive connections assist workers how to cope with harmful situations (Bakker & Demerouti 2007; Cohen & Willis 1985; George et al., 1993), whereas additional studies revealed that social support offset the detrimental responses of employees (Glaser et al., 1999; Kaufman & Beehr, 1986; Leather et al., 1998).

Thus the main objectives of this research are to investigate the relationship among workplace ostracism and CWB. We also investigate the relative importance of workplace ostracism on job tension. We also investigate the mediating effect of job tension on relationship between workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior. In this research we check the moderating effect of supervisory support on workplace ostracism and job tension relationship.

## **2. Literature Review**

Relationships between organizational members have a considerable effect on organizational behaviors. As employees expend a lot of their time in organizations that’s why it is important to think about the workplaces. Robinson et al., (2013), stated that workplace ostracism has become an important issue for organizations to

consider as its occurrence and impacts those over the years. When a person is ostracized, avoided or ignored by other members of the organization then it can appear to be painful experience and results shows negative organizational outcomes.

Individuals who face ostracism in the workplace they are found to reduce emotional well-being and results in negative behavioral outcomes for example withdrawal from job, antagonism and disagreements between employees (Ferris et al., 2008; O'Reilly and Robinson, 2009). Studies have acknowledged that workplace ostracism is a general and widespread observable fact that takes places across all the organizations (Ferris et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2011, 2012). Ostracism shows that the act of exclusion and ignored (Williams, 2001) that's why workplace ostracism lessen the chances of social interaction.

This is important to affect employee's psychological health attitudes and performance (Ferris et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2012). Based on this assumption researcher have sought to understand the impact of workplace ostracism on employees and on organizations. Employees who experience ostracism they show they are less psychological well, and their performance is low and workplace deviance. Researchers who investigate the effects of workplace ostracism they frequently concentrate on employee's psychology and performance (Wu et al., 2011, 2012).

Empirical studies have not widely observed the behavioral outcomes of workplace ostracism especially the negative behaviors (Ferris et al., 2008; Hitlan and Noel, 2009). Among the negative behaviors that employees build up at work the topic of counterproductive work behavior is more common behaviors Jung and Yoon, 2012; Sheahan and Smith, 2003; Spector, 2010; Spector and Fox, 2010; Wildes, 2005; Yang, 2008). Because such behavior is more common in service industries and it have adverse effects on employees and on organizations.

Feelings ultimately form our behavior and are frequently bound to enthusiasm (Baumeister, Vohs, DeWall, & Zhang, 2007). Therefore, it appears to be reasonable that the intimidation of four basic needs have more influence on ostracized individuals. The response to ostracism is an instant signal of emotional pain (Williams, 2001). The perceptions of ostracism have unfavorable effects on workers welfare. Interrelated studies provide support to this concept and expose that ostracized employees frequently suffer angst, tension and psychological distress.

The needs to belong are essential and intrinsic and are also significant for our happiness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Small acts of ostracism are the reasons that employees feel excluded even when such acts are socially suitable. The aspects of exclusion have two implications. First ostracism creates bigger danger on individual's understanding of belonging. One more aspect of ostracism is that it creates uncertainty. Ostracism is more uncertain in comparison of bullying, incivility, harassment and social undermining (Williams, 1997). Baumeister & Leary (1995) found that the need to belong is a basic motivation of human beings and additionally progressively versatile (Baumeister & Tice, 1990; Buss, 1990).

Furthermore, psychological diseases like consumption turmoil and job related tensions are associated with a low level of social support and belongingness (Armstrong, 1989 & Solomon et al., 1990). Lonely employees are mostly found to commit illegal acts such as suicide and also experience decreases in their contentment (Baumeister, 1990; Sampson & Laub, 1993).

Many researchers confessed that ostracism intimidates the primary need to belong of the individuals (Baumeister et al., 2007; Williams & Zardo, 2005). Numerous researchers claims that the need of preserving higher self-esteem is basic, persistent and versatile (Greenberg et al., 1992; Steele, 1988). Maslow in his theory of need not only consider love and belonging as higher needs but he also considers in his hierarchy of need, the need for self-esteem (Maslow, 1943). Williams & Zardo (2005) found that the need of higher self-esteem is more than simply a function of judging the current belonging and inclusionary position. Being ignored but no exchange of information and

ideas then the person who is ostracized is not capable to impact the condition. (Williams, 2001; Williams et al., 2005)

Eisenberger et al., (2003), defines that workplace ostracism is a type of “social pain”. Preceding studies indicate that ostracism decreases performance (O’Reilly and Robinson, 2009), and effects on workers wellbeing (Heaphy and Dutton, 2008). Prior studies recommended that ostracism behavior is common in organizations and it has negative influence on organizations and on employees (Robinson, 2009) Ostracism is the submissive type of violent behavior (Hitlan et al., 2006).

By definition counter productive work behavior (CWB) is a type of behavior which is opposite to unintentional and create damage or intended to harm organization and its members. Fox and Specter (2005), describes the two dimensions of CWB who classify CWB around the targets of the behavior. The one is organizational counterproductive work behavior and the other is interpersonal counterproductive work behavior.

The literature related ostracism revealed that repetitive and prolonged actions of ostracism may have consequences of sadness and aggressive behaviors (Lustenberger & Jagacinski (2010). Responses to ostracism are anti-social behavior such as enmity. Ostracism directs individuals toward negative behavior and also results in workplace deviance. As such it is logical to assume that ostracism is positively interrelated with workers CWB. This assumption fits into two theories reciprocity theory and displaced aggression theory (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Dollard et al., 1939; Miller, 1941).

According to reciprocity theory it approximately describes the exchange of the same values wherein the deeds of each party are dependent on the preceding dealings of the others such that good comes back for good and bad for bad. Reciprocity principles lead employees toward negative behaviors and it is adequate to get revenge straightforwardly against those who ostracized them. As a result, it causes them to indulge in interpersonal CWB such as spreading false anecdotes and abuse against others. According to displaced aggression theory, employees who experience ostracism may indicate their enmity against their organizations. Therefore, when any worker experiences ostracism then he or she is involved in organizational form of CWB for example disruption, extraction and stealing. Hitlan and Noel (2009) established in his studies that workplace ostracism boost employees CWB.

Investigations by different authors also expose a positive association among workplace ostracism and unhealthy destructive behavior including worse psychological performance augmented violent behavior and a propensity to engage in self-defeating behavior (Baumeister et al., 2002 & Warburton et al., 2006). Sommer & Baumeister (2002) investigated that when ostracized employees with low self-esteem feel that their self-worth is in danger then they did their work with low level of confidence which in turn diminishes their performance. CWB is an array of harmful behaviors that are vicious to businesses that damage the organizational assets and the effectiveness of their employees (Giacolone & Greenberg, 1997; Hollinger, 1986; Idiakheua & Obetoh., 2012 & Perotti et al., 2023).

Within the organizational framework, individuals are mostly found in CWB when they face such type of circumstances that they observe are inequitable and hamper their talent to achieve goals and their need to manage things (Penney & Specter 2005). Ostracism is such a traumatic situation for those who experience it, menace, their need of control (Wu et al., 2012; Warburton et al., 2006). Hence, it is logical to claim that workers who experience ostracism at the workplace are more likely to occupy in CWB as their response. Hence we hypothesize that  
H1: There is a positive association among workplace ostracism and CWB.

### **2.1 Workplace ostracism and job tension**

In conservation of resources theory (COR), resources mean specific things, vigor, individual attributes that are cherished by other human beings or that can be used as a medium to achieve these objectives (Hobfoll, 1989).

Consistent with the theory of COR when there is a failure of resources, a superficial risk of loss, or a deficiency of resource gain subsequent a venture of resources then stress will take place (Hobfoll, 1989, 1998). Depending on these rationales people try to protect their resources with the intention of handling aggressive situations and avoid themselves in engaging unenthusiastic outcomes such as tension.

On the other hand, conservation of resources theory postulates that employees who are poor in resources will try to protect their remaining resources by removing their individual traits and identity, decreasing their engagement in work and also their efforts. In the study of (Wright, & Hobfoll, 2004) it is explicated that removal of individual traits and identity is an effort of employee's to decrease the loss of resources that may arise in interacting with customers. For the effects of workplace ostracism, the justification of conservation of resources is alike to the need threat model which is developed by Williams, (2001).

Job tension describes the effects of traumatic situations in the workplace (Pool, 2000), is a significant mediator among ostracism and performance (Hochwarter et al., 2007) and contained in many studies to express the effects of tension (Klenke-Hamel, 1990). Job tension is obviously different from job stress such as the later arise from the environmental circumstances possibly able of giving a condition of stress (Greenhaus, & Parasuraman, 1986), while the earlier is an emotional reaction to job stress and takes place within the body as a feedback to job stress (Macan, 1994).

Hence we propose that workplace ostracism is positively related with job tension. It is anticipated that human beings who are ostracized at the place of work by other members of the organization experience stress and tension such as poor physical condition and restlessness. Psychosomatic research has revealed that workplace ostracism turns on the areas of intellect linked with physical pain Eisenberger & Lieberman (2005) and therefore results in sadness, a state of depression and isolation Williams, (2007); Williams & Zadro (2005). Different studies have demonstrated that workplace exclusion is negatively associated with employees happiness and directly associated with sadness, anxiety and distress (Hitlan et al., 2006; Wu, et al., 2012). For this reason, we hypothesized that

**H2:** There is a positive link between workplace ostracism and job tension.

## **2.2 Job tension and counterproductive work behavior**

Investigation of Spector, (1998) illustrates the association among job tension or situations that bring out negative sentimental reactions. Consistent with Jex, & Beehr (1991) job tension can be labeled as either it can be physical, behavioral or psychological. Bulk of job tension literature has focused mainly on judging the physical and psychological outcomes of tension, for example high blood pressure, annoyance, poor health and nervousness. Behavioral strains are the behaviors in which human beings act upon with the aim of dealing with the stressful situations either by reducing the sentiments bring out by the stressor for example keep away from work and alcohol consumption or by focusing on the removal of stressor itself for example quitting and conversation with supervisor. Diverse responsibilities have challenging requirements and satisfying one responsibility means that the other is neglected when this situation takes place then employees experience the role conflict.

Role ambiguity and role conflict are associated with many emotional reactions such as job frustration, disappointment and anxiety Jackson, S. E., & Schuler, R. S. (1985); Jex, S. M., & Beehr, T. A. (1991). Jackson, S. E., & Schuler, R. S. (1985) conducted a Meta-analysis in which they found the association among role conflict and role ambiguity and its outcomes shows that tension from responsibilities is associated with narrow types of CWB. Particularly both types of tensions are positively associated with less level of job involvement, absenteeism and with turnover intentions.

Additionally, both types of tensions are broadly associated with CWB. Chen, P. Y., & Spector, P. E. (1992) examined the association between tension from multiple roles and CWB. In an investigation of four hundred working

individuals who are working in different professions they investigated that role stressors are associated with many types of CWB in which include stealing, sabotage, enmity and complaints, turnover intentions and violent behavior.

Moreover, a lot of studies have established a positive association among situational constraints and counterproductive work behavior Chen, P. Y., & Spector, P. E. (1992); Miles, D. E., Borman, W. E., Spector, P. E., & Fox, S. (2002); Penney, L. M. (2002); Penney, L. M., & Spector, P. E. (2002). Additionally, employees who experienced greater levels of situational constraints exhibit more CWB other than those employees who experienced lower levels of constraints. Furthermore, situational constraints are related with organizational circumstances Fox, S., & Spector, P. E. (1999); Penney, L. M., & Spector, P. E. (2002) observed that constraints are more positively associated with organizational form of CWB than interpersonal form of CWB.

CWB greatly affects the organizational performance and its outcomes are employee disloyalty and dissatisfaction, higher turnover, organizational breakdown, higher absenteeism and lower productivity (Penney, L. M., & Spector, P. E. 2005; Jones, D. A. 2009 & Khan, et al., 2013). The framework of job tension and CWB which is developed by Spector, P. E. (1998) and Spector and Fox (2002) find out that counterproductive work behavior are the result of job tension at the workplace. (Fox et al., 2001) identifies that counterproductive work behavior is the manifestation of emotional and behavioral pressure or of tension. Job tension provoked negative psychological reactions such as fury and nervousness and production deviance and extraction (Spector, 1998; Hitlan, 2020).

Job tension refers to the experience of negative and unpleasant feelings for example stress, angst, fury, frustration and of sadness. Tension takes place when the magnitude of stressor is more than the employee's ability to deal with it. In a study of Gallagher et al. (2008) it is established that job tension was considerably associated with pressure which is a type of CWB. Higher level of ostracism increases employee's job tension and greater job tension increases employees CWB. Job tension strengthens the link among ostracism and CWB. Thus we propose that

**H3:** job tension is positively related with counterproductive work behavior.

**H4a:** job tension mediates the connection between workplace ostracism and CWB.

Across many companies supervisory support has found be an essential feature for organizational effectiveness Lu, L., L. Cooper, C., & Yen Lin, H. (2013); Thomas, J. L., Bliese, P. D., & Jex, S. M. (2005); Tourigny, L., Baba, V. V., & Lituchy, T. R. (2005). Supervisory supports have an effect on employees attitudinal and on their behavioral outcomes in service industries. Supervisory support can be defined as the extent to which individuals identifies that their supervisors give them support and inspiration in performing their tasks and have interest in the welfare of workers (Burke et al., 1992).

Additional studies have investigated that when individuals identify a helpful atmosphere from their supervisors then they are more expected to help their supervisors and contribute in the accomplishment of organizational objectives Eisenberger, R., Stinglhamber, F., Vandenberghe, C., Sucharski, I. L., & Rhoades, L. (2002). Current studies in the literature of hospitality established that supervisory support affected job satisfaction and depression Chen, Z., Sun, H., Lam, W., Hu, Q., Huo, Y., & Zhong, J. A. (2012). , O. M., & Uludag, O. (2008) it has also been found that supervisory support decreases disagreement among work and family and consequently increases job and family satisfaction.

Individuals believed that supervisors are the representatives who are working on behalf of the organization (Baran et al., 2012). Supervisory support is supposed to be closest to the individuals other than the organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 2002). As a result, inadequate perceived supervisory support can lead employees towards counterproductive work behavior that can badly influence the wellbeing of the organization (Menguc et al., 2013).

Social exchange theory indicates that higher levels of supervisory support can assist employees to feel more bound and they make a reciprocal action toward the organization such as to support their managers for the accomplishment of organizational objectives. Conversely, when employees feel lower levels of support from their supervisors then they do not give their maximum effort to the job (Dysvik et al., 2014).

An experimental study proposes that employees are extremely influenced by workplace ostracism from person related sources (e.g., Bernstein et al., 2010). Karatepe (2011) study among Turkish hospitality employees demonstrated that greater levels of organizational support decrease the strength of the association among psychological dissonance and job disconnection. We hypothesized that

**H4b:** workplace ostracism and perceived supervisory support interrelate in predicting job tension such that job tension is higher when supervisory support is low and lower when supervisory support is higher.

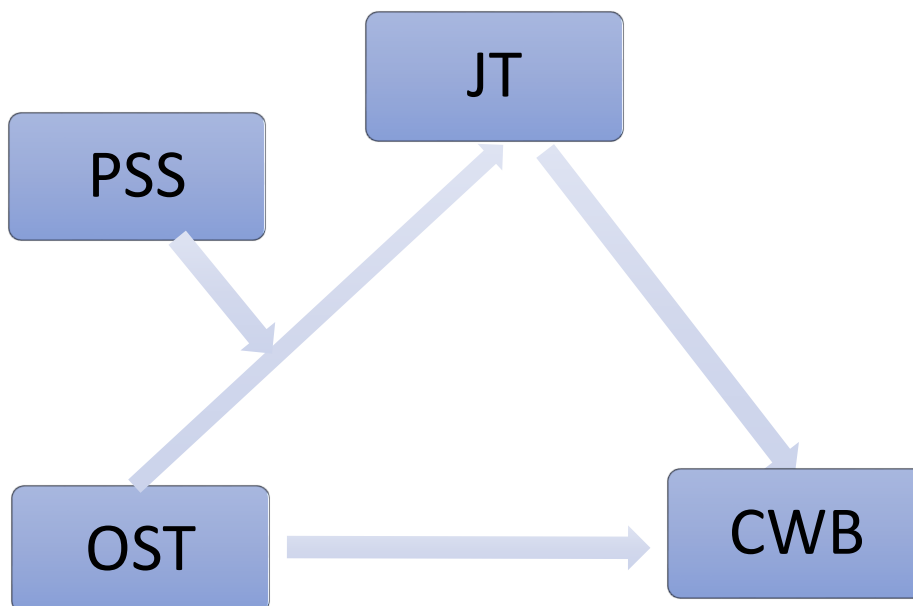
### 3. Materials and Methods

This section discusses features of research design of the study, research variables, control variables, research population, data and sample size, data collection method, measurement scales, data analysis techniques, validity and reliability. Correspondingly, statistical techniques for data analysis are discussed.

#### 3.1 Research design

This research was constructed on quantitative methods and survey procedure was used for collection of responses, sampling technique is measured as the best amongst all likelihood sampling methods. A questionnaire based on 38 statements covering a predictor; workplace ostracism, moderator; perceived supervisory support, mediator; job tension, and dependent variable; counterproductive work behavior. Data were collected from multiple sectors, e.g. banking, insurance companies, and telecom sector. This study is descriptive in nature and in this research design; we explore the relationship among workplace ostracism, perceived supervisory support, job tension and counterproductive work behavior.

As the literature reviews suggested that workplace ostracism and mediator job tension are impacting on CWB. The following conceptual framework for the study includes independent, mediator, moderator and dependent variables related to the four hypotheses. Data collection includes personal and work related demographic information. The independent variable is workplace ostracism. The moderator is perceived supervisory support. The mediator is job tension and their effects on CWB.



Jung and Yoon, (2012) Wei and Si, (2011) Yang and Diefendorff, (2009) in preceding studies recommended that Workers demographics like age, gender, organizational tenure and education were related with workers counterproductive work behavior. The participants in this descriptive study consisted of 380 employees from multiple sectors including banking, insurance, and telecom organizations. These organizations were placed locally in Sargodha. Data was collected from banks including Allied bank, MCB, Faysal bank, NIB bank, khushali bank, Bank Alfalah, JS bank, UBL and Askari bank. Out of total 300 were returned back. However, 40 out of 300 collected responses were discarded because these were not properly filled and thus remaining 260 questionnaires were used for further analysis. This indicates a response a rate of 86%.

Variables of workplace ostracism and job tension, perceived supervisory support, CWB investigated on likert scale have five possible response items. Data were collected from public and private organizations. The findings from the study were interpreted as they referred to the research hypothesis. Data were collected from top organizations of different sectors and 300 respondents reported through filling questionnaires. Almost 25.8% were females and 74% of the respondents were males.

For this research the questionnaire was utilized which was comprised on two sections. The first part of the questionnaire inspects the respondent's biographic characteristics for instant organization name, age, gender, organizational tenure and education. With the purpose of achieving fundamental goals of this research questionnaire was used and the results were examined through scoring the responses. Choice scoring weights were 1 strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3 neutrals, 4 agree and 5 strongly agree.

And the second portion of the questionnaire were comprised on questions related with research variables to measure the independent variable (Workplace ostracism), moderator variable (Perceived Supervisory Support), mediator variable (Job Tension), dependent variable (Counterproductive work behavior). To measure these four variables measurement scales were utilized of existing studies which are discussed are below.

In order to measure the workplace ostracism, we utilized ten-item scale which is developed by Ferris et al. (2008) to determine how frequently individuals recorded that they had been ostracized at the place of work. We constructed a five point likert scale and the respondents were requested to response the questions.

Perceived supervisory support was measured by utilizing nine item scale developed by Greenhaus et al. (1990). This scale has been adopted by numerous researchers and found to be reliable. Job tension was measured by utilizing seven item scale developed by House and Rizzo (1972). The respondents were requested to response the questions constructed on a five point likert scale.

Counterproductive work behavior was measured by utilizing twelve item scales with two dimensions developed by Dalal, Lam, Weiss, Welch, and Hulin (2009) to measure how frequently supervisors recorded that subordinates had demonstrated OCWB and ICWB (Dilchert, Ones, Davis, & Rostow, 2007). Descriptive statistics, correlation, confirmatory factor analysis and Hierarchical regression analysis are conducted and these techniques were applied on collected data to draw conclusions.

Supreme famous reliability statistics in utilization is Cronbach's coefficient alpha to determine the internal consistency or average correlation of items in a survey instrument to gauge its reliability. All questions would measure the similar thing thus they would be interrelated with one another. Value of alpha for independent (workplace ostracism), moderator (PSS), mediator (Job tension) and dependent (CWB) were calculated respectively.

**4. Results and Discussion**

This section presents results of data analysis and hypothesis testing. Demographic distribution of data; descriptive and inferential statistics; and hypothesis testing results are described. Following table presents descriptive correlation and the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha for all variables. Independent variable is Ostracism, Moderator is PSS, Mediator is Job tension, and CWB is dependent variable. Descriptive and correlation statistics are reported in the following table 2.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations**

	Croanbach	Mean	S.D	Ostracism	Perceived supervisor support	Job tension	CWB
Ostracism	0.911	1.9996	0.75955	1			
Supervospr support	0.904	3.6973	0.83852	-0.431	1		
Job tension	0.752	2.6663	0.86350	0.328	-0.304	1	
CWB	0.871	2.1291	0.75905	0.712	-0.380	0.458	1

The correlation matrix shows the measurement of relationship that exists between all the variables. CWB is positively related with ostracism and job tension representing by the value of 0.712 and 0.458 respectively that indicates that an increase in one variable increases the other variable also. And the CWB is negatively related with PSS (-.380,  $P < 0.01$ ) means that change in CWB causes the same amount of change in PSS but in opposite direction. Perceived supervisory support has a negative correlation with ostracism explaining that a change in ostracism causes the same amount of change in PSS but in opposite direction. Job tension and ostracism are positively correlated with the value of (0.328,  $P < 0.01$ ), it means that increase in ostracism will also cause increase in job tension and vice versa. Job tension in addition also has negative relationship with PSS with the value of (-.304,  $P < .01$ ) that shows that increase in job tension leads to decrease in PSS.

**Table 2: Regression Results for Mediator (Job Tension)**

Predictor	B	SE	t	p
Constant	1.45	0.21	6.90	.000
Ostracism	0.373	0.06	9.67	.000

Model Summary:  $R^2 = .20$ ,  $F = 83.50$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Table 3: Regression Results for Outcome Variable (Counterproductive work behavior)**

Predictor	B	SE	t	p
Constant	1.02	0.20	5.10	.000
Ostracism (OST)	0.711	0.06	6.33	.000
Job Tension (JT)	0.164	0.05	8.40	.000
Perceived supervisor support (PSS)	-0.29	0.05	5.80	.000
OST × PSS	-0.141	0.04	4.50	.000

Model Summary:  $R^2 = .44$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .04$ ,  $F = 64.40$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Table 4: Conditional Direct Effects of OST on job tension at Levels of PSS**

Moderator Level	Effect (B)	SE	t	p
Low (-1 SD)	-0.041	0.06	3.67	.000
Mean	-0.141	0.04	4.50	.000
High (+1 SD)	-0.601	0.07	8.57	.000

Note. Conditional effects estimated using PROCESS Model 14.

**Table 5: Bootstrapped Indirect Effect of ostracism on CWB via job tension**

Indirect Path	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
OST → JT → CWB	0.158	0.04	0.231	0.125

Note. Bootstrapping based on 5,000 samples. CI does not include zero.

Above Table 4 indicates a positive estimate (.711) from ostracism to CWB significant at ( $P < 0.001$ ) that gives support to our first hypothesis after controlling for age, gender, education, and organizational tenure. This estimate showed that workplace ostracism is positively associated with CWB.

Ostracism had a positive and significant estimate to job tension (.373) with  $P < 0.001$  which is significant at 99 percent. This supports our second hypothesis that ostracism is positively associated with job tension. Similarly, job tension also had a positive path estimate to CWB (.164) significant at  $P < 0.01$  which is greater than 2.56 and significant. This gives support to our third hypothesis that job tension is positively linked with CWB.

Table 6 describes the indirect effects of ostracism (.158) on CWB. The table also provides the standard errors, P values as well as the lower and upper boundaries of a 90% confidence interval. This indirect effect gives support to our fourth hypothesis that job tension mediates the relationship among workplace ostracism and CWB. The results illustrate that workplace ostracism impacted on employees CWB ( $\beta = .158, p = .008$  and  $CI = (.231; .125)$ ) through the mediating effect of job tension.

We conducted analysis through PROCESS macro to test hypothesis four. We predict that perceived supervisory support moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and job tension (H4). As reported in table 5, this interaction is significant in predicting job tension ( $\beta = -.141, p < .05$ ). The negative beta value (-.141) shows that if PSS is increases then the effects of ostracism on job tension are lesser. On the other hand, if PSS is lower than the effects of ostracism on job tension are greater.

Figure 1 elucidates that workplace ostracism interacts with perceived supervisory support to predict highest job tension when workplace ostracism is high and PSS is low as compared to when it is high. In addition, it shows that job tension is at its lowest when workplace ostracism is low and PSS is high.

### 5. Discussion

The main purpose of this research work is to investigate the impact of ostracism on employee’s attitudes and behaviors. Employee’s feelings about work and himself or herself greatly influence their behaviors. The results of this study exhibits support for the hypothesis about the association among workplace ostracism and job tension and CWB and also for moderator which we used in this study. Regarding this aspect as hypothesized this study found that workplace ostracism is positively associated with CWB. When employees feel that they are excluded they are expected to observe that they have pitiable working associations with other employees of the organization and also have diverse opinions about their job.

Workers who are excluded think about their selves to be different from other organizational members and also feel that they are the part of the outer group. Therefore, employees may become hostile towards others, unhelpful, probably not like other members and not willing to work together in this way ostracized employees take more tension and engaged in organizational and interpersonal CWB. Moreover, this study also found that workplace ostracism is positively associated with job tension. As well as workplace ostracism is increases in any organization employees job tension also increases. As ostracism is itself a source of stress which depletes the power of employees to cope with the challenging situations and in this way boost ups the employees tension at the workplace and as a result employees become more tensed and aggressive.

And in this study we also find support for our study hypothesis that ostracism is positively associated with job tension. Furthermore, we also hypothesized that job tension is positively associated with counterproductive work behavior. CWB is the result of job tension. Employees who experience job tension are more frustrated and are worried people and because of stressful situations they are more likely to engage in CWB and in this way they create damage for the organization.

Moreover, our fourth hypothesis of the study also supported. Based on our results we also found that job tension mediates the association among workplace ostracism and job tension. When ostracism increases in organizations then it increases job tension of employees when tension is more in organizations then CWB also increases. Additionally, we also found that perceived supervisory support moderates the association among workplace ostracism and job tension. When PSS is high it results in the weakest association among workplace ostracism and job tension while low levels of PSS make the strongest association among ostracism and job tension. This study also suggests that PSS improves individual's reactions to tension at the place of work.

This study found that PSS plays a considerable role in predicting job tension. Supervisors who deal positively with their employees and assured them that their contributions are valued and organization cared about their well-being then they show more commitment towards organization. The key results in this study are PSS helps workers to deal with work related tension. However, PSS can possibly counterbalance the adverse effects of negative interpersonal situations like ostracism.

## **6. Conclusion**

Today in the organizations teamwork has increased immensely and denotes the need for more social interaction with coworkers. Social affiliations among organizational members can have a considerable effect on organizational performance. Workplace ostracism diminishes the chances of social dealings which is vital for individuals to accomplish their emotional desires of being acknowledged. Workplace ostracism is a general observable fact that is found inside the organizations. In view of the fact that workers spend a lot of their time together that's why the place of work in an essential social framework to study. In recent times workplace ostracism has turned to be an important issue for organizations because its occurrences as well as effects are growing throughout the years.

Human capital of any organization is an essential resource which ensures the organizational competitiveness in national and international markets. Therefore, organizations want their workforce to feel a sense of inclusiveness. Administration cost and possible legal responsibility associated with employee misconduct is a crucial interest for organizations. Ignoring and reshuffling generate deviant behavior among employees toward their organization. Workplace ostracism is a hurting experience and results in negative behavioral outcomes in which counterproductive work behavior is more common. Workplace ostracism is a social pressure that creates job tension for employees.

In this study we investigated the impact of workplace ostracism on counterproductive work behavior by examining the mediating role of job tension and the moderating role of perceived supervisory support. Data were collected from 300 employees out of which 260 were the valid responses and these employees are working in different areas of Faisalabad including various service sectors such as banks, insurance companies, and telecommunication organizations by using questionnaire. We hypothesized that workplace ostracism is positively related to CWB. Workplace ostracism creates job tension for employees which in turn increases their CWB. We also hypothesized that perceived supervisory support mitigates the effects of workplace ostracism on job tension which in turn leads to lower levels of CWB.

This theoretical model offers some realistic inferences for organizations. In organizations managers should have to promote open and clear competition and to lessen the negative impacts related with workplace ostracism. In order

to deal with critical circumstances managers should have to make precise rules and regulation and some employee assistance plans.

As mentioned earlier the purpose of the study was to investigate the association among workplace ostracism and CWB. Ostracism decreases employee's resources which in turn increases job tension. Briefly this study suggests that workplace ostracism is harmful to organizational performance. The result supports our hypothesis that ostracism has a positive relationship with job tension and also with CWB. It was also found that job tension mediates the association among workplace ostracism and CWB. Our findings have further suggested that ostracism relates with PSS to envisage job tension such that workplace ostracism is more positively associated with job tension when perceived supervisory support is low as compared to when it is high. This negative impact can be reduced by giving employees supervisory support. When PSS is high then it decreases employee's job tension which in turn decreases employees CWB.

Results showed that workplace ostracism has a positive effect on employees CWB. Ostracism reduced employee's resources and increases tension that sequentially increases CWB. Results verified the association among ostracism and CWB from the job tension viewpoint. This study contributes to the existing literature in two ways. We also introduce the job tension as a mediator among workplace ostracism and CWB. Ostracism increases job tension that boost CWB within organizations. Based on reciprocity theory in service organizations we explain a negative reciprocity analysis among workplace ostracism and particular types of CWB. We also develop the association among workplace ostracism and job tension by the moderating role of PSS. As we anticipated the result shows that the moderating effect of PSS on the relationship between workplace ostracism and job tension depends on the levels of PSS.

Workers opinions and feelings about their supervisors can encourage employee's perceptions about their organization. If managers give support to their employees then it strengthen the employee's attachment towards the organization and it also assists employees to reduce their job tension. Thereby this leads towards the weakest association among ostracism and job tension. However, when the PSS is low then the situation is worse and employees are more upset and the association among ostracism and tension is strongest. This study extends Hitlan and Noel's (2009) model by examining the moderating effect of PSS on the association among ostracism and job tension which in turn predicts CWB.

### **7. Practical and managerial implications**

For service organizations this theoretical model and empirical results offer some suggestions. Because of extreme competition organizations typically think first about their performance in spite of workers feelings (Liu et al., 2011). This tactic augments disagreement between supervisors and among organizational members and as a result causes ostracism. Managers should have to focus on workplace ostracism in order to lessen or eradicate the destruction that CWB originates to organizations and workers. We offer some implications managers should have to follow.

In order to control ostracism behavior organizations should have to implement some rules and regulations. Ostracism increases employees CWB. Thus supervisors in service organizations should try to decrease the negative impacts related with ostracism. One way is to form a culture that discourages ostracism. To encourage fair, helpful and open atmosphere organizations should have to eradicate cliques.

Ostracism is less likely to takes place when supervisors give more concentration to group structure and put emphasize on healthy job atmosphere wherein appreciation, empathy and forgiveness are articulated. Organizations should have to pay attention on employee's experience of workplace ostracism and on employee's psychological needs and in this way they can avoid from CWB.

Support that managers give to their employees is important for workers and organization. This research recommends that by giving supervisory support organizations can assist their workers to feel good as an organizational member about their selves and carry out organizational activities even when the relations with other members are not good. It is the responsibility of the managers to provide their workers a supportive atmosphere. This work indicates that if managers create such type of atmosphere that promote esteem and dampen exclusionary behaviors then this can help employees to deal with harmful situations. Moreover, this research established that PSS moderates the association among ostracism, job tension and CWB.

### **8. Limitations and future directions**

Whereas this study also provides many favorable contributions and has numerous merits it has also some limitations. The first limitation is that this study is cross sectional in nature in future studies we can adopt longitudinal research design. Secondly the study was conducted only in the different areas of Sargodha and data was collected from only a few service sectors so it has limited its generalizability. In future, in order to increase the generalizability of the research data could be collected from other cities of Punjab and from other service sectors like manufacturing, hotels and from universities. Furthermore, future studies can also use some mediators like job satisfaction, self-esteem to explore the association among ostracism and CWB.

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The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author alone and do not necessary reflect the views of any institution.

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**Asad Abbas** is Assistant Professor at MFK Noon Business School University of Sargodha. He earned his PhD in Management Sciences from COMSATS University Islamabad and worked there as assistant professor as well. His area of focus in research is corporate governance, earnings management, earnings quality and Fintech. ORCID: 0000-0002-7040-6095

**Syed Mubashar Raza** is Manager at Zenmall. He has done his Master in Business Administration from Kharazmi University Tehran, Iran. His area of research is consumer behavior, organization behavior and organization citizenship. ORCID: 0009-0006-1344-8287

**Asad Abbas** is a lecturer at the Department of Economics, COMSATS University Islamabad, Vehari Campus, Pakistan. He got his PhD in Economics from Bahauddin Zakriya University, Multan, Pakistan. His research focuses on Applied Microeconomics, Development Economics and Econometrics. ORCID: 0009-0009-9401-7738

**Naila Anjum** is an MPhil Scholar at University of Sargodha. Her research focuses on digital transformation and innovation in education, assessment and sustainable development in education. ORCID: 0009-0004-2133-3952

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