Workplace Ostracism and Workplace Incivility lead towards Counterproductive Work Behaviour, mediating the offer of Intentions to Sabotage

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Abstract

This study investigates how active and passive workplace stressors—specifically ostracism and incivility—contribute to the emergence of counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) among nurses working in public and private hospitals in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Drawing on the Theory of Reasoned Action, the research examines the mediating role of intentions to sabotage in this relationship. Data was collected from a sample of 77 nurses through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS. The study employed a deductive approach and empirical methodology to test the proposed relationships. The findings reveal that workplace ostracism is positively associated with counterproductive behavior, and intentions to sabotage partially mediate this relationship. Although the study initially hypothesized the inclusion of narcissistic personality and employee cynicism, the primary analysis centers on ostracism, incivility, and sabotage intentions. This research contributes novel insights into how subtle forms of mistreatment in the workplace can evolve into harmful behaviors, emphasizing the importance of early interventions. By identifying and managing intentions to sabotage at an early stage, organizations—particularly

within the healthcare sector—can potentially prevent escalation into more severe behavioral outcomes. The study offers practical implications for creating a more inclusive and respectful organizational environment, thereby reducing the risk of employee cynicism and organizational harm.

Keywords: Workplace Ostracism, Narcissistic Personality, Intentions to Sabotage, Employee Cynicism, Hospitality sector, Nurses.

Introduction

The association between individual characteristics—such as abilities, skills, and personality traits—and workplace behavior has long been a critical area of inquiry in industrial and organizational psychology. It is widely acknowledged that certain personality traits are significantly related to behavioral tendencies at work, which underscores the importance of hiring employees whose attributes align with desired workplace conduct. In recent years, there has been increasing emphasis on negative workplace behaviors, particularly counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs), which encompass a broad range of actions detrimental to organizations and their members (Spector & Fox, 2005). CWBs can range from interpersonal misconduct, such as gossiping and verbal abuse, to organizational-level transgressions, including theft and property damage (Choi et al., 2022).

The conceptualization of CWBs includes multiple behavioral dimensions such as aggression, sabotage, incivility, and service deviance (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). These behaviors have been examined under various theoretical lenses, including the theories of aggression and equity theory. Environmental and situational factors—such as extreme noise, crowding, poor lighting, and high-temperature settings—are known to trigger negative emotional and behavioral reactions. Additionally, perceptions of injustice, workplace stressors, and interpersonal mistreatment further exacerbate CWBs.

Recent literature has expanded to include the social dynamics of the workplace, revealing that factors such as leadership style, peer relationships, and group-level behavior norms significantly influence the prevalence of CWB (Tian et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2013). Workplace ostracism and incivility—two subtle yet pervasive forms of mistreatment—have received growing attention as precursors to harmful organizational behavior. Ostracism, often described as the experience of being ignored or excluded, has been found to undermine employees' psychological well-being and promote retaliatory or deviant behavior (Hitlan et al., 2006; Howard et al., 2020; Lyu & Zhu, 2019; Wu et al., 2012). Similarly, workplace incivility—defined as low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm—has been linked to emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, and turnover (Alshaabani et al., 2021; Murtaza et al., 2020; Porath & Pearson, 2013).

The present study aims to examine the behavioral consequences of workplace ostracism and workplace incivility, particularly how these stressors may lead to CWBs among nurses. Drawing upon the Theory of Planned Behavior, the study posits that negative workplace experiences first shape an employee's intentions, which then manifest as counterproductive actions. While previous studies have often examined direct links between stressors and behavioral outcomes, this study contributes a novel perspective by highlighting **intentions to sabotage** as a **mediating mechanism**. Specifically, it investigates how unmet expectations, high-pressure tasks, and toxic work environments provoke sabotage intentions in nurses—a group already working under intense demands (Ahmad et al., 2023; Baumeister et al., 2005; Kim & Lee, 2021).

For example, a nurse assigned to the intensive care unit (ICU) may be required to manage multiple responsibilities—monitoring vital signs, ensuring

equipment functionality, and preparing documentation—within rigid time constraints. In such high-stakes scenarios, organizational neglect, rudeness from superiors, or feelings of exclusion may drive employees to adopt counterproductive shortcuts or retaliatory behaviors. By focusing on workplace ostracism and incivility as antecedents, and intentions to sabotage as the mediating factor, the current study provides a comprehensive understanding of how subtle, yet chronic stressors evolve into CWBs in the healthcare context.

Furthermore, this study is particularly relevant to healthcare settings in developing countries such as Pakistan, where resource constraints, hierarchical cultures, and understaffing may intensify experiences of workplace mistreatment. Findings from this study will not only contribute to the theoretical understanding of workplace deviance but also offer practical insights for healthcare administrators to foster inclusive, respectful, and psychologically safe work environments.

Literature Review

Workplace Ostracism and Employees' Counterproductive Work Behaviors (CWBs)

Counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) refer to voluntary acts that harm organizations or their members (Spector & Fox, 2005). These behaviors reflect antisocial tendencies, encompassing dimensions such as property deviance and production deviance, including theft, withdrawal, and rule violations (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). CWBs can manifest in both overt and covert forms and are often contextually driven by workplace dynamics, including how employees are treated by peers and supervisors. Workplace ostracism—defined as the extent to which an individual perceives being ignored or excluded—has been consistently linked to increased CWBs (Howard et al.,

2020). Ostracism undermines self-regulation, leading to emotional exhaustion, anger, and retaliatory behavior (Yang & Treadway, 2016; Baumeister et al., 2005). This emotional deterioration can lead to a decline in motivation, increased workplace deviance, and a shift in employee attitudes toward their organization (Ferris et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2020).

Recent studies suggest that ostracism weakens employees' sense of belonging and psychological safety, which in turn predicts dysfunctional outcomes (Ahmad et al., 2023; Tian et al., 2023). The aggressive behavior exhibited by excluded individuals, particularly in healthcare settings, may result from unresolved emotional strain and perceived injustice (Twenge et al., 2001; Wu et al., 2012). Moreover, ostracized employees often experience identity threat and deteriorating interpersonal relationships, resulting in psychological withdrawal and sabotaging intentions (Howard et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020). Repeated acts of exclusion also erode organizational trust, thus amplifying psychological distress and deviant outcomes.

H1: Workplace ostracism is positively related to employees' counterproductive work behaviors.

Workplace Incivility and Employees' CWBs

Workplace incivility, though often subtle, is a significant predictor of CWBs. Incivility includes rude or discourteous behavior that violates norms of mutual respect (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). While it is typically low in intensity and ambiguous in intent, it may escalate over time into more overt counterproductive acts (Porath & Pearson, 2013). Gou and Kumar (2020) explain that incivility overlaps conceptually with CWBs in its behavioral consequences, although it may not initially be driven by hostile intent. The ambiguity of incivility makes it particularly harmful because it is harder to confront or report.

According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989; 2019), individuals experiencing incivility suffer from resource depletion, including emotional and social resources, which may lead to stress and retaliatory behaviors (Alshaabani et al., 2021). Murtaza et al. (2020) argue that employees facing incivility experience reduced organizational commitment and higher burnout, which encourages CWBs. These outcomes are particularly concerning in emotionally demanding workplaces such as hospitals (Liu et al., 2020).

Furthermore, incivility contributes to organizational cynicism and social undermining, compounding its detrimental effects (Ghosh et al., 2021). Employees who are exposed to persistent incivility are more likely to experience a breakdown in communication, poor collaboration, and eventual withdrawal from team processes. Such behaviors diminish productivity and morale across departments, which ultimately affects organizational performance.

H2: Workplace incivility is positively related to employees' counterproductive work behaviors.

Workplace Incivility and Intentions to Sabotage

Incivility has also been shown to foster intentions to sabotage, especially when employees internalize mistreatment and develop negative affective states (Vickers, 2006). The resulting emotional exhaustion, dissatisfaction, and alienation can motivate individuals to withdraw effort or intentionally undermine organizational operations (Kim & Lee, 2021; Wu et al., 2011). Negative workplace interactions significantly erode job satisfaction, increase disengagement, and drive covert retaliatory behaviors such as withholding effort or delaying tasks (Choi et al., 2022).

When employees perceive disrespect or are consistently subjected to unprofessional conduct, they may retaliate by violating service norms or neglecting tasks. The deterioration of workplace relationships, especially in healthcare, can provoke psychological withdrawal and sabotage intentions (Ahmad et al., 2023). More recent evidence shows that employees may rationalize sabotage as a way to restore perceived equity in the workplace.

H3: Workplace incivility is positively related to intentions to sabotage.

Workplace Ostracism and Intentions to Sabotage

Workplace ostracism can trigger similar outcomes. It leads to a breakdown in social connections and undermines psychological health, increasing the likelihood of sabotage intentions (Zhao et al., 2013). Liu et al. (2013) emphasized that exclusion from workplace conversations and activities results in feelings of low self-worth, emotional exhaustion, and resentment.

These negative emotions, when left unresolved, often transform into retaliatory intentions. In healthcare settings, such intentions may include delayed patient care or neglecting safety protocols, posing serious consequences (Gonsalkorale & Williams, 2007; Hitlan et al., 2006). Ostracism also contributes to a diminished sense of psychological contract, where employees no longer feel valued by their organization (Ferris et al., 2008), prompting intentional disruptions in service delivery (Wu et al., 2012). Recent research by Yang et al. (2021) highlights how perceived exclusion lowers moral self-regulation, which increases the tendency to engage in sabotage. Social rejection also amplifies aggressive tendencies and erodes normative behavior patterns.

H4: Workplace ostracism is positively related to intentions to sabotage.

Workplace Incivility, Intentions to Sabotage, and CWBs

The cumulative effects of incivility can escalate into both intentions to sabotage and actual CWBs. Incivility-induced stress may impair emotional regulation, particularly when combined with feelings of powerlessness (Kim & Lee, 2021). Employees may then act out against their organization through absenteeism, neglect, or deliberate errors (Aquino & Douglas, 2003; Choi, Lee, & Park, 2022). In resource-constrained environments like hospitals, such behaviors may be fueled by staff burnout and emotional fatigue, reinforcing the link between incivility, sabotage intentions, and CWBs (Murtaza et al., 2020). Moreover, incivility disrupts role clarity and teamwork, leading to increased workplace conflicts and unproductive norms (Porath & Pearson, 2013). These toxic interactions foster a culture where deviant behavior becomes normalized and less likely to be sanctioned (Ghosh et al., 2021).

H5: Workplace incivility is positively related to intentions to sabotage and counterproductive work behaviors.

Workplace Ostracism, Intentions to Sabotage, and CWBs

Ostracism, though passive in form, can erode psychological resilience and induce employees to engage in CWBs (Williams & Zadro, 2001). The silence and lack of acknowledgment create ambiguity that undermines emotional stability (Gonsalkorale & Williams, 2007). Over time, ostracized individuals may become disengaged and more inclined to retaliate (Wu et al., 2012). Healthcare professionals who experience exclusion may compromise work quality or violate procedural norms as a response to psychological injury (Ahmad et al., 2023; Colligan & Higgins, 2006). The loss of perceived fairness, value, and social support contributes to sabotage intentions and destructive behaviors. Psychological contract breach caused by prolonged exclusion is also a significant antecedent of withdrawal behavior and organizational deviance.

H6: Workplace ostracism is positively related to intentions to sabotage and counterproductive work behaviors.

Intentions to Sabotage as a Mediator

Intentions to sabotage may serve as a mediating mechanism between workplace mistreatment and CWBs. COR theory suggests that when individuals lose key psychological or social resources due to incivility or ostracism, they are more likely to retaliate (Hobfoll, 2019; Wright & Hobfoll, 2004). Andersson and Pearson (1999) described this dynamic as an "incivility spiral," which gradually evolves into an organizational culture of retaliation and dysfunction.

Intentions to sabotage, therefore, represent a psychological stage between mistreatment and behavioral deviance, especially in environments characterized by high stress and low support (Pearson & Porath, 2005; Heaphy & Dutton, 2008). When emotional regulation is compromised, sabotage becomes a means of reclaiming power or control over one's work environment. Such behavior is more likely in hierarchical, under-resourced institutions like hospitals, where emotional resources are routinely depleted (Alshaabani et al., 2021). Understanding the mediating role of sabotage intentions is essential in preventing the escalation of workplace mistreatment into more severe outcomes. Organizations that fail to address early signs of abuse may unknowingly foster climates conducive to deviance and disengagement.

H7: Intentions to sabotage mediate the relationship between workplace ostracism, workplace incivility, and CWBs.

Theoretical Framework
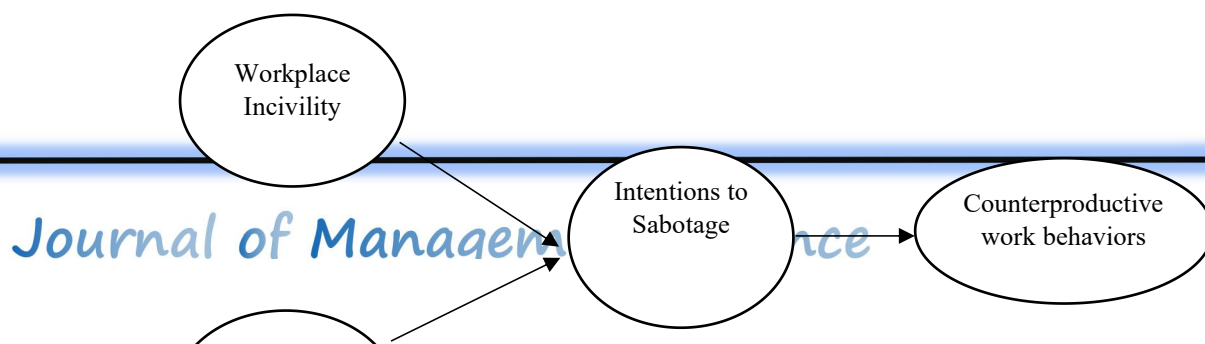
Research Methodology

Sample and Procedure

As per the target sector, employees working in healthcare organizations have been facing multiple issues of project deadlines, such as checking vitals for all patients, managing all equipment there, and completing all paperwork and files by a specific time, like before a doctor's visit. To obtain their feedback, duty doctors and ward in-charges have been accessed to address their issues through a survey-based questionnaire. Duty doctors were requested to allow them to fill in questionnaires during the appropriate break time for their nurses. The appropriate anonymity, confidentiality, volunteer input, and needful encouragement have been applied to target the subordinates.

Measuring Instrument

A questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) was provided to the respondents to record their observations. Close-ended questionnaires are provided to all the employees to rate their responses. Participants were assured that their answers would be kept highly confidential and would only be used for academic purposes. Overall, 100 questionnaires were distributed, of which 92 were returned. Seventy-seven questionnaires were used for the data analysis, whereas 15

incomplete questionnaires were discarded. Seventy-seven valid questionnaires showed an 84% response rate. In the age category, 54.1% was the highest percentage shown for the category, ranging from 26 to 30 years.

Workplace Ostracism

For workplace ostracism, respondents completed the 10-item scale developed by Ferris et. al (2008). Sample items include: "Others ignored you at work", "Others left the area when you entered", and 'Your greetings have gone unanswered at work".

Workplace Incivility

For workplace incivility, respondents completed the 07-item scale used. Sample items of the questionnaire include: "Put you down or was condescending to you?", "Paid little attention to your statement or showed little interest in your opinion?" and "Made demeaning or derogatory remarks about you?".

Intentions to Sabotage

For intentions to sabotage, respondents completed the 08-item scale developed. Sample items of the questionnaire includes: "I often think about withdrawing my effort, energy and enacting flexible service rules due to rude customers", "I sometimes feel it is not worth caring for the bank resources, time & energy, since no one knows your value", "I will not hesitate to share my knowledge, experience and feedback with Management".

Counterproductive Work Behavior

For counterproductive work behaviors, respondents completed the 33-item scale used by Spector and Fox (2005) in their paper. Sample items include: "Purposely wasted your employer's materials/supplies", "Purposely damaged a piece of equipment or property", "Purposely dirtied or littered your place of work Withdrawal".

Research Analysis

The research analysis was conducted using the SPSS 21 software for exploring the relationship among the variables and for testing the hypothesis too. Research analysis includes the evaluation of demographics, control variables, reliability, correlation, and regression, along with regression in terms of mediation analysis, individually for both independent variables of the study. The results of all the analyses are represented in tabular form in this study. For the accurate analysis of data, demographic scrutiny of the respondents was conducted. The demographics of the respondents are shown in the following tables 1, 2, 3, and 4. Table 1 corresponds to the gender distribution analysis, Table 2 corresponds to the age distribution, Table 3 corresponds to the education, and lastly, Table 4 corresponds to the experience distribution.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Demographics Analysis (Gender)

Gender				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	22	28.5	28.6	28.6
Female	55	71.4	71.4	100.0
Total	77	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics Demographics Analysis (Age)

Age				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18 – 25 years	24	28.2	31.2	31.2
26 – 30 years	46	54.1	59.7	90.9
31 – 35 years	3	3.5	3.9	94.8
36 – 40 years	2	2.4	2.6	97.4
Above 40	2	2.4	2.6	100.0
Total	77	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics Demographics Analysis (Education)

Education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Graduation	46	54.1	59.7	59.7
Master's/M.Phil.	27	31.8	35.1	94.8
PhD	4	4.7	5.2	100.0
Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics Demographics Analysis (Experience)

Experience				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 5 years	59	69.4	76.6	76.6
5-10 years	15	17.6	19.5	96.1
More than 5 years	3	3.5	3.9	100.0
Total	77	90.6	100.0	

Analysis for Control Variables

Following the demographics analysis, the One-Way ANOVA analysis was conducted to determine the significant control effect of the demographic elements on the dependent variable, i.e., CWB (Counterproductive work behavior). The purpose of this analysis was to identify the control variables to account for their impact in the following analysis. The results of this analysis are depicted in Table 5.

Table 5: Control Variables One Way ANOVA Analysis

Demographics	Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)	
	f statistics	p value
Gender	.259	.612ns
Age	.783	.540ns
Education	.009	.009ns
Experience	.340	.713ns

*$p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, ***$p<.001$, ns = non-significant

From the One-Way analysis conducted, it became evident that none of the demographic elements were found to be significant. All the values are above .05 (p<.05) and are considered as non-significant. It means the dependent variable has no significant impact on any variable of the present research model. The dependent variable has no significant effect on any control variable at a substantial level of 0.030 (p<.05). This means that the model is safe to run on future multiple-related analyses.

Reliability Analysis

To check the consistency of the collected data and the relevancy between the items of the scale, the reliability analysis was conducted. The reliability analysis is used to analyze whether the opted scale produces similar results regardless of the external parameters. This relevancy is evaluated using the value of Cronbach's alpha. The threshold value for Cronbach's alpha is 0.70. The results of the reliability analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Reliability Analysis, Cronbach's Alpha

Variable Name	Cronbach's Alpha
WO	.849
WI	.897
IS	.743
CWB	.948

WO = Workplace Ostracism, WI = Workplace Incivility, IS = Intentions to Sabotage, CWBs = Counterproductive Behavior.

As all the values of the Cronbach's alpha are well above 0.70, the reliability analysis proves that all the items of the scales of all four variables are reliable.

Correlation Analysis

Another analysis was conducted to check the correlation among the variables. The correlation analysis is performed to ensure that no multi-collinearity exists between the variables, and the respondents were able to identify the individual identities of the variables. The threshold value for multicollinearity is 0.50. The results of the correlation analysis are shown in table 7 given below.

Table 7: Correlation Analysis

	1	2	3	4
WO	1			
WI	.107	1		
IS	.107	1.000**	1	
CWB	.340**	-.122	-.122	1

WO =Workplace Ostracism, WI = Workplace Incivility, IS = Intentions to Sabotage, CWB = Counterproductive Behavior.

The results of the correlation analysis indicate the direction of the relationship among the variables. In this study, the results show that all the variables are correlated, mainly positively correlated. It illustrates that WI, IS, and CWB are positively associated with WO, with the values of 0.107, 0.107, and 0.340** respectively. The table also indicates that ISIS is positively associated with WI, with the value of 1.000***. At the same time, CWB has a correlation coefficient of- .122 with IS. And lastly, the table depicts that ISis associated with CWB with a value of -.122.

Following the correlation analysis, the analysis conducted in this study is a regression analysis. Regression analysis is used to determine the percentage change impact of independent variables and control variables on the dependent variable (Kafle, 2019). By selecting the One-Way analysis of demographics in Table 5, it was found that all the values are non-significant, hence no control variable has affected the dependent variable of the model. Therefore, simple regression analysis, consisting of independent variables and dependent variables, is performed.

Regression Analysis

Simple regression analysis is conducted to determine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The results of the simple regression analysis are depicted in Table 8.

Table 87: Regression Analysis

Predictors	Counterproductive Work Behavior		
	B	R^2	$\blacktriangle R^2$
Step 1			
Step 2			
WO	.335		0.001
WI	-.106	.533	0.144
Step 3			
WO*WI	-0.018	.141	0.000***

* p<.05, ** p<.01, ***p<.001, ns = non-significant

WO = WorkplaceOstracism, WI = Workplace Incivility

Upon evaluating the results, the p-value of counterproductive work behaviour is 0.000***. As the obtained p-value is 0.004, less than the threshold of 0.05, the impact of the independent variable WO on the dependent variable of counterproductive work behaviour is accepted. Similarly, the p-value of the independent variable WI is 0.144, and since this value exceeds the threshold of 0.05, the independent variable WI is rejected.

Mediated Regression Analysis

As the research model constitutes a mediator, hence the analysis of the mediated regression analysis is also covered in this study. The mediated regression analysis is conducted under the Hayes process. The purpose of this analysis is to determine the significant impact of the independent variables (workplace ostracism, workplace incivility) on the dependent variable (counterproductive work behavior), the critical relationship between the independent variables (one and two respectively) and the mediator, and the significance of the relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable in the presence of the independent variable. The results obtained are depicted in Table 9.

Table 9: Mediated Regression Analysis

	B	**SE**	**t**	**p**
IV1→DV	0.3187	0.1016	3.1351	0.0025
IV1→ Med	0.1509	0.1623	0.9293	0.000
Med →DV	-0.1058	0.0717	-1.4750	0.1445

IV1 →Med →DV	-0.0159	0.0116	-1.3707	0.0513
Bootstrap results for the indirect effect	Indirect Effect	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI	
	0.3187	0.0217	-0.0911	

Unstandardized regression coefficients reported. LL = Lower Limit, CI = Confidence Interval, UL = Upper Limit

	B	SE	t	P
IV2 → DV	0.2009	0.0516	3.3005	0.001
IV2 → Med	0.3503	0.0234	6.9558	0.000
Med →DV	-0.7901	0.0962	-1.3792	0.1005
IV2 → Med →DV	-0.0448	0.0606	-0.7384	0.5140
Bootstrap results for the indirect effect	Indirect Effect	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI	
	0.2538	0.1071	0.3090	

Unstandardized regression coefficients reported. LL = Lower Limit, CI = Confidence Interval, UL = Upper Limit

The results are concluded using the p-value in each significant relationship. The table indicates that as the p-value of the relationship between the independent variables (IV1, IV2) and the dependent variable is 0.002 and 0.001 (less than 0.05), the independent variable (workplace ostracism and workplace incivility) positively impacts the dependent variable (counterproductive work behavior). Furthermore, the table indicates the p-value of the relationship between the independent variable and the mediator. As this value is 0.000 (less than 0.05), the independent variables (workplace ostracism and workplace incivility) positively impact the mediator (intentions to sabotage). Similarly, the p-value for the relationship between the mediator (intentions to sabotage) and the dependent variable (counterproductive work behavior) is 0.000 (less than 0.05), indicating that the mediator positively impacts the dependent variable. Lastly, no mediation was observed in the research model (z = -0.6820, p = 0.492). It was found that intentions to sabotage did not mediate the relationship between workplace ostracism and workplace incivility.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the profound implications of workplace ostracism and incivility on counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs), particularly within healthcare environments. Consistent with previous literature, workplace ostracism significantly predicts CWBs, supporting the notion that social exclusion diminishes self-regulation, induces emotional distress, and ultimately promotes retaliatory behaviors (Tian et al., 2023; Yang & Treadway, 2016). This relationship is further exacerbated in highly demanding and emotionally charged contexts such as nursing, where social bonds and communication are essential to effective performance (Ahmad et al., 2023).

The study also demonstrates that workplace incivility—though often low in intensity—can accumulate to produce severe psychological and behavioral consequences. Incivility-induced emotional exhaustion and burnout diminish employees' ability to cope with stressors and increase their vulnerability to engage in CWBs (Alshaabani et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020). These results are in line with the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, which suggests that employees who perceive persistent mistreatment are more likely to engage in defensive or retaliatory behaviors to preserve their remaining psychological and emotional resources (Hobfoll, 2019).

Furthermore, the mediating role of intentions to sabotage in the relationship between mistreatment and CWBs reveals critical insights into how negative emotions and cognitive appraisals of injustice evolve into tangible harmful actions. Sabotage intentions represent a cognitive precursor to behavioral deviance, illustrating the transformation from perception to intention, and eventually to action (Kim & Lee, 2021). These intentions were found to be significantly influenced by both ostracism and incivility, suggesting that

hostile work environments foster a psychological climate where sabotage is not only contemplated but also normalized.

Healthcare professionals, especially nurses, are at increased risk of engaging in CWBs due to role overload, interpersonal strain, and perceived lack of support. This study adds to growing evidence that uncivil or exclusionary treatment within hospitals can jeopardize patient care by fostering disengagement, cynicism, and deliberate rule-breaking (Choi et al., 2022; Ghosh et al., 2021). More importantly, the findings reinforce the urgency for managerial interventions that promote inclusive, respectful, and psychologically safe workplaces.

A key contribution of this research lies in integrating the Theory of Reasoned Action and COR theory to explain how environmental factors (ostracism, incivility) interact with individual-level cognitive processes (intentions to sabotage) to shape CWBs. This theoretical integration offers a more nuanced understanding of behavioral deviance in organizations and highlights opportunities for targeted organizational interventions.

Future research should examine longitudinal data better to understand the temporal dynamics of mistreatment and behavioral outcomes. Additionally, incorporating moderators such as resilience, perceived organizational support, or emotional intelligence may help explain individual differences in reactions to workplace mistreatment (Howard et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the results of this study not only validate the deleterious effects of workplace ostracism and incivility but also emphasize the critical role of sabotage intentions as a mediating mechanism. Creating positive interpersonal environments and addressing early signs of exclusion or incivility can significantly reduce the likelihood of CWBs and improve organizational outcomes in healthcare settings.

Conclusion

The research study highlights the significant outcomes of workplace ostracism and workplace incivility and how they lead to counterproductive work behavior. The primary focus of the study is how ostracized treatment by nurses in hospitals leads them towards counterproductive work behaviors. This relationship between workplace ostracism, workplace incivility, and counterproductive work behaviors is established. Therefore, the study demonstrates that the prevalence of workplace ostracism and workplace incivility within an organization leads towards counterproductive work behavior. The study claims that the target sector, Healthcare organizations in Pakistan, can hinder the CWBs of nurses by ending the ostracism of nurses and providing them with a civil environment to work in.

Recommendation

- Considering the conclusions drawn above, the following recommendations are proposed, which can be incorporated within the healthcare sector to enable nurses to hinder CWBs.

- Organizations must act proactively in dealing with incivility so that it does not lead to serious and caustic consequences that eat away at the workplace culture by promoting well-being in the workplace and putting a stop to specific unsafe dynamics from establishing themselves.

- In dealing with workplace incivility, organizations should train both employees and managers on the relationship Management competence because relationship Management abilities would result in improved handling of workplace aggression and uncivil behaviors.

- The manager must proactively address the workplace culture and take steps to minimize the occurrence of rudeness and reinforce respectful, acceptable behavior. They should exhibit model good behavior, not make excuses, hold

everyone accountable all day, every day, define acceptable conduct, hire and train for civility, and pay attention to the larger world.

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