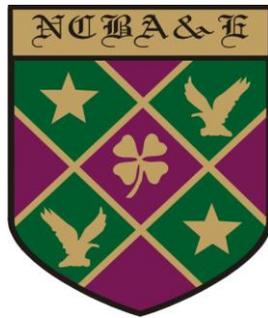


*National College of Business
Administration & Economics
Lahore*



**WORKPLACE OSTRACISM AND THE
DIMENSIONS OF WORKPLACE
AGGRESSION: AN UNDERSTANDING
FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF
CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES AND
AFFECTIVE EVENTS THEORY**

BY

RABIA ABRAR

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

FEBRUARY, 2023

**NATIONAL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION & ECONOMICS**

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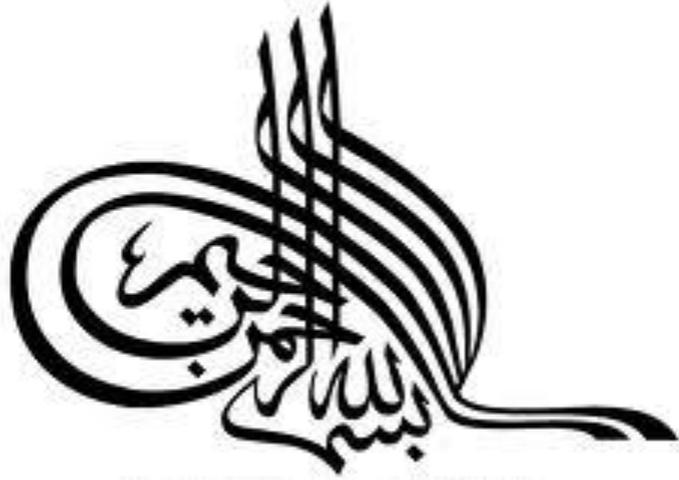
RABIA ABRAR

**A dissertation submitted to
School of Business Administration**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

FEBRUARY, 2023



*In the name of ALLAH,
The Most Beneficent,
The Most Merciful,*

AUTHOR’S DECLARATION

I, **Rabia Abrar**, hereby state that my PhD thesis titled “**Workplace Ostracism and the Dimensions of Workplace Aggression: An Understanding from the Perspectives of Conservation of Resources and Affective Events Theory**” is my own work and has not been submitted previously by me for taking any degree from this university, **National College of Business Administration & Economics (NCBA&E), Lahore** or anywhere else in the country/world.

At any time, if my statement is found to be incorrect, even after my graduate, the university has the right to withdraw my PhD degree.

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FEBRUARY, 2023

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I solemnly declare that research work presented in the thesis titled **“Workplace Ostracism and the Dimensions of Workplace Aggression: An Understanding from the Perspectives of Conservation of Resources and Affective Events Theory”** is solely my research work with no significant contribution from any other person. Small contribution/help whenever taken has been duly acknowledged and that complete thesis has been written by me.

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This is to certify that research work presented in the thesis, entitled “**Workplace Ostracism and the Dimensions of Workplace Aggression: An Understanding from the Perspectives of Conservation of Resources and Affective Events Theory**” was conducted by **Rabia Arbar** under the supervision of **Professor Dr. Faisal Qadeer**.

No part of this thesis has been submitted anywhere else for any other degree. This thesis is submitted to the **School of Business Administration** in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the field of **Business Administration**, National College of Business Administration & Economics, Lahore.

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Dedication

*I feel honor to dedicate
this dissertation to my Family.
It would be an understatement
to say that, as a family,
we have experienced some
ups and downs in the past years.
Every time I was ready to quit,
they did not let me
and I am forever grateful.
This dissertation stands as a
testament to their unconditional
love and encouragement.*

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All the praises are for Allah Almighty who blessed me with his wisdom and provided me with the resources to accomplish this gigantic task. I would like to express my intense feelings of gratitude to all those who have been with me throughout the journey of success.

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Words cannot express the feeling of thankfulness to my honorable supervisor, Dr. Faisal Qadeer. This thesis would not exist without his guidance and moral support. His supervision has helped me hone my research skills. His continuous support and empathy enabled me to complete this journey of Ph.D. No doubt, he is one of the best researchers in Pakistan who are serving with a great passion for research community development. I am also thankful to Dr. Albert John, Assistant Professor, Lahore Business School, The University of Lahore, for his valuable support in building my analytical skills in Structural Equation Modeling through AMOS.

I am nothing without my loving family who keep the confidence and patience during the entire duration of Ph.D. completion. I owe my family members, particularly my parents and siblings whose proximity, love and affection provided me joy and relaxation. Their everyday prayers made it possible for me to complete this thesis. Specifically, I would like to thank my mother, Rubina Abrar, who always provided me a cheerful encouragement during the entire period of this study.

Allah Bless Pakistan! Aameen.

SUMMARY

Workplace ostracism is one of the universal and painful experiences for employees subject to feelings of exclusion, ignorance, or being invisible at work. In organizational behavior and general management, there has been considerable research on workplace ostracism leading to workplace aggression. However, the research has unheeded the overt and covert dimensions of aggression following workplace ostracism. Specifically, our research questions pose what makes employees exhibit overt and covert aggression in response to workplace ostracism. The study proposes an underlying mechanism essential to a comprehensive understanding of what mainly instigates employees to undergo overt and covert aggression due to ostracism. Employing the conservation of resources theory and affective events theory, we proposed that workplace ostracism can affect employees' overt and covert aggression via job tension and hurt feelings. We also proposed the boundary conditions of the need for affiliation and neuroticism.

The present study offers a comprehensive model that includes mediation and moderation to examine the place ostracism and employees' overt and covert dimensions of aggression relationship that have been overlooked in past studies. Data is collected from Pakistan for empirical evidence. The study contributes to workplace ostracism and workplace aggression literature by providing insights through the conservation of resources and affective events theory. This quantitative and analytical study took place in a non-contrived setting with minimal interference from the researcher. Time-lagged (two points in time) usable data of 502 employees working in different organizations is analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling.

Findings suggest that employees develop job tension and hurt feelings due to workplace ostracism, leading to aggression. There are implications for researchers to investigate the other potential mediators, e.g., perceived intensity, perceived intent, and anger, and moderators, e.g., Emotional intelligence and organization-based self-esteem in workplace ostracism-overt and covert aggression research. The study implies that the proposed mechanism can help to minimize the costs associated with such destructive behaviors, and organizations may control this harmful process.

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title	Page
5.1	Demographic Descriptive Results (n=502)	57
5.2	Participants' Gender by Marital Status, Age, and Education	59
5.3	Participants' Gender by Sector, Industry, Hierarchical Level, and Tenure	60
5.4	Exploratory Factor Analysis	61
5.5	Descriptive Statistics and Reliability	63
5.6	Validity Analysis - Square Roots of Average Variance Explained	64
5.7-A	Comparisons of the Study Variables by Gender	65
5.7-B	Group Comparisons by Age	66
5.7-C	Group Comparisons by Formal Education (Years)	67
5.7-D	Group Comparisons by Sector	68
5.7-E	Group Comparisons by Industry	69
5.7-F	Group Comparisons by Hierarchical Level	70
5.7-G	Group Comparisons by Organizational Tenure	71
5.8	CFA Model Fitness Comparisons	72
5.9	Correlation Matrix	74
5.10	SEM Direct and Indirect Results-COR Path	75
5.11	Moderation results-COR	76
5.12	SEM Direct and Indirect Results-AET Path	78
5.13	Moderation Results-AET	79

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.	Title	Page
1.1	The Theoretical Framework	7
2.1	Study Flow Diagram	12
3.1	Research Model Underpinning COR Theory	38
3.2	Research Model Underpinning AET Theory	45
5.4	Moderation of Need for Affiliation on Ostracism → Job Tension Relationship	77
5.5	Moderation of Neuroticism on Job Tension → Overt Aggression Relationship	77
5.7	Moderation of Neuroticism on Hurt Feeling → Overt Aggression Relationship	79

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AUTHOR’S DECLARATION	IV
PLAGIARISM UNDERTAKING	V
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL	VI
DEDICATION	VII
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	VIII
SUMMARY	IX
LIST OF TABLES	X
LIST OF FIGURES.....	XI
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Problem Statement and Aims	1
1.2 Study Background	2
1.2.1 Research Gap.....	5
1.2.2 Purpose and Objectives of the Study.....	6
1.3 Theoretical Framework.....	7
1.4 Topic Effectivity and Expected Contribution.....	7
1.5 Overview of the Research Design	9
1.6 Definitions of Key Terms	9
1.6.1 Workplace Ostracism	9
1.6.2 Workplace Aggression	9
1.6.2.1 Overt Aggression	10
1.6.2.2 Covert Aggression	10
1.6.3 Job Tension.....	10
1.6.4 Hurt Feelings	10
1.6.5 Need for Affiliation	10
1.6.6 Neuroticism	10
1.7 Organization of the Dissertation.....	11
1.8 Research Context.....	12
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE ON KEY CONCEPTS	14
2.1 Workplace Ostracism	14
2.2 Workplace Aggression	18
2.2.1 Overt Aggression.....	24
2.2.2 Covert Aggression	24
2.3 Workplace Ostracism and Workplace Aggression.....	25
2.4 Constructs of the Mechanism	27
2.4.1 Job Tension.....	27
2.4.2 Hurt Feelings	28
2.4.3 Need for Affiliation	28
2.4.4 Neuroticism	29

CHAPTER 3: HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH MODELS	30
3.1 Conservation of Resources Theory.....	30
3.1.1 The Mediation of Job Tension.....	35
3.1.2 The Moderation of Need for Affiliation.....	36
3.1.3 The Moderation of Neuroticism	37
3.1.4 Research Model Underpinning COR Theory	38
3.2 Affective Events Theory.....	38
3.2.1 The Mediation of Hurt Feelings	42
3.2.2 The Moderation of Neuroticism	43
3.2.3 Research Model Underpinning AET Theory	44
 CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	 46
4.1 Research Design	46
4.2 Online Survey Strategy.....	47
4.2.1 Online Survey Design.....	49
4.2.2 Time Lag Procedure	49
4.2.3 Common Method Biases	50
4.3 Data Collection.....	50
4.3.1 Target Population	51
4.3.2 Survey Instrument Time 1	51
4.3.3 Survey Instrument Time 2.....	52
4.3.4 Administration of the Survey	52
4.3.5 Final Sample.....	53
4.4 Measurements	54
4.4.1 Workplace Ostracism	54
4.4.2 Job Tension.....	54
4.4.3 Hurt Feelings	54
4.4.4 Need for Affiliation	54
4.4.5 Neuroticism	54
4.4.6 Overt Aggression.....	55
4.4.7 Covert Aggression	55
4.5 DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGY	55
 CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS	 56
5.1 The Data Input and Screening	56
5.2 Demographic Profile.....	57
5.2.1 Participants' Gender by Personal Characteristics	58
5.2.2 Participants' Gender by Firm-Related Characteristics	59
5.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis.....	60
5.4 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability.....	62
5.5 Validity Analysis	63
5.5.1 Discriminant and Convergent Validity.....	63
5.6 GROUP COMPARISONS	64
5.6.1 Group Comparisons by Gender.....	65
5.6.2 Group Comparisons by Age	66

5.6.3	Group Comparisons by Formal Education	67
5.6.4	Group Comparisons by Sector.....	68
5.6.5	Group Comparisons by Industry	69
5.6.6	Group Comparisons by Hierarchical Level.....	70
5.6.7	Group Comparisons by Organizational Tenure.....	71
5.7	Confirmatory Factor Analysis	72
5.8	Correlation Analysis	73
5.9	Hypothesis Testing – COR Path.....	75
5.9.1	The Mediation of Job Tension.....	75
5.9.2	The Moderation of Need for Affiliation and Neuroticism	76
5.10	Hypothesis Testing – AET Path	78
5.10.1	The Mediation of Hurt Feelings	78
5.10.2	The Moderation of Neuroticism	78
5.11	SUMMARY OF RESULTS	80
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....		81
6.1	Discussion.....	81
6.2	Research Implications.....	83
6.2.1	Theoretical Implications under COR	83
6.2.2	Theoretical Implications under AET	85
6.2.3	Practical Implications	86
6.3	Limitations and Future Direction	87
6.4	Conclusion	90
REFERENCES		91
ANNEXURE A		116
ANNEXURE B		118

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND AIMS

The universal phenomenon of ostracism is one of the familiar and impactful experiences followed by feeling excluded, ignored, or invisible at work. The workplace is considered one of the most critical social contexts where ostracism occurs. In today's workplaces, employees spend considerable time with other organizational members. Ostracism can lead to feelings of loneliness, stress, and depression among employees. When individuals feel excluded or ignored, it can erode their self-esteem and sense of belonging, leading to negative emotional consequences. Ostracism can also contribute to workplace aggression. When individuals feel mistreated, ignored, or unfairly targeted, they may respond with hostile behaviors. This aggression can create a toxic work environment and harm both individuals and the overall team dynamics. We know that workplace ostracism leads to workplace aggression – which comes in various types. Nevertheless, research has overlooked *what makes employees exhibit overt and covert aggression in response to workplace ostracism*. Therefore, the literature examining this mechanism is imperative to comprehensively understand what primarily provokes overt and covert aggression among employees. Moreover, a theoretical framework that clarifies *how and under what conditions employees exhibit various aggression forms* is yet to be thoroughly investigated. Thus, understanding what predicts overt and covert aggression in the workplace may benefit organizations and reduce the costs of such harmful and destructive behaviors.

The research on workplace ostracism has presented adverse implications and reveals the impact on the reduced commitment to targets, job satisfaction, and well-being (Haldorai et al., 2020; Howard et al., 2020; Mao et al., 2018; Penhaligon et al., 2009). One of its recent critical outcomes also includes a proclivity to leave work early and a proclivity to be late for work (Hsieh & Karatepe, 2019). However, one noteworthy exception to workplace ostracism's negative effect is its influence on targets' aggressive behaviors by focusing on two main dimensions (i.e., overt and covert) of workplace aggression. By withdrawing or being aggressive, ostracized individuals may respond negatively (Leary et al., 2006; Mao et al., 2018; Twenge et al., 2007; Williams, 2001). Thus, it is unsurprising that individuals respond aggressively and negatively to

ostracism. Nonetheless, it is unanticipated and intriguing how and when ostracized employees exhibit overt and covert aggression.

Surprisingly, we found no research focusing on the much-needed mechanism of employees lashing out (overt aggression) and displaying subtle aggression (covert aggression) at the workplace following ostracism, which has been accentuated as pervasive and may harm the performance of the organization (Xu et al., 2015). To the best of our knowledge, the current study is the first to investigate the underlying mechanism and boundary conditions under which workplace ostracism leads to overt and covert aggression in the light of two theories, i.e., conservation of resources (COR) and affective event theories (AET). The present research highlights the mediating mechanisms between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression by proposing job tension as a potential mediator in the COR path. On the other hand, hurt feelings are offered as a potential mediator in the AET path. The proposed research model integrates the boundary conditions of the need for affiliation in the COR path and neuroticism in both paths (i.e., COR and AET).

The present study simultaneously contributes to workplace ostracism and workplace aggression literature. It goes beyond the existing workplace ostracism's consequences of focusing on employees' overt and covert aggression, letting organizations understand and become aware of this heinous process that eventually negatively affects organizations.

1.2 STUDY BACKGROUND

Workplace ostracism refers to the extent to which one feels ignored or excluded by other employees (Ferris et al. (2008). Ostracism socially disengages others. This social disengagement leads to a substantial threat to belonging, considered a fundamental human need. The other three fundamental needs of humans - including the need to control, the need for self-esteem, and meaningful existence (Williams, 1997) - are also threatened by ostracism. Being alone and forgotten is immensely stressful and hurting for social beings. So, ostracism leads individuals to behave aggressively. We are interested in the anti-social behavior of employees, i.e., workplace aggression from a target perspective following workplace ostracism. One of the significant issues faced by organizations is workplace aggression.

Workplace aggression, often stemming from workplace ostracism, is a highly detrimental phenomenon that poses significant risks to the well-being of employees and the overall functioning of organizations. Ostracism creates an environment where individuals feel excluded, marginalized, and disengaged,

leading to heightened frustration, anger, and a potential desire to retaliate. As a result, employees who experience ostracism may resort to various forms of aggression, such as verbal abuse, physical confrontation, or even sabotage.

Prior research states that workplace ostracism negatively impacts employee behavior by making them withdraw or become aggressive (Leary et al., 2006; Li et al., 2019; Twenge et al., 2007; Williams, 2001). Recent meta-analytic reviews also discussed the adverse outcomes of workplace ostracism (Bedi, 2021; Howard et al., 2020). In addition, workplace aggression has negatively affected organizational effectiveness (Johnson et al., 2018; Shah & Huang, 2023). Aggression denotes all kinds of behavior that include the intention to harm others, so many types of behaviors could be categorized as aggressive. However, numerous scholars tried to consolidate these behaviors into more manageable dimensions. One of the most widely recognized dimensions of aggression is overt and covert aggression (Buss, 1961; Baron et al., 1997; Baron & Neuman, 1998; Kaukiainen et al., 2001). Aggressive behaviors like throwing objects, verbal exchanges while abusing, banging doors, and homicide are considered overt. On the other hand, covert aggression is less visible or vaguer in form. For example, not responding to phone calls and email messages, withholding needed resources or information, numerous forms of sabotage, and coming late or avoiding the meeting are covert.

Astoundingly, no research has concentrated on these dimensions of aggression as an outcome of workplace ostracism. Both overt and covert aggression is likely to occur in workplaces. Therefore, a mechanism must tell how and when employees lash out (overt aggression) and exhibit covert aggression in response to workplace ostracism. Since workplace ostracism is pervasive, stressful, and hurtful, it may provoke employees to show overt and self-covert aggression. Therefore, our study is the first to provide this insight to help organizations curtail such destructive behaviors that are overtly and covertly aggressive and may harm the performance of the organizations. The present research investigates how and when employees lash out and exhibit covert aggression following workplace ostracism underpinning COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

In line with COR theory, the present research highlights the mediating mechanisms between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression by proposing the potential mediator of job tension. The theory describes that persons make efforts to attain, preserve, and guard resources valuable to them in resource threat (Lyu et al., 2016b). Therefore, workplace ostracism acts as a workplace stressor. Considering this, it may exhaust the target's resources (Wu et al., 2012), and there is a likelihood that workplace ostracism will positively influence job tension, which may lead to overt and covert aggression. We also

examine the boundary condition of the need for affiliation and neuroticism that would increase or decrease the influence of workplace ostracism on overt and covert aggression. The need for affiliation denotes individuals' longing for belongingness and social contact (Wilson et al., 2005).

Persons with a high need for affiliation develop harmonious relationships with others and achieve social satisfaction (Murray, 1938; Wiesenfeld et al., 2001). Such people are highly susceptible to workplace ostracism to cultivate job tension. Neuroticism involves the propensity to experience negative emotions like anger, sadness, and fear (Costa & McCrae, 1987). Individuals who are high in neuroticism are rejection-sensitive and imply emotional instability. They have more tendencies to engage in interpersonal conflicts. As workplace ostracism depletes personal and social resources, individuals find it challenging to cope with the current demands, which makes them stressed, leading to job tension. Highly neurotic employees will respond aggressively to job tension created by workplace ostracism. We propose that workplace ostracism's positive effect on employees' overt and covert aggression can be more robust for those high in neuroticism.

In line with AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), the present research discusses the mediating mechanisms between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression by suggesting hurt feelings as a potential mediator. AET corresponds that "there are certain work events like hassles, uplifts, or both and affects like positive or negative emotions that have a role in forecasting the behavioral reactions at the workplace in response to both events and emotions" (Anjum et al., 2022; Judge et al., 2011; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). In line with this theory, there are specific work events to which employees react with emotion whether positive or negative, and these affective reactions decide the attitudes and behaviors of employees (Lim et al., 2008; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

This study suggests that workplace ostracism is a hostile work event that can cause negative affective states such as hurt feelings. Hurt feelings among employees being ostracized can lead them to overt and covert aggression. We also examine the boundary condition of neuroticism that would increase or decrease the impact of workplace ostracism on hurt feelings and overt and covert aggression via hurt feelings. According to AET, personality characteristics influence the effect of work events on a person's emotional and behavioral reactions. According to Brief & Weiss (2002), neuroticism is negative affectivity linked to various negative emotions (Watson, 2000), such as hurt feelings. We propose that workplace ostracism's positive effect on hurt feelings and overt and covert aggression via hurt feelings can be more substantial for those high in neuroticism.

In sum, the study aims to identify how and when employees exhibit overt and covert aggression in response to workplace ostracism via two paths: COR and AET. First, this study will explore the mediating mechanisms and boundary conditions in the path of COR and AET that evoke employees to lash out (overt aggression) and exhibit covert aggression. This research integrates two theories of COR and AET to examine the mediating mechanisms and boundary conditions to determine how and when workplace ostracism triggers aggressive responses. The first path of COR will explore the mediation effects of Job tension between workplace ostracism and covert and overt aggression and the boundary conditions of the need for affiliation and neuroticism that exacerbate the relationship between workplace ostracism and overt/covert aggression via job tension. The second path of AET will explore the mediation effect of hurt feelings between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression and the boundary condition of neuroticism that expects to exacerbate the relationship between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression via hurt feelings.

1.2.1 Research Gap

The research on workplace ostracism has presented adverse implications and reveals the impact on the reduced commitment to targets, job satisfaction, and well-being (Wang et al., 2023; Haldorai et al., 2020; Howard et al., 2020; Mao et al., 2018; Penhaligon et al., 2009). One of its recent critical outcomes also includes a proclivity to leave work early and a proclivity to be late for work (Hungchen Hsieh, 2019). However, one noteworthy exception and to workplace ostracism's negative effect (Xu et al., 2015) is its influence on targets' aggressive behaviors by focusing on two main dimensions (i.e., overt and covert) of workplace aggression. The research on workplace ostracism has offered its negative implications. Surprisingly, no research has focused on the overt and covert dimensions of aggression as an outcome of workplace ostracism, as both overt and covert aggression are likely to occur in workplaces. So the first gap is: that considerable literature on workplace ostracism leading to workplace aggression is available. Still, the research has largely *overlooked* one of the most popular dimensions of aggression (overt and covert) as an outcome of workplace ostracism.

Secondly, workplace ostracism causing overt and covert aggression via job tension and hurt feelings is under-researched in organizational behavior. Research about this gap will provide vital insight to help organizations curtail such destructive behaviors that are overtly and covertly aggressive and may harm the performance of the organizations. The role of the process variable of

job tension in the COR path and hurt feelings in the AET path following workplace ostracism is also unexplored.

Thirdly, existing literature also *lacks empirical support* on the much-needed mechanism of employees exhibiting overt and covert aggression in response to workplace ostracism. Moreover, the theoretical framework to capture this critical mechanism has had little empirical support. Moreover, there must be a mechanism that tells how and when employees lash out (overt aggression) and exhibit covert aggression in response to workplace ostracism.

Fourthly, the literature on workplace ostracism and aggression needs to be *extended or complemented*. Therefore, this study proposes a theory-informed framework underpinning COR and AET that would extend the literature on workplace ostracism leading to workplace aggression.

1.2.2 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

Although much research on workplace ostracism leads to aggression (Leary et al., 2006; Li et al., 2019; Twenge et al., 2007; Williams, 2001), the overt and covert dimensions of aggression as a consequence of workplace ostracism were undermined. The present study suggests a framework involving mediators and moderators under the two paths of COR and AET to analyze the relationship between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression. The suggested framework will supplement the exploration of workplace ostracism and workplace aggression in OB literature. The key objective is to analyze the role of workplace ostracism in exhibiting overt and covert dimensions of aggression.

The current study determines the reactions and emotions that might occur as mediators in the said relationship. These intervening mediators are the job tension under the path of COR and hurt feelings under the path of AET. The study emphasizes the ostracized employees who consequently exhibit overt and covert aggression.

Therefore, precisely, the research objectives are:

- To analyze the mediating role of job tension between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression.
- To examine the moderating effects of the (a) need for affiliation and (b) neuroticism on the ostracism-job tension relationship.

- To analyze the mediating role of hurt feelings between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression
- To examine the moderating effect of neuroticism on (a) ostracism-hurt feeling, (b) hurt feelings-overt aggression, and (c) hurt feelings-cover aggression relationships.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research model of this study involves two perspectives of conservation of resources and affective event theory. Under the perspective of COR, job tension mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression with two moderators of the need for affiliation and neuroticism. Under the perspective of AET, hurt feelings mediate the relationship between workplace ostracism and a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression with the moderator of neuroticism.

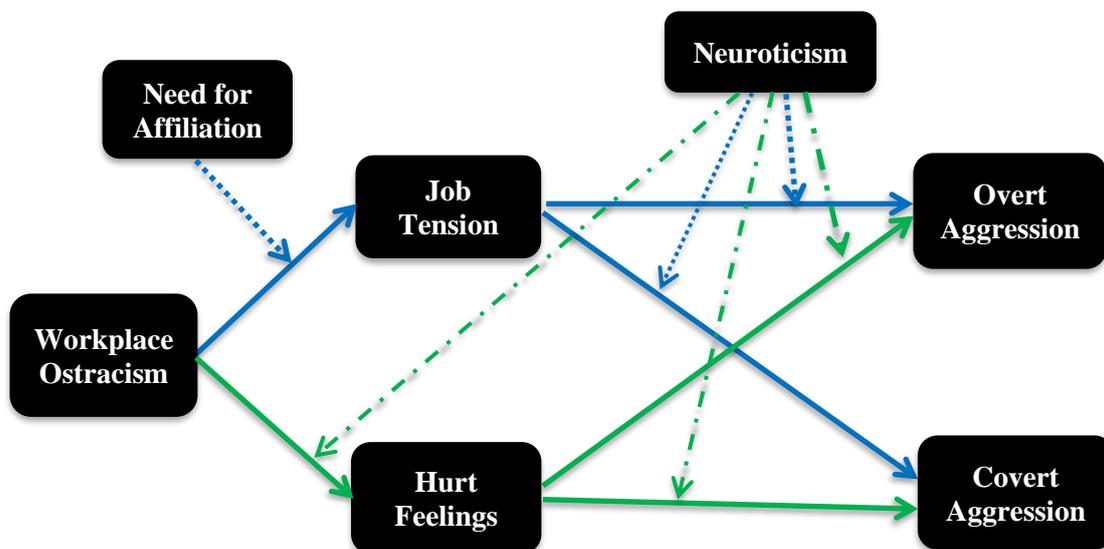


Figure 1.1: The Theoretical Framework

1.4 TOPIC EFFECTIVITY AND EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION

The present study simultaneously acquires the conservation of resources theory and affective events theory and proposes a model for comprehending the consequences of workplace ostracism for various employee behaviors. This research study entails rationalizations and will contribute to the following fashions.

Remember that workplace ostracism is painful and hurting and may trigger employees to act aggressively. We are well informed that workplace ostracism leads to workplace aggression. Still, it may raise the curiosity of organizational scholars and practitioners that one of the most essential and popular dimensions of aggression, i.e., overt and covert, is largely ignored as a response to workplace ostracism.

The present study hits the area of inquiry to determine the overt and covert dimensions of aggression due to ostracism, as it is the most prevalent workplace experience. For organizations, it is critical to understand that workplace ostracism can be a source of employees lashing out and displaying subtle aggression. How and when workplace ostracism generates overt and covert aggression? It would be of immense interest to help organizations examine and curtail the challenge of such destructive behaviors that may harm the performance of the organizations.

Astoundingly the much-needed mechanism of employees lashing out (overt aggression) and displaying subtle aggression (covert aggression) at the workplace following ostracism is unexplored yet. The present study takes the lead in investigating the underlying mechanism and boundary conditions under which workplace ostracism leads to overt and covert aggression in the light of two theories, i.e., conservation of resources and affective event theories. Hence, this study has exciting and substantial practical insights to offer. Two mechanisms in the light of two theories come up with broader scope to examine aggressive behaviors following workplace ostracism.

The present research contributes to the literature in many ways as it advances our theoretical understanding incrementally. It establishes new theoretical linkages that offer rich potential for theory and research in general management and organizational behavior. It enriches the workplace ostracism literature by extending its consequences to overt and covert aggression. The study contributes to our knowledge and understanding of antecedents that may exhibit overt and covert aggression in response to workplace ostracism within organizations. It also threw light on the mediating mechanisms between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression by proposing job tension as a potential mediator in the path of COR. This study is the first to introduce hurt feelings as a process variable between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression in the path of AET.

Within the two paths of COR and AET, investigating two potential mediators of job tension and hurt feelings suggests novel acumens into the mediating processes by which workplace ostracism leads to overt and covert aggression. The current finding on moderators is enhanced via two paths of COR

and AET, with which effects of workplace ostracism on overt and covert aggression can be augmented. This study bridges two kinds of literature on workplace ostracism and workplace aggression with two paths: COR and AET.

This quantitative study empirically testifies to the proposed theoretical framework. It explores the underlying mechanism with two complete paths offering mediation that holistically clarifies the process and offers clear implications of theory in addressing different organizational situations.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

This quantitative study follows a positivist research philosophy centered on a deductive approach to test the hypotheses. It is a formal study as the research question has been crystallized to a greater degree. The purpose of the study is explanatory—the research is conducted in natural settings. The unit of analysis is individual employees. This retrospective study gathers the data about the independent and moderating variables at one point (separated by lag) and then collects the data about the mediators and dependent variables. The topical scope of this study is statistical.

A suitable research strategy was designed and selected, i.e., an online survey that corresponds to the research objectives in line with the research questions. Then, the online survey through self-administered questionnaires was conducted twice to collect time-lagged data.

1.6 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

1.6.1 Workplace Ostracism

Workplace ostracism denotes “the extent to which an individual develops perception that he or she is ignored or excluded by another individual or group of individuals” (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1350).

1.6.2 Workplace Aggression

Workplace aggression has been defined as “behavior directed toward another person or persons carried out with the intent to harm” (Aquino & Thau, 2009, p. 718).

1.6.2.1 Overt Aggression

It involves “behaviors which do reveal the identity of the aggressor and this person’s aggressive intentions” (Baron & Neuman, 1998, p. 449).

1.6.2.2 Covert Aggression

It involves “behaviors that disguise the identity of aggressors and their harm-doing intentions” (Baron & Neuman, 1998, p. 449).

1.6.3 Job Tension

It is “the workers’ psychological reaction to disturbances in the objective or perceived work environment” (Chisholm et al., 1983, p. 387).

1.6.4 Hurt Feelings

It refers to “the outcomes of events that connoted relational devaluation which correspond the perception that another individual does not regard his or her relationship with the person to be as important, close, or valuable as the person desires” (Leary et al., 1998, p. 1225).

1.6.5 Need for Affiliation

It refers to “individuals’ desire for social contact or belongingness” (Wiesenfeld et al., 2001, p. 216).

1.6.6 Neuroticism

It refers to “a broad dimension of individual differences in the tendency to experience negative, distressing emotions and to possess associated behavioral and cognitive traits” (Costa & McCrae, 1987, p. 301).

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1 deals with the study's introduction, including the background, theoretical framework, study significance, expected contributions, an overview of the research design, and a definition of critical terms.

Chapter 2 deals with literature on critical concepts. The chapter indicates the study variables with its brief overview. Then, it provides the concept of workplace ostracism and workplace aggression and their theoretical and historical development in research.

Chapter 3 deals with the hypothesis development and research model. The author reviews the past literature in an attempt to build a larger and deeper explanation of the constructs. The chapter also creates the theoretical context of how workplace ostracism is related with overt and covert aggression through employees' reactions and emotions. Lastly it deals with the formal hypotheses grounding.

Chapter 4 includes the research methodology. It follows the detailed discussion on research design, research strategy, survey design, sampling design, data collection method and sources, and measurements. The study is cross-sectional and has minimal researcher interference as conducted in natural settings. The questionnaire entails well-established scales that are reliable to measure the study variables.

Chapter 5 deals with the data analysis and results. It includes demographics of the respondents and techniques of data analysis. In order to have vigorous model investigation, contemporary data analysis techniques are used. In SPSS descriptive and inference tests are used to have information about study respondents. Structural equation model is applied in AMOS to test and analyze the hypotheses.

Chapter 6 includes discussion and conclusion. Findings of the study are explained in this chapter along with their alignment with previous studies. It also discusses the theoretical and managerial implications, study limitations and future recommendations.

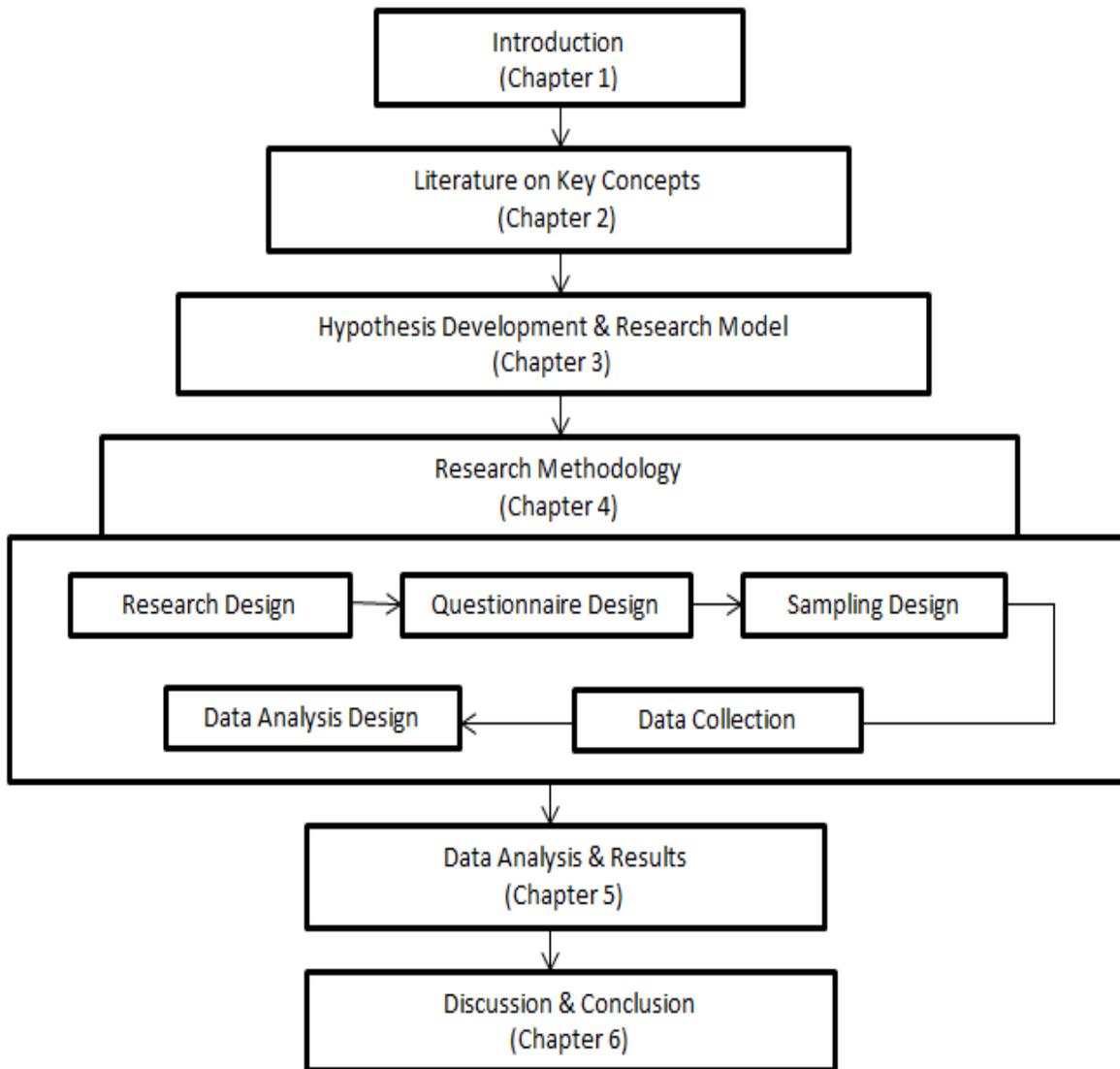


Figure 2.1: Study Flow Diagram

1.8 RESEARCH CONTEXT

Mainly the literature on workplace ostracism and workplace aggression is based on evidence from developed countries. It is necessary to investigate these phenomena in developing countries (Rupp et al., 2015). Several studies have revealed that western organizations are more prone to workplace aggression (Ambrose et al., 2002; Tailor & Kluemper; Yang & Caughlin, 2016). The concept of ostracism and aggression in developing and emerging economies is still new. The data in the present study is based on Pakistani organizations. Pakistan falls under the most critical countries owing to its geographic location and is a developing South Asian country.

Investigating the phenomena of ostracism and aggression in a developing country like Pakistan will add significant value to the literature. The study would

help comprehend how ostracized employees behave in developing countries like Pakistan, with poverty and high unemployment rates. It has been observed that employees in western countries are more prone to workplace aggression. The present study has provided a way to discuss the said phenomena in a different cultural context. Owing to the critical need for organizations to comprehend the influence of workplace ostracism on workplace aggression, there is a valid reason to examine the proposed mechanism so that organizations may benefit from this heinous process.

Data collected from Pakistani organizations can help figure out the effect of culture on the phenomena present in the study. The objective of the research is not to chase any specific cultural dimension (Hofstede et al., 2010). Still, the contingencies expand that need to be improved in the past studies due to the present investigation in the Pakistani context. Several cultural differences exist between developed and developing countries. In contrasting environments, this study context provides a chance to elucidate the phenomena included in the study.

In the presence of this contrasting culture, the present study on workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression appears exciting. Moreover, it will add to this literature by giving evidence from South Asia.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE ON KEY CONCEPTS

2.1 WORKPLACE OSTRACISM

Across all social contexts, one of the most common experiences is being excluded, ignored, or overlooked by other individuals or groups (Williams, 1997), including in the workplace (Fox & Stallworth, 2005). These experiences are often termed ostracism (Williams, 2001). The experience of workplace ostracism is a complex subject to confrontation with ostracizing behaviors from others (Howard et al., 2020). Deprivation of social engagement directs to a substantial threat to belonging. Being alone and forgotten is hurtful for social beings; it is even more wounding if the aloneness is consequent upon others' choices (Gu et al., 2023; Steinbauer et al., 2018). According to Williams (2007), ostracism can concurrently impend the four fundamental needs: the need to belong, the need to control, the need for self-esteem, and the need for a meaningful existence. Our well-being is highly affected if the need to belong is threatened, leading to an acute sense of ostracism (Spoor & Williams, 2007). One can feel ostracized even with minor actions of exclusion when such actions would have been appropriate socially (King & Geise, 2011; Wirth et al., 2010).

Workplace ostracism denotes "the extent to which an individual develops the perception that he or she is ignored or excluded by another individual or group of individuals" (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1350). It is a common observation that colleagues at work may disconnect or isolate others from social interaction, such as ignoring to reply greetings of coworkers, avoiding any eye contact, exiting the room upon entering the individual, and sending an individual to a lonely location (Fox & Stallworth, 2005; Robinson et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2015). The study by Hitlan et al. (2006) indicated that 13% of the workers felt excluded. Another study observed that 66% of the employees reported being treated silently (Fox & Stallworth, 2005).

Workplace Ostracism revolves around three key features: a) It does not need drive to inflict harm towards individuals, b) its occurrence is contingent upon neglecting the inclusion of another coworker when it is considered communally suitable to do so, and c) It reflects the omission of the positive attention as compared to the commission of negative attention. Due to the omission of an intention, a severe threat is posed by workplace ostracism to the sense of belongingness of an individual, which is a fundamental human need

(Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Fiske, 2004). Although by withdrawing or being aggressive, individuals who are ostracized may respond negatively (Williams, 2001). Conversely, they may display prosocial behavior by acting helpful and cooperative (Williams & Sommer, 1997).

It is essential to consider the evolutionary perspective of ostracism, including its function and existence, as it is witnessed in most social species and across time and different cultures. Gruter & Masters (1986) argued that groups became more cohesive when they ostracized troublesome or deviated from other members. More security and reproductive opportunities were also offered to their members and members who were ostracized. According to Barner-Barry (1986), ostracism was adaptive and functional. Similarly, those organisms that could anticipate or detect ostracism were likely to handle it. They might preclude the inevitable losses like loss of protection, loss of group membership, and loss of reproductive opportunities. An ostracism-detection system may coevolve due to the extensive use of ostracism.

When the event of ostracism is not occurring and is perceived as occurring, it might incur considerable psychological costs. However, when ostracism was about to happen, and it was not detected would likely result in death. Hence, it would be expected that humans have evolved to detect ostracism to assist them in signaling an alarm towards identifying whether ostracism was taking place. Moreover, if ostracism were found to be occurring, they would extend their efforts in coping with it. One of the multiple alarming signals would be a pain. An individual's attention can be captured following any hint of ostracism due to a harsh, painful response. An appraisal would be required to take action to remedy the situation.

The prevalence of ostracism is established by the fact that even in our most significant relationships, we will either act as a victim (target) or as a perpetrator (source) (Faulkner et al., 1997). In their research, Williams and his colleagues revealed that even the shortest duration of ostracism harms four fundamental human needs, including control, self-esteem, the need to belong, and meaningful existence (Williams & Zadro, 2001). In response to ostracism, the targeted employees are compelled to act cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally to fortify the threatened needs.

We will suffer physically and psychologically if we do not feel a sense of belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). If a good sense of self-esteem is not maintained, we cannot feel optimistic, practical, and self-confident (Steele, 1988; Tesser, 1988; Wortman & Brehm, 1975). To be ready to face challenges and be consistent, we must have a sense of control over our environment (Bandura, 1997; Seligman, 1975). To battle against purposelessness and

existential angst, we must be acknowledged as existing sentient humans (Solomon et al., 1991). All of the needs mentioned above tend to have robust evolutionary roots so that the victory of individuals and groups can be maintained (Spoor & Williams, 2007).

A signal that shows if things are not boded well for the individuals concerning these needs is a system in which ostracism is detected in its earliest stage and simplest form (Williams & Zadro, 2001). That signal or indication is believed to be a pain. When we know that ostracism arises from a friendly instead of an unfriendly source, the reflexive response to ostracism is pain.

Ostracism has aversive effects that are limited to our thoughts, behaviors, and beyond. It has been investigated by Eisenberger et al. (2003) that ostracism has a role in producing neurological activity that has been linked with physical pain traditionally. The memories relating to ostracism can be relived easily as being painful. It is considered as painful as severe back pain and childbirth. Ostracized individuals also feel maladaptive cardiovascular responses like higher blood pressure (Stroud et al., 2000; Zadro, 2004).

Considering ostracism's powerful and intuitive effects, the fear of being ostracized is aggravated, leading to altered social behavior. Many other domains of social influence are invaded by the fear caused. For example, normative influence is a crucial motive for conformity. This motive is about choosing to conform to others' perceptions or attitudes even when it is evident that such perceptions or attitudes are not correct. The fear behind this notion is that rejection and ostracism will be the outcome if one does not conform. Authority obedience, bystander apathy, and compliance that are not rational may also be motivated by fear of disapproval and ultimate ostracism.

There are other domains where fear of ostracism is used strategically during advertisements to promote buying products that will reduce the options of ostracism and rejection. To advance careers and elude ostracism, people in organizations tend to evade whistleblowing. The silent treatment in dyadic ostracism is a punishment in interpersonal communication. As far as where conflict resolution is concerned, the threat of ostracism is frequently used to spur negotiations and resolve conflicts.

When assessing the ostracism episode, several factors matter, for example, the role of traits and predispositions, subsequent attributions, and appraisals of ostracized individuals. These would also assist in determining how long the episode of ostracism remains upsetting and what kind of actions might be taken to support the dissatisfied needs effectively. Similarly, some situational factors play an essential role at the time when cognitive deliberation has taken

place. Thus, following ostracism, there are at least two divergent response paths. The first path includes actions to recover thwarted needs of belonging and self-esteem. The second path contains measures to recover the thwarted need for a belonging and meaningful existence.

It has been shown by ostracized individuals that they pay attention to and remember social information much more than included individuals as they feel more sensitive (Gardner et al., 2000). Social and emotional inconsistencies are felt more by such individuals (Pickett et al., 2004). There is a likelihood that ostracized individuals unconsciously mimic a new person, mainly when that new person belongs to the in-group member in a subsequent encounter (Lakin & Chartrand, 2005).

Ostracized individuals tend to comply (Carter & Williams, 2005), cooperate (Ouwerkerk et al., 2005), conform (Williams et al., 2000), work more challenging for the group (Williams & Sommer, 1997), strive to reconnect interpersonally (Maner et al., 2007) and extend fondness for new groups (Wheaton, 2001). Thus, the patterns of their social susceptibility are apparent. Collectively, there is considerable evidence supporting the notion that individuals who suffer from ostracism will strive to pay enough consideration to others and also place themselves in favor of others. Consequently, one's level of belonging and self-respect would be increased concerning such behaviors.

There is considerable research focused on the behavioral reactions following ostracism, and these behavioral reactions aim to improve social inclusion. However, other research studies found that individuals appear less helpful when ostracized (Twenge et al., 2007). In addition, ostracized individuals behave aggressively (Williams & Cairns, 2006).

However, what is the function of such antisocial behaviors? Perhaps such negative actions at the macro level are uncommon but very evident. They are likely to provide a balance to hinder the practicing and overuse of ostracism indiscriminately. What does an ostracized individual accrue after lashing out? Antisocial reactions serve two functions. The first function states that with aggression, an ostracized individual reclaims control over the social environment (Tedeschi, 2001). Hence, if ostracism prevents control, answering aggressively can help reinstate or strengthen the sense of control. The second function states that as ostracized individuals feel invisible, they may also respond aggressively.

It is understood from both patterns of reaction that these are attempts aimed at fortifying thwarted needs. However, the dominant propensity is to correct behaviors so that inclusion can be considered by the ostracizing group

(Baumeister & Leary, 1995). When individuals feel like losing and have no voice, they may resort to aggression without concern for future consequences. Such a return to aggression is used to fortify control and recognition because the individuals cannot attract attention.

The social psychological research on ostracism has been very enlightening and constructive. It has been established that these are negative interpersonal behaviors that lead to distress. Now it is further added to our knowledge that a) Individuals face a knee-jerk reflexive reaction because of ignorance and exclusion, b) ostracism leads to social pain, and c) responses that are the outcome of ostracism varies as they are dependent on what kind of needs the person is attempting to strengthen. Therefore, few persons pursue approval because of ostracism, whereas others choose to pursue revenge.

2.2 WORKPLACE AGGRESSION

The consensus on *workplace aggression* holds that it involves hostile acts in the workplace with the intent to harm in ways the intended targets are motivated to avoid (Aquino & Thau, 2009). This definition encompasses four themes that are central to it. Firstly, aggression includes behavior that is goal-directed and intentional. Secondly, aggression covers the intention to inflict harm. Thirdly, it includes direct or indirect actions pointing to other human beings. Fourthly, aggressive' targets have the motivation to avoid such hostile acts, so such behavior is not longed-for or invited by them. Competition, limited resources, time constraints, incompatibility, unattainable objectives, and other work pressures at organizations, just like in any other social setting, urge people to commit aggression against colleagues, subordinates, and even higher authorities.

The empirical research examines how various organizational factors affect employees' vulnerability to workplace aggression. The nature of the work performed in the organization is one factor in determining susceptibility toward workplace aggression. According to Mikkelsen & Einarsen's (2001) research, employees in a manufacturing company are more prone to bullying and workplace aggression than in hospitals. Einarsen & Skogstad (1996) conducted an extensive survey of employees from fourteen Norwegian organizations and found that employees of private organizations faced more bullying than those of public organizations.

Industrial workers are more likely to be bullied and are more prone to workplace aggression. This has been endorsed by the investigators as well. Based on their investigation, industrial workers reported higher numbers of

bullying cases. During six months, about 17 percent of the employees reported bullying cases from the industrial sector, which was comparatively higher than those reported by psychologists and university employees.

However, Salin (2001) put forward a contradictory statement based on a survey conducted among Finnish employees from various organizations. He found that public organizations' employees face more bullying than the employees of private organizations. However, this difference was insignificant. Hubert & van Veldhoven (2001) surveyed eleven different types of organizations and found that the workers of sectors such as industry, public administration, local government, and education were more likely to become the victims of aggression by their colleagues and boss. Whereas the employees belonging to the sectors such as financial institutions and business services reported fewer aggression cases.

Workplace settings where the employees are engaged in frequent interactions and work interdependently are more prone to be victimized; this has been considered one logical prediction about workplace aggression. The nature of occupation and work environment varies from organization to organization, even within the same industrial sector. Therefore, the researchers have studied and analyzed particular aspects of the work environment.

According to (Zapf et al., 1996), employees who are dominated by and have less control over their work are more likely to be mobbed or bullied (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004). According to (Aquino et al., 1999), such employees are more prone to be directly or indirectly victimized by coworkers. According to research conducted by (Vartia, 1996), the cases of bullying are high when the nature of work is monotonous and lacks variability and meaning. Cases of Victimization have been reported to be higher where there are stressful and competitive work environments (Coyne et al., 2003). Such work environments also lead to role ambiguity (Jennifer et al., 2003), role conflict (Skogstad et al., 2007), greater workloads (Quine, 2001), and high cooperation requirements (Zapf et al., 1996).

Einarsen and Skogstad (1996) state that male-dominated work environments lead to more victimization cases. Various organizational practices and work environments are the factors causing institutionalized bullying. A survey conducted by Liefoghe and Davey (2001) among employees also supports this statement. The organizational practices leading to institutionalized bullying include organizational control, such as rules and regulations to keep a check on the performance and the means of punishment for failure to perform. This makes a distinctive claim that the organization, not the individuals, is responsible for bullying.

Negative affect increases the tendency of the individual to suffer from negative psychological states such as sorrow, hostility, and nervousness. These psychological states are different from depression. Instead, they are considered subclinical. Many studies have examined the link between negative affect and workplace aggression regarding organizational behavior. The research results indicate a good relationship between negative affect and workplace aggression (Hepworth & Towler, 2004). Workplace aggression ensues between the supervisor and subordinate and between coworkers and colleagues in the workgroup (Glomb & Liao, 2003). In addition, the effects of perceived injustice on retaliatory and revengeful behaviors are also controlled by the negative effect (Skarlicki et al., 1999).

Persons with low self-esteem are extra susceptible to suffer aggression in general. This has been endorsed by Anderson & Bushman (2002) in their research. A valid and viable link exists between workplace aggression and self-esteem (Inness et al., 2005). The nature of self-esteem must be taken into notice as it is overblown or uneven self-esteem, similar to narcissism, is more prone to envisage aggression if self-esteem of such nature is endangered (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

Some individuals are inclined to react to the aggression and take it as a provocation to respond (Dill et al., 1997). According to research, anger and aggression are correlated with each other. (e.g., Glomb & Liao, 2003; Hepworth & Towler, 2004; Parkins et al., 2006). The Trait of anger is the product of workplace aggression and an antagonistic personality. Workplace aggression can also be predicted by personal attitudes that consider revenge or retaliation normal or acceptable behavior.

As discussed above, a consistent factor in predicting aggression is the supposed incitement or stimulation. This is closely related to causal reasoning (Bing et al., 2007) or cognitive appraisal, which triggers interpersonal events. The relation between aggression and perceptions of the hostile event is indicated by several studies (e.g., Epps & Kendall, 1995). Various researchers have tested and examined the relationship between workplace aggression and individual differences, and the relationship has been considered a tool to predict workplace aggression. This supposition has been challenged by Geddes & Callister (2007). They believe that in some cases, the higher level of anger expression proves beneficial for the organization leading to a productive and fruitful organizational and personal outcome.

According to social learning theory, it has been accepted that early exposure to aggression has significant repercussions for the enactment of

aggression. The research by Greenberg & Barling (1999) reveals that the current aggression against supervisors and coworkers has been predicted by a history of aggression (Inness et al., 2005). Each of these personal variables can well control the effects of the supposed relational incitement.

Four types of workplace aggression are classified based on the committee's relationship with the victim (Braverman, 1999). The first type of workplace aggression occurs when the committee has no legitimate relationship with the organization or the targeted employees. The sole purpose of the perpetrator is to commit a criminal act which may include crimes such as shoplifting, armed robbery, etc. Perpetrators of this kind usually enter the work environment to commit such crimes. According to Sygnatur & Toscano (2000), more than 65% of the killings at the workplace occur due to the workplace crimes such as robbery. In addition, approximately 71% of the public servants reported violence from clients, residents, or other members of society, whereas only 34% reported violence from their coworkers.

The risk of aggression is increased by certain factors, including interaction with the public, working alone or in groups, money-related matters, etc. The second type of workplace aggression occurs when the perpetrator has a legitimate connection with the organization. The offender in this category may be a customer, client, inmate, student, or patient. Approximately 60% of nonfatal workplace homicides occur due to this aggression (Peek-Asa & Howard, 1999).

In the context of occupation, employees responsible for providing services, including education, care, or advice, are more prone to become the victim of assault (LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002). In this case, the assault is committed by the customers, clients, patients, or inmates when they face stress, insecurity, or frustration (Lamberg, 1996). The third type of aggression takes place when the offender is an insider. In this case, the perpetrator may be a current or former employee who commits aggression against a past or present employee.

Media usually focus on the sub-ordinate-supervisor aggression. However, the aggression committed by the insider, such as an organization employee who commits aggression against another employee, has received excellent research attention. When the employees are the ones who commit aggression, then the aggression can be predicted by examining specific work experiences or situational factors which trigger aggression.

Various situational factors trigger Employees' workplace aggression. Such factors include investigation (Greenberg & Barling, 1999), job stress (e.g.,

Glomb, 2002), unfairness (Baron et al., 1999), over-controlling (Dupre & Barling, 2006), and supervision that is obnoxious (Inness et al., 2005). Workplace aggression and bullying can also be accounted for as role stressors, including role conflict and ambiguity (Einarsen et al., 1994). According to Hershcovis et al. (2007), role conflict has considerably projected workplace aggression. The fourth and last type of aggression ensues when the perpetrator has a present or earlier legitimate association with an organization employee. In this type of aggression, the offender may be a previous husband or wife, kin, friend, or consociate.

According to Tjaden & Thoennes (2000), approximately 25% of women have reported partner violence, whereas 8% of men have reported partner violence cases. According to Duhar (2001), between 1 to 3 percent of all assaults are committed by intimate acquaintances of the victim. Partner violence has substantial repercussions for both the workplace and the individual. Therefore, it can be concluded that the assumption that most workplace aggression occurs in supervisor-subordinate relationships is incorrect. The reality is that aggression in the workplace can be predicted by various factors and can involve players other than the supervisor and the subordinate (Inness et al., 2008).

Workplace aggression research has come up with considerable knowledge, including several meta-analyses. Hershcovis et al. (2007) investigated the target-specific nature of aggression with its differential predictors. Berry et al. (2007) developed an understanding of the nomological net of workplace aggression. Bowling and Beehr (2006) build an attribution and reciprocity-based model that explains the linkage between aggression and its potential causes and consequences. Hershcovis & Barling (2010) highlighted the outcomes of workplace aggression from different perpetrators. Hershcovis (2011) clarified the manner of conceptualization of workplace aggression.

Workplace aggression has a broad domain, and various constructs have been amplified in the past fifteen years. Within multiple labels (e.g., incivility, workplace deviance, and social undermining), the vast research area on aggression has explored different outcomes, predictors, and mechanisms that would play a crucial role in explaining these relationships. Workplace aggression includes bifurcated literature, with one research body investigating the perspective of the perpetrator (or actor) and another research body investigating the perspective of the target (or victim) with few exceptions (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). However, Fox and Spector (2005) emphasized the collaboration of these two kinds of literature.

We now see much more diversity in the conceptualizations of workplace aggression because of increasing interest in it. For instance, according to some,

aggression is a retaliatory behavior exhibited in reaction to an unfair situation (Skarlicki et al., 1999). Others observe aggression as a socially deviant response (Robinson & Bennett, 1995), disrupting organizational norms and threatening organizational well-being. Few researchers label the construct of aggression as counterproductive and antisocial (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Fox & Spector, 2005; Robinson & O’Leary-Kelly, 1998). The identified targets in each measure vary even though the primary act of aggression is similar.

There are several forms of aggression. Therefore, various researchers have made efforts to categorize workplace aggression. Baron (1993) offered three levels of aggression, and he also observed that every higher level incorporates more damaging behaviors than the previous level. These levels of aggression are a) the use of offensive language, withholding cooperation, and spreading rumors and gossip; b) harsh arguments with the boss, coworkers, and customers, feelings of maltreatment, and verbal threats; and c) regular exhibitions of extreme anger, use of weapons, the commission of murder, physical fights, arson, and damaging property. Buss (1961) classified the forms of aggression into three dimensions: active-passive, direct–indirect, and physical–verbal. Likewise, a Workplace violence spectrum has been suggested by Mantell (1994) and involves overt, covert, and hazardous behaviors. Baron and Neuman (1996) have recognized forty aggressive behaviors from past research (Buss, 1961; Bjorkqvist et al., 1994). Accordingly, a forty-item scale was generated to evaluate the frequency of these aggressive behaviors.

It has been observed that workplace aggression is very costly to organizations globally as each year, it affects the core business, causing millions of dollars in losses (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006). It is also not without a harmful impact on individuals, families, and society. Workplace aggression and organizational aggression are different; in the latter, the target of aggression is the organization, for instance, the destruction of organizational property or equipment (Hershcovis et al., 2007).

Aggressive behaviors are highly prevalent among workplace employees and often result in severe disruptions of occupation (Fiset & Robinson, 2018). Workplace aggression includes many behaviors, ranging from physical attacks (e.g., slapping or punching) to verbal acts (e.g., spreading rumors or insulting someone). In addition, there are various situations in which aggression can occur. Therefore, understanding aggression in the workplace is one of the critical domains. Acts of aggression can hold any likely combination of the three dichotomies. Two widely used dimensions of aggression are overt and covert (Kaukiainen et al., 2001).

2.2.1 Overt Aggression

The behavior is best characterized as overtly aggressive when you are determined to have something and are direct, clear, and open in your intentions. Many researchers have defined overt aggression as *aggressive* behaviors (i.e., homicide, abusive verbal exchanges, slamming doors, pounding fists, throwing objects, etc.) (Baron & Neuman, 1998; Kaukiainen et al., 2001). Overt aggression comprises the acts that are open and hostile, like fighting, threats, and bullying (Conner, 2004). According to Bjorkqvist et al. (1994), overt aggression involves open intentions and does not hide the aggressive intent; it is physical, direct, and active (Baron & Neuman, 1998).

A wide-ranging research has inspected workplace aggression. Flannery (1996) look over many studies concentrating on overt aggression in the workplace, like assault and homicide. Physical and psychological pain is inflicted by these types of aggression. They occur mainly in face-to-face situations and are highly emotional (Kaukiainen et al., 2001). Anger is expressed openly, and the perpetrator is easily identifiable in their intentions (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994).

The negative consequences of overt aggression are apparent immediately and include strong emotional resonance (Zuffiano et al., 2018). This form of aggression carries the significance of temperament and involves an interplay of biological and environment-related factors to identify different individuals' tendencies. Severe disruptions among familial, social, occupational, and societal functions are part of such aggression.

2.2.2 Covert Aggression

The behavior is best characterized as covertly aggressive when you are out to dominate or control but are subtle and devious enough to hide your intentions. Many researchers have addressed covert aggression. For example, Conner (2004) defined *covert aggression* as hideous and sneaky, like stealing and arson. These behaviors are less visible or vaguer in form (e.g., not responding to phone calls and email messages, withholding needed resources or information, and numerous forms of sabotage) (Baron & Neuman, 1998; Kaukiainen et al., 2001). According to (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994), it involves behavior that is intended to disguise the target's aggressive behavior or hostile intentions. Typically, covert aggression is verbal, indirect, and passive (Baron & Neuman, 1998).

Covert aggression is often called cold aggression and is carried to the target through the adverse responses of others; the target encounters suffering at the end of a chain of interceding events and persons (Buss, 1961). This type of aggression is disguised, and the perpetrator is often unaccused and undisclosed. In covert aggression, it is complex to tell if the perpetrator is furious (Björkqvist et al., 1994). Intentions to harm others are hidden by the perpetrator. The victim is unclear whether any harm has been intended or not.

In the current study, we will examine two types of aggression (overt and covert) in response to workplace ostracism. These types are the most widely used and an important distinction closely associated with perceptions of intent.

2.3 WORKPLACE OSTRACISM AND WORKPLACE AGGRESSION

The desire to connect socially is pivotal among humans, and they are prone to experience negative psychological, behavioral, and physical consequences once this need is thwarted (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Ostracism is a universal negative social experience that thwarts the need for social connection (Williams, 2009a). In addition, social cues suggesting that one is relationally devalued can elicit feelings of ostracism (Bockler et al., 2014; Klages & Wirth, 2014; Koudenburg et al., 2011; Wirth et al., 2010).

In response to workplace ostracism, individuals behave either pro-socially or anti-socially (Xu et al., 2015). The temporal model of ostracism (Williams, 2009b) predicts that there are processes and responses in response to ostracism at three stages of the reaction, i.e., a) reflexive, b) reflective c) resignation. The response of reflexive pain threatens the four fundamental needs, i.e., the need to belong, self-esteem, control, and complete, meaningful existence, leading to coping responses. Constant exposure to ostracism eventually leads to resignation, depression, and helplessness. This model suggests that fortifying belonging and self-esteem often leads to prosocial behaviors. In contrast, the fortification of control and existence can lead to antisocial behaviors.

One of the most significant predictors of employees' attitudes and behavior is the psychological work environment and climate (Parker et al., 2003). A positive work environment seems important for positive behavioral outcomes, and a hostile work environment may lead to adverse behavioral outcomes. Ostracism experienced at the workplace is considered a toxic social behavior that can badly impact individual and organizational outcomes (Ferris et al., 2016; Sarwar et al., 2020).

One of the essential desires of human beings is to fit in with others, including all aspects of society. The place of work where individuals spend most of their time is also a prominent part of their desire. Workers want to formulate and uphold high-quality relationships as they are represented as social entities (Caillier, 2017). Considering this scenario, organizations are provoked to devote substantial resources and time to enrich the worth of relationships within their boundaries. However, keeping pace with high-quality relationships throughout the organization is problematic because it includes diverse individuals. Therefore, problems like ostracism are likely to arise in organizations that may lead to aggression.

A sense of ostracism or ignorance is a negative characteristic of many organizations. Ostracized employees need help to gain entry into social interactions. Such ostracized feelings can be much more damaging as it undermines the usual need to belong. Despite the overlapping of ostracism with other deviant behaviors at the workplace, conceptually, it is different and involves the potential to explain additional variance in employees' work outcomes. Many studies have highlighted workplace ostracism's emotional and physical outcomes (Bedi, 2021; Howard et al., 2020; MacDonald & Leary, 2005; Stroud et al., 2000; Smith & Williams, 2004;). Other studies have identified the effect on employee behavior, revealing that ostracized employees exhibit antisocial behaviors and aggression is stimulated (Twenge et al., 2007). According to Bedi (2021), workplace ostracism is a threatening experience among employees that leads to dysfunctional work outcomes, thus causing an increased level of deviance.

The present study is interested in the antisocial behavior of employees, i.e., workplace aggression from the target perspective, as no research to date has explored how and when employees exhibit overt and covert aggression following workplace ostracism. Ostracism provokes an violent reaction towards the source of ostracism (Buckley et al., 2004; Chow et al., 2008; Chen & Li, 2018; Van Beest et al., 2012) as well as passersby (Gaertner et al., 2008) and innocent targets (Twenge & Campbell, 2003; Wesselmann et al., 2010). By just recalling a moment when one had been ostracized is sufficient to induce hostile responses (Riva et al., 2011). There has been considerable research determining the effects of ostracism or subsequent behavior of individuals, precisely aggressive behavior. Workplace aggression in its different forms, including deviance, antisocial behavior, or retaliation, is a noteworthy issue met by organizations.

Workplace aggressive behaviors have been described in various ways. For instance, Giacalone and Greenberg (1997) refer to antisocial workplace

behavior as employee behavior that intentionally harms the organization and colleagues. On the other hand, workplace deviance is described as the deliberate behavior of employees concerned with the violation of organizational norms & threatens the organization and coworkers (Robinson & Bennett, 1997). In line with this explanation, workplace aggression is the intentional behavior of employees to harm coworkers and the organization (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Martinko & Zellars, 1998).

It is argued that exposure to workplace ostracism is a risk factor for employees because of its negative impact on targets' attitudes and behavior, which may ultimately result in overt and covert dimensions of workplace aggression.

2.4 CONSTRUCTS OF THE MECHANISM

There are two mechanisms proposed in this study. The first mechanism (under COR) comprises the mediator of job tension and moderators of the need for affiliation and neuroticism. The second mechanism (under AET) comprises the mediator of hurt feelings and the moderator of neuroticism.

2.4.1 Job Tension

The stressors' impact on the workplace is reflected by *job tension*, defined as the workers' psychological reaction to disturbances in the objective or perceived work environment (Chisholm et al., 1983). It has been a part of many studies reflecting the stress effect (McAllister et al., 2018). However, there is a difference between job tension and job stress. The latter originates from certain situations in the environment or an event that causes a stressful state (e.g., work overload). On the other hand, the former happens within the body in reaction to job stress as a psychological reaction (Macan, 1994). For example, individuals establish job tension when faced with challenging goals followed by the depletion of resources (McAllister et al., 2017).

It involves pressures that come from requirements at the job. It also comprises stress or anxiety and relief from workplace quitting (Taylor, 1953). Job tension co-existence with stress, which ascends when individuals perceive not meeting the work demands being made on them and when there is also a threat to their well-being. Physical symptoms such as digestive disruption, tiredness, and frustration result from job tension (House & Rizzo, 1972b). Concerning the present context, job tension, and occupational stress are alike

(Motowidlo et al., 1986). The workplace's culture and characteristics may significantly influence job tension at the organizational level.

The feelings of stress and anxiety are augmented by job tension which hampers one's ability to fulfill job demands (House & Rizzo, 1972). Feelings of this kind arise when individuals develop perceptions that they cannot cope with the demands of the job or with the terrorization of their well-being. Many factors in the workplace influence job tension, including dysfunctional behavior of coworkers, incivility at work leading, and personal feelings of depression and anxiety (Robinson et al., 2014). Furthermore, when the atmosphere at the workplace worsens or becomes unfavorable, it may be a predictor of increased job tension.

2.4.2 Hurt Feelings

Hurt feelings refer to the outcomes of events that connote relational devaluation, which corresponds to the perception that another individual does not regard his or her relationship with the person to be as important, close, or valuable as the person desires (Leary et al., 1998). This perception is based on the belief that others openly wish to disassociate from the individual by avoidance, exclusion, or reducing their dealings with them. Characterize hurt feelings; it is an undifferentiated adverse effect and is often complemented by the emotions of hostility and anxiety (Chavez et al., 2019). The victim's distress strongly correlates with feelings of rejection (Ren *et al.*, 2018).

An interpersonal emotion is one of the experiences that persons colloquially call hurt feelings (Ferris et al., 2019). Certain interpersonal events cause psychological hurt and feel like physical pain or bodily injury. The feelings of the persons are hurt by a wide variety of circumstances, one of which constitutes ostracism.

2.4.3 Need for Affiliation

The *need for affiliation* refers to the individual's desire for social contact or belongingness (Rybnicek et al., 2019; Wiesenfeld et al., 2001). In line with the need for affiliation, it is proposed that persons develop a different propensity to interpret themselves as independent or interdependent, i.e., distinct from or related to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Wiesenfeld et al., 2001).

Persons with a high need for affiliation presume to receive social rewards from harmonious relationships as they tend to reflect themselves as

interdependent with others (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2011; Wiesenfeld et al., 2001). These persons have importance for group memberships and are strengthened in organization identification (Scheier & Carver, 1992; Wiesenfeld et al., 2001). They also derive pleasure from close relationships (Wang et al., 2018). Moreover, persons with a low need for affiliation possess little fundamental need for belongingness as they might assess themselves as independent from others. This need involves the desire to participate in interactive and cooperative activities and provides higher leadership ratings (Rybnicek et al., 2019).

2.4.4 Neuroticism

Neuroticism involves the propensity to experience negative emotions such as anger, sadness, and fear (Costa & McCrae, 1987). It comes up with the continuum of individual differences, such as low levels representing the stability of emotions and high levels representing sensitivity to harmful stimuli, moodiness, and nervousness (Borghuis et al., 2019; Nevid & Rathus, 2005). It is a socially unfavorable individual characteristic and regards interactions with others as threatening (Anthony et al., 2007). Neurotic individuals in the workplace exhibit low levels of relationship with satisfaction and stability over time (Taggart et al., 2019).

Highly neurotic individuals tend to engage in interpersonal conflicts and consider them emotionally draining. Such individuals are sensitive to rejection and imply higher trait anxiety, maladjustment, and emotional instability. Neuroticism also leads to unfavorable life outcomes and poor physical and mental health. They interpret usual and unintended interpersonal ignorance as a deliberate rejection (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Horney, 1937). In a situation of threat, neurotics often express hostile behavior and emotions to others (Elliot et al., 2019).

A negative linkage of neuroticism with a high-stress tolerance level leads to augmented emotional distress. When an individual is in contact with an individual high in neuroticism, they are more likely to experience conflicts in the workplace (Barrick et al., 1998). Neurotic individuals also may feel mental illness (Friedman & Booth-Kewley, 1987). According to Kardum & Krapic (2001), neuroticism has weakened individuals' coping mechanisms, ultimately leading to adverse outcomes. Creating doubts about others and feeling discomfort towards unwanted stimuli are characteristics of individuals who score high on neuroticism (Liao et al., 2013).

CHAPTER 3

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH MODELS

This chapter includes two research models underpinning two theories. The first research model is examined through the lens of COR theory, and the second is examined underpinning AET theory.

3.1 CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES THEORY

Resources are necessary to fulfill the central needs of individuals. According to the conservation of resources theory, resources represent individuals' total capacity to accomplish their essential requirements (Hobfoll, 2001; Neves & Cunha, 2018; Wang et al., 2011). The resources include those objects, conditions, energies, or characteristics which are personal and have value for the individual (Hobfoll, 1989). These resources are motivational, social, physical, and cognitive (Gao et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2011). Considering the importance of these resources, individuals always try to attain, retain, and guard such valued resources whenever they feel endangered by resource loss (Hobfoll, 1989).

According to the review of Hobfoll et al. (2018), COR theory involves cognitions comprised of an evolutionary-based built-in and potent bias under which resource gain is underweighted, and resource loss is over weighted. In line with this view, it has been postulated by COR theory that stress arises i) with central resources that are vulnerable to loss, ii) with central resources that are lost, or iii) when individuals fail to attain resources despite putting in many efforts. COR theory explains more of human behavior as a motivational theory.

It emphasizes that humans have an evolutionary need to gain and protect resources for their existence, as it is also essential to the behavioral genetics of humans. In addition, humans need to gain and protect personal strengths and social bonds like other social animals. Compared to other animals, humans can build complex tools so that their survival can be ensured, and they also have the benefit of complex language through which they communicate. The power to communicate also aids the social bonding and survival of humans.

Therefore, essential resources are employed by people so that they can respond to stress and can also create a pool of sustaining resources to utilize in the future. Moreover, different organizations, people, and families develop the sense that they can meet stressful challenges when they gain and retain social, personal, and material resources. COR theory possesses a critical tenet that states that appraisal of the individual is unimportant to what is mainly valued and universal among people. These generally valued resources are a sense of purpose, health, family, well-being, self-esteem, and meaning in life. The expression of these appraisals differs culturally, but the same core elements are always reflected.

In organizations, the theory of COR is critical to advancing the understanding of stress as it is principally the opposite of the stress-appraisal theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984). The stress-appraisal theory follows the principle that what is stressful is what is professed as stressful. However, this theory is considered limited because, according to the definition, one has to wait for the event to occur to identify it as stressful. Due to this information, stress-appraisal theories are regarded as non-predictive or ideographic. Additionally, it is stated by stress-appraisal theory implicitly that stress pertains to the individual perception, while the theory of COR accentuates the stressful nature of events objectively.

Keeping in view that social justice and attempts to reduce workplace maltreatment and sexual harassment are emphasized, the theory of Lazarus and Folkman is potentially blaming the victim, and individuals are put under the burden of addressing the stressful situation and adjusting their appraisals resultantly. However, taking into account legally, if mistreatment at the workplace is mainly a matter of appraisal, then the cases arising from it are named “frivolous.” Similarly, suppose the conditions at the workplace are only perceived as stressful, and in actuality, they are not. The focus of the intervention will be on appraisals and probably the grounds of those slanted cognitions.

There is a need for Individuals to alter their minds to combat such stressors essentially. To explain this more visibly, the argument that posits stress is what is considered stressful seems discriminatory and racist. In line with the understanding of organizational stress in today’s time, when there are micro aggressions, it infers that the victim does not just perceive subtle, racist, and sexist behaviors. However, it is real (Sue, 2010). Many stressors are subtle and may also be misperceived. The COR theory posits that intense, stressful conditions include objective elements about an event of life or series of events (for example event of divorce and firing is a cascade or series of events) that include a standard level of impact and are shared within a culture.

COR theory consists of a few principles; the first principle states that resource gain is less salient than resource loss. The types of resources are condition resources (for instance, seniority, employment, tenure), energy resources (for instance, money, credit, knowledge), object resources (for instance, working tools, car), and personal resources (for instance, personal traits including optimism and self-efficacy, essential skills).

The only stress theory is the COR theory, which involves the momentum component and considering the effect magnitude. COR theory infers that resource loss, as compared to resource gain, is more potent in magnitude. It also impacts people faster and with increased speed over time as individuals are products of evolution, so the loss is primarily in human systems. When considered evolutionary, even when losses were little, they were tied to failure to survive. The feature of momentum may also possess an evolutionary basis because slow processes might not come to notice quickly. Still, they are enough to produce survival-threatening damage when they are identified.

Under the second principle of COR theory, there should be an ongoing process of resource investment from individuals to attain resources, safeguard resources from loss and recuperate from losses. To overcome all this, direct replacement of resources is required in how savings are utilized to pay for lost income. In addition, there should be an indirect investment of resources to increase employees' skills and prepare them for a challenging business environment.

When it comes to the third principle of COR theory, it is paradoxical. According to this principle, resource loss decreases in salience with the perspective of resource gain. When the circumstances of resource loss are high, resource gain appears to be more significant. There is a corollary that matches it (corollary 1). In line with this corollary, the individuals with more significant resources are less exposed to loss of resources, and they possess a high capability of managing resource gain. On the other hand, individuals with fewer resources can infuse resources to have a substantial impact in attracting strength and momentum. Notably, this is the only theory of stress that involves this kind of interaction.

According to the fourth principle of COR theory, when the resources of the individuals are deficient or extended, they tend to become aggressive and enter a defensive mode which is often unreasonable. Despite being the least researched, this principle of COR theory possesses high explanatory power. This can be an innate evolutionary strategy, just like other aspects of the COR Theory. The built-in evolutionary strategy may have two modes: defensive (protecting the resources) or exploratory (looking for other alternate resources).

Aggressive responses can change the grouping of stressors and work as it leads to new coping strategies.

In addition to the principles, the COR theory also put forward numerous vital corollaries. Similar to the principles, these corollaries also play a fundamental role in making precise, diverse, and multi-dimensional predictions. Moreover, they also help formulate multifaceted strategies that counter primary stressful conditions at the individual and organizational levels.

According to corollary 1, the possession and loss of resources are vital to susceptibility and robustness. Those possessing more excellent resources have less fear of losing them and have more potential to gain resources. On the other hand, individuals and organizations with scarce resources are more prone to losing resources and less able to gain resources.

Corollary 2 gives a spiral form of resource loss. It is irrefutable that resource loss is more potent than resource gain, and owing to this fact, stress emerges when resources are lost. Individuals and organizations have scarce resources at each iteration of the stress spiral to counterbalance the resource loss; as a result spiral of resource loss is created, which drives more strength and energy from the losses. The stress theory proposed is the most viable one as it entails detailed and comprehensive predictions, which no other stress theory provides. Moreover, the predictions offered under this theory are testable and reliable in their implementation.

According to corollary 3, resource gain, just like resource loss, also has a spiraling nature. Resource gain is less potent than resource loss; therefore, the spiral of resource gain is also weaker and consumes more time to develop. The iterations of the gain spiral are also slow. To counterbalance the loss, individuals and organizations must adopt it. The spirals of the resource gain attain strength in conditions of high losses. In other words, there are higher possibilities of building a resource gain cycle under high-stress conditions where chances of losses are also at the apex.

The COR theory of the interrelationship between resources has developed considerable understanding. It has also formed an understanding of how different contexts and environments produce productive or unproductive grounds for forming, preserving, and limiting resources. The concept of caravan appears in contrast to the emphasis of research, in general, to put attention on either one resource at a time (social support, self-efficacy) or assumption can be made that resources are static, ignoring the fact that how they are exasperated, imparted and fostered.

According to Hobfoll (2011), resources exist in packs or caravans for individuals and organizations instead of in isolation. Resources tend to appear as co-travelers because they result from learned adaptation and nurturance. Self-efficacy, self-esteem, and positive thinking result from ordinary environmental and developmental circumstances; therefore, they are closely linked. A supportive and nurturing social setup is responsible for the emergence of personal resources correlated to supportive and compassionate families and working conditions.

There are ecological conditions where the resources of the people exist. The ecological conditions are responsible for either fostering and nurturing or blocking and limiting the creation of resources. The organizations and the diversified culture play a significant and pivotal role in this process. However, this analysis at the organizational level needs to be addressed by the scholars of the organizations because their prime focus is on an individual level. The organizational and cultural conditions deeply impact the resources of the individuals. For instance, the resources of the varying classes of people, including women and other ethnic minorities, are the outcome of their organizational and cultural conditions. Social and environmental stage settings can either produce stability and resilience or cause instability and fragility. Similarly, social comfort and social discomfort are also the outcomes of social and environmental conditions. Such favorable or unfavorable conditions create tolerance and intolerance among individuals.

The theory of COR offers an intuitive viewpoint to comprehend the impact of workplace ostracism. As an interpersonal stressor, the social resources of the target are threatened by ostracism. Such social resources are considered assets that can be drawn upon in times of need, to cope with a challenging event, or to resolve a problem (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Given that these resources are limited, individuals try to protect, retain and establish resources as they discover it frightening when they view considerable damage to these valued resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). Most cases of depression result from resource loss (Hobfoll, 1989).

In line with COR theory, energy depletion is experienced by employees when they are prone to adversarial work circumstances such as ostracism. They may face many distractions that are enough to lessen their capability to fulfil their necessities at the job. When employees feel that their colleagues are helpful and they also involve them in daily held interactions, they are likely to feel more energized (Quinn et al., 2012). Furthermore, their energy drains out when they feel stressed due to work situations. In such a case, they are likely to pull their efforts and resources toward adverse activities, including agonizing and worrying (Quinn et al., 2012). Therefore, employees are prevented from gaining

the resources necessary to perform at work and meet their daily challenges due to the social isolation associated with workplace ostracism (Jones et al., 2009).

There is a significant challenge from workplace ostracism toward the resources that individuals can hold, and it also threatens the resources that are essential to aid them at work. (Leung et al., 2011). It leads to the protection mechanism of the individuals being activated. Firstly, individuals require resources to mobilize to counter ostracism. Secondly, there is less probability of replenishing their resources from other individuals, so, to refrain from further loss of resources, individuals may develop the perception of unceasing stress and can suffer enhanced resource loss that leads to several undesirable consequences. These resources can help individuals manage their daily work, so deprivation of such resources may lead individuals to develop more stress (Hobfoll, 1989).

3.1.1 The Mediation of Job Tension

Workplace ostracism plays a role in depleting individuals' resources and preventing them from gaining further resources. In the current research, workplace ostracism may lead to job tension for the target. Employing the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001), individuals may experience psychological strain due to resource loss and try to achieve, retain and guard valuable resources (Lyu et al., 2016). Recent work by (Chang et al., 2019) stated that when individuals experience workplace ostracism, they are prone to workplace stress, leading to less commitment and self-empowerment. At workplaces, a considerable loss of resources is instigated by ostracism, which lowers the individuals' capacity to meet demands and fulfilling expectations from work. Resultantly, job tension can be the outcome of workplace ostracism.

Workplace ostracism depletes the social resources of employees and also lowers the capacity to meet work demands. As ostracism is a negative social experience (Williams, 2009a), individuals face adverse psychological, behavioral, and physical outcomes when the need to connect socially is thwarted (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Furthermore, with such a considerable loss of resources, ostracized employees may fight at work which may lead to additional loss of resources at the workplace. Resultantly, workplace ostracism may incur resource loss that promotes job tension among employees (Zhu et al., 2017).

Such job tension is a risk factor for employees because of its adverse impact on the behavior and attitude of targets, which may ultimately result in overt aggression involving behaviors that are open in intentions and do not hide the aggressive intent. Overt aggression is physical, direct, and active. Similarly,

job tension among employees caused by workplace ostracism may also result in covert aggression involving behaviors that are intended to disguise the behavior that is aggressive or hostile intentions from the target. Typically, covert aggression is verbal, indirect, and passive.

Ostracized individuals work under excessive tension and often feel fretful and worried. Their sleeping habits and health may also be affected. When individuals differ with them they cannot stop getting into arguments. They cannot control the urge to strike another person in such conditions. And given enough provocation, they may also hit another person. They can also show mild and subtle aggression due to ostracism, like unjustly judging the work of others, backbiting, and spreading rumors.

Individuals strive to keep the remaining resources after depletion due to ostracism (Wu et al., 2012; Williams, 2001) and try to get different resources as a substitute. We argue that psychological tension among targets is created by perceived workplace ostracism, which may instigate them toward a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression (Duffy et al., 2006; Zhao et al., 2017). Therefore, the influence of workplace ostracism on a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression should be transferred via job tension.

H1: Job tension mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression.

3.1.2 The Moderation of Need for Affiliation

The desire of individuals for belongingness or social contact is related to the need for affiliation (Veroff & Veroff, 1980; Wiesenfeld et al., 2001). When individuals with a high need for affiliation can get close to others, they feel like they have accomplished something valuable (Gardner et al., 2000). One of their favorite pastimes is to develop a harmonious relationship with others, listening to them and relating to them on a one-to-one level. They enjoy the company of others and find satisfaction in forming new friendships with whomever they like.

Because of workplace ostracism, targets are socially disconnected and isolated from others which imposes a substantial threat to belongingness. When respect, love, importance, and appreciation are extended to employees, their sense of worth is highly conditioned (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019). Their sense of worth can be badly affected when their need to belong to others at the workplace is thwarted due to ostracism, resulting in aggravated job tension. It is proposed that the positive impact of workplace ostracism on job tension of employees can be more substantial for those in high need for affiliation since

such employees should be exhausted in social resources to a much higher degree.

Employees who are highly in need for affiliation can sense ostracism more effortlessly and may identify the ostracism as hurtful, which leads to a higher level of exhaustion of resources. Furthermore, in line with COR theory, higher resource loss elicits greater job tension. Therefore, when employees with a high degree of need for affiliation encounter workplace ostracism, they are likely to observe a more social and personal loss of resources and may experience higher levels of job tension. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis.

H2: The need for affiliation moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and job tension.

3.1.3 The Moderation of Neuroticism

As discussed above, individuals' social and personal resources are depleted because of workplace ostracism (Yang & Treadway, 2018). With such a resource loss, it is difficult for the targets to cope with the current demands at the workplace, which makes them stressed, leading to job tension. Highly neurotic employees will respond aggressively to the state of job tension created by workplace ostracism as they are more prone to experience anxiety and depression (Costa & McCrae, 1987; Schmitz et al., 2003), and there is a probability that they would involve in emotionally exhausting conflicts (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995).

Strain is when individuals sense their valuable resources are threatened (Spector, 2017). Drawing upon COR theory, ostracism impends employees' values, which they regard as an essential resource as they act as a guide for their behavior. Employees who are high in neuroticism are emotionally unstable and more reactive to stress caused by job stressors (Zhao & Xia, 2017). In response to stressful situations, such employees are likely to show strong emotional reactions that lead to emotional exhaustion and aggressive behaviors. We propose that the positive effect workplace ostracism has on overt aggression & covert aggression of employees can be more robust for those high in neuroticism.

Highly neurotic individuals are sensitive to undesirable stimuli (Nevid & Rathus, 2005); they are also sensitive to rejection and imply emotional instability. When employees are highly neurotic, they may exhibit a) overt

aggression and b) covert aggression via job tension. Hence, we propose the following:

H3: Neuroticism moderates the relationship between job tension and a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression.

3.1.4 Research Model Underpinning COR Theory

The following research model underpinning COR theory proposes that job tension mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression. The need for affiliation moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and job tension. Neuroticism moderates the relationship between job tension and a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression.

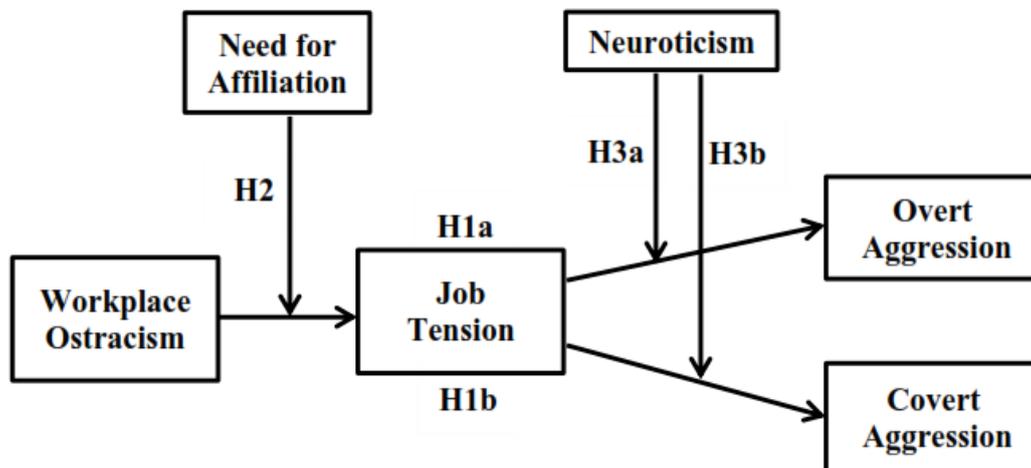


Figure 3.1: Research Model Underpinning COR Theory

3.2 AFFECTIVE EVENTS THEORY

Affective events theory (AET) (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) proposes that emotions play a central role in forecasting the behaviors of employees at the workplace. According to AET, the behavior of employees is contingent upon the exposure of employees to different kinds of events that takes place at work, as well as the emotional reactions produced by such events (Mitchell, 2018). So, AET explains the behavior of employees as a procedure that takes place over emotions, beginning with work event exposure and concluding with outcomes related to behaviors. The emphasis of AET is on the specific part of events that take place in a workplace, like uplifts and hassles and affects like negative or

positive emotions in forecasting the behavioral responses related to both events and emotions at the workplace (Judge et al., 2011; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

Wiess and Beal (2005) provided reflections on Affective events theory (AET). As explanatory constructs, there is a visible distinction between features and events. The central viewpoint of AET is that events lead to affective reactions. When people are prone to different incidents at the workplace, their reactions are often emotional. The literature on emotions admits that changes in emotional states are derived from events.

When it comes to the filtering process of personality, how events are construed, the comparative influence of positive and negative events, etc., differences of opinion occur. So, the instigator of changes in emotional states is an event. It has been noted by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) that most of the research on affect and satisfaction has focused on the association between environmental features and affective criteria. It has also been argued that there is a representation of a mismatch of construct types when the features are utilized to predict affect. Causal explanations are required by affect as it is a state that emphasizes changing circumstances. Therefore, the focus is on events.

AET has been founded on connecting work events and emotional reactions. Such a connection is just like a placeholder for the affect instigation procedures. The description of the existing literature on appraisal theories of emotion has been provided by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996). The description proposes that these theories guide the involved processes. Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) suggested that there is a way through which personality gets entry into the picture, and that way is by impelling reactions to events.

It has been established clearly that AET aims to motivate researchers to consider events as the leading causes of emotions and work phenomena. The overall intention of AET was to address researchers that they should pay greater attention to events and their structure, value of information, and construal. AET has a natural focus on work events. Even a brief study of this theory would make the idea obvious about job-related and non-job-related events that have the potential to instigate emotional states at the workplace leading to work-related consequences.

It has been consistently presented in various meta-analyses and reviews by 1996 that the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance is negligible. Resultantly, some organizational psychologists used to confuse satisfaction and affect and were hard-pressed to admit that there is a significant relationship between affect and performance. Therefore, the argument was built by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) that more precision could be added to

understanding how performance is influenced by affect after distinguishing the constructs of affect, i.e., emotions and mood from satisfaction, i.e., evaluative judgment. By doing this, a distinction was created between affect-driven and judgment-driven behaviors.

The behaviors, judgments, and affect-driven decisions have the immediate tendency to result in particular affective states. The proximal causes of these behaviors are the affective states. Such behaviors are time bound and coincident with those states temporally. The behaviors, judgments, or decisions that are judgment driven involve more enduring attitudes related to the job or organization. The proximal causes of these behaviors are evaluative judgments or attitudes. Although the macrostructure of AET suggests that there are actual affective states that have significant implications regarding performance, such affective states are relatively transient, instant, and changeable within persons over time.

Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) discussed the episodic structure of emotional experiences. The discrete emotions are subject to change during the episode, but the individual is occupied in intensified emotional engagement. It was implied but not stated explicitly to study the episodic structures of experiences of life generally. Here it is pointed toward the subjective starting and ending of emotional states and activities. The underlying assumption was that not just emotional life but life is also structured episodically.

AET has a crucial argument that behaviors relevant to performance were influenced by affective states directly. Such affective states have transitory nature. They would also render the consequences related to behavior to be time limited. Many literature reviews were presented on the behavioral consequences of moods and emotions, but the overall framework needed to be presented.

Nevertheless, the framework needs to develop a transitory performance construct, the purpose of which is to offer a structure of time for performance processes compatible with the structure of time for affective states. The resource allocation process is driven by episodic performance in turn. The interaction of regulatory resources, emotional states, and emotional regulation influences the allocation. Lastly, resource depletion and recovery processes are described to understand how the process of immediate emotions spill over to affect performance in episodes.

The personality constructs are an essential aspect in the study of affective experiences which is well recognized. The AET model suggests personality operating at several instances in the procedure where events provoke reactions that further affect the behavior. The topic has been discussed at length by Weiss

and Cropanzano (1996). The AET model provides guidance and paves the path for developing more practical process models. Weiss and Kurek (2003) offer a comprehensive discussion on it.

The types of constructs being studied lack coherence which is quite apparent. Moods and distinctive emotions characterize states. Change is a powerful feature of the state. The specific moments over time can easily be configured in the wake of change or when people move from one state to another. Experience serves as a guiding principle in this regard. Although the states are defined as time-specific constructs, the duration of the state may vary from a few moments to a few years.

Personality is a different type of construct. Contrary to the states, the significant characteristic of the personality is that they are pretty stable. Organizational psychologists prefer this essential feature of personality. Traits have a constant component. Unlike states, they are not time bound and are timeless characteristics of the people. When affect and personality are studied, the problem is identified immediately. The topic under question is how the states, moods, and emotions which are time-bound can be explained by trait constructs whose essential feature is stability.

Organizational researchers have solved this problem in multiple ways. The most likely adopted ways to solve the problem in question are the least interesting ones. One way is substituting the relatively stable affect-like constructs, which can result in authentic affective experiences. The essential feature of the personality is stability, so satisfaction, stress, tension, etc. can be theoretically and practically associated with it. Another way is to accumulate affective experiences over time. This is possible by collating the report of people about their affective inclinations and aggregated experience. Unfortunately, this process is not viable as it is likely to be concluded by error with in-person variability since the people's responses need more accuracy and authenticity.

According to Mischel and Shoda (1995, 1998), there are two traditions in the research on personality. The first tradition is related to the tradition of behavioral disposition. This tradition focuses on relating personality to behavioral consistencies by overlooking those behaviors and the within-person variability. In the I/O literature, this approach has been taken concerning personality and affect. There is another approach known as the meditational process approach that takes into account the within-person variability truly. During process explanations for behavior change, this approach carves a role for personality. The latter approach is the approach of choice for affect. Instead of analyzing whether there is the predictability of stability in moods and emotions, the multiple ways in which personality moves into the causal chain should be

looked at. This causal chain comprises behavioral choice, generation of emotions, regulation of emotions, etc.

The basic tenets of AET have been supported empirically by research since its development. For example, various researchers have investigated how emotional experiences, positive or negative, describe the impact of the work environment on employees' behavior comprising counterproductive workplace behaviors (Rodell & Judge, 2009; Yang & Diefendorff, 2009), withdrawal behaviors (Kiefer, 2005), job performance (Carlson et al., 2011) and organizational citizenship behaviors (Rodell & Judge, 2009).

The present study prolongs AET to the workplace ostracism literature to propose that workplace ostracism comprises one linkage in the process of events-emotions-behaviors. Consistent with the AET, employees react to a specific work event with emotion, and such affective reactions are significant determinants of employees' behaviors and attitudes (Lim et al., 2008; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Therefore, workplace ostracism is likely to create negative affective states, which upsurge the experience of stress and depletes the individual's resources (Leiter, 2013). So this creates an imbalance between job resources and job demands and increases the likelihood of hurt feelings.

We argue that workplace ostracism (event) is likely to prompt hurt feelings in employees at work, which provokes overtly and covertly aggressive behaviors, with the power of these relationships contingent upon neurotic employees.

3.2.1 The Mediation of Hurt Feelings

Employing the affective events theory suggests that there are specific work events to which employees react with emotion and that such affective reactions are essential determinants of employees' attitudes and behaviors (Lim et al., 2008; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). For example, silent treatment given to employees is often taken as hurting, as it causes high emotional arousal (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019). We propose that workplace ostracism is an adverse work event that can cause negative affective states (hurt feelings) due to social pain. People who are rejected may suffer negative emotions like anger, sadness, loneliness, hurt, and jealousy. The primary emotion that appears to be rejection-related is hurt feelings (MacDonald & Leary, 2005).

The hurt feeling strongly connects with rejection and is a signature emotion in this regard. We argue that workplace ostracism represents a lack of social support leading to social pain, which increases the likelihood of hurt

feelings. Individuals respond to threats of belonging and social acceptance by displaying immediate responses in terms of negative affect. Following these prompt responses, they may react to socially avoidant and aggressive behaviors (Smart & Leary, 2009). For example, Leary and Springer (2001) found that hurt feelings may result in anger and lashing out at those who hurt them. Aggression is the behavioral aspect of hurt feelings (Abrams, 2003). In an experimental study, the researchers found that the intensity of hurt feelings leads to overt aggression (Kashdan et al., 2013). Ostracism gives hurtful messages that undermine relationship contentment and are likely implicated in aggressive behaviors (Vangelisti, 2009). Shoemaker (2019) regards ostracism as a hurtful event that drags individuals towards aggressive behaviors.

As hurt feelings are the outcomes of events that connote relational devaluation, it is often escorted by emotions like anxiety and hostility (Leary et al., 1998). Persons devalued, critiqued, or ostracized may turn angry, aggressive, and antisocial (Leary et al., 2006; Williams & Cairns, 2006). As hurt feelings are the predominant rejection-related emotion, we argue that hurt feelings among employees being ostracized can lead them to a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression. Accordingly, the impact of workplace ostracism on a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression should be transferred via hurt feelings.

H4: Hurt feelings mediate the relationship between workplace ostracism and a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression.

3.2.2 The Moderation of Neuroticism

An essential aspect of AET illustrates that personality characteristics may influence work events' effect on a person's emotional and behavioral reactions. For example, Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) argued in their development of AET that individuals' predispositions may permit them to react more or less to various situations than others. Similarly, Bolger and Zuckerman (1995) supported that personality significantly impacts individuals' outcomes by moderating the influence of various experiences on outcomes. Neuroticism refers to negative affectivity (Brief & Weiss, 2002), and this personality trait can influence various adverse emotions (Watson, 2000), such as hurt feelings into aggression.

Individuals who are highly neurotic act as depressed, nervous, troubled, and emotionally unbalanced (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Costa & McCrae, 1992). They are emotionally responsive to adverse environmental stimuli (Larsen & Ketelaar, 1991) and have low acceptance of undesirable events (Eysenck, 1967). Workplace ostracism is also an undesirable work event, given that neuroticism

primarily focuses on emotional reactions (Brief & Weiss, 2002; Spector et al., 2006). The study proposes that highly neurotic individuals will develop hurt feelings in the presence of workplace ostracism.

H5: Neuroticism moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and hurt feelings.

Hurt feelings among employees may lead them towards a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression. When people who are high in neuroticism will get hurt, they may show an increased tendency towards aggressive behaviors. It has been suggested by Berkowitz (1988) that aversive events in the workplace give rise to negative affect such as hurt feelings which are associated with both fight and flight tendencies with an inclination to attack and to avoid. Kang et al. (2009) stated that highly neurotic individuals are likelier to instigate aggression in response to hurt feelings. As the AET posits that certain adverse work events are regarded as imperative by employees as they trigger spiteful emotions, which in turn expect affectively driven reactions and aggressive behavior is the product of such emotional reactions (Sommovigo et al., 2019).

When highly neurotic employees are prone to hurt feelings, they feel jittery, ashamed, irritable, and upset, which may cause a harsh temperament leading to aggressive behaviors. How ostracism works could be explicated by affective responses such as sadness, anger, and hurt feelings (Buckley et al., 2004). When these affective responses come from highly neurotic employees, they may bring along an amplified tendency to retaliate (Chow et al., 2008). They may attack the rejector and coworkers as well. When employees are highly neurotic, they may exhibit overt and covert aggression. Therefore, the study proposes that.

H6: Neuroticism moderates the relationship between hurt feelings and a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression.

3.2.3 Research Model Underpinning AET Theory

The following research model underpinning AET theory proposes that hurt feelings mediate the relationship between workplace ostracism and a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression. Neuroticism moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and hurt feelings. Neuroticism moderates the relationship between hurt feelings and a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression.

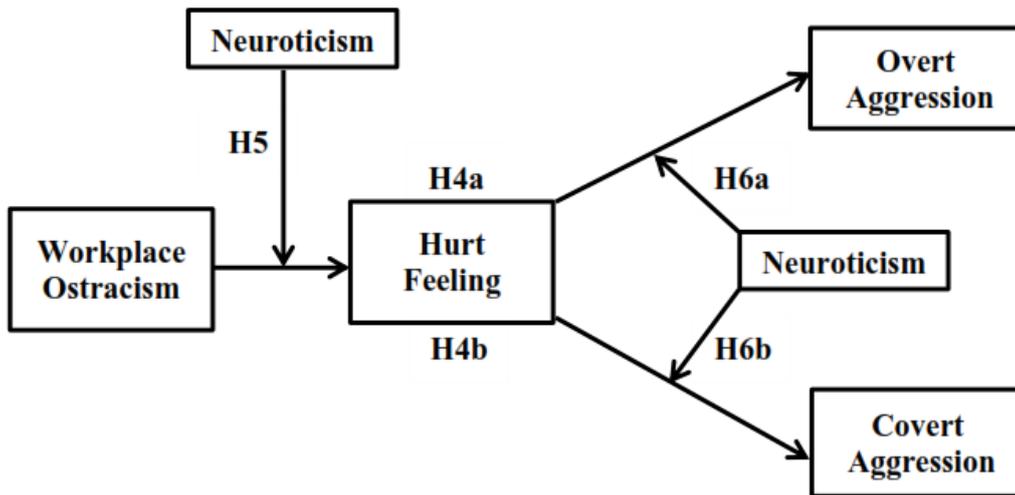


Figure 3.2: Research Model Underpinning AET Theory

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This quantitative study follows a positivist research philosophy centered on a deductive approach to test the hypotheses. In line with this philosophy, the existing theory will be utilized to develop and test hypotheses. It is a formal study as the research question has been crystallized to a greater degree.

The study aims to test the proposed hypothesis, so the purpose of the study is explanatory—the present research was conducted in natural settings, i.e., a non-contrived environment with minimal researcher interference. In line with the type of variables, the unit of analysis is individual employees. This retrospective study gathers many variables at one point in time (separated by lag). The topical scope of this study is statistical.

We collected the data from the permanent employees working in Pakistan's manufacturing and service industries. Our target population is alums of three business schools, which must be doing a job and working as permanent employees. Their organizational tenure at the time of the survey was one year. This period is selected to record the responses of employees to workplace ostracism. Snowball sampling is used which is a non-probability sampling technique. It involves identifying a few initial participants who meet specific criteria and asking them to refer others who also meet the criteria. This process continues iteratively, forming a "snowball" effect. The purpose for using this technique is its cost-effectiveness and time-efficiency, especially when compared to more traditional sampling methods that require extensive resources and time to identify and recruit participants. Snowball sampling leverages the trust and social connections within a network. Participants are more likely to respond positively to referrals from people they know and trust, which can lead to higher participation rates. The sample size was 600, and business alums were selected as universities had easy access to them.

The data collection method was electronically administered questionnaires as they were easy to administer, could cover a wide geographical area, and ensure fast delivery. A suitable research strategy was designed and selected, i.e., an online survey strategy that corresponds to the research objectives in line with the research questions. The purpose of using an online

survey as a research strategy is due to the increased use of data collection through internet-mediated research and its numerous advantages over a non-web-based approach. Technological developments have fortified traditional sampling methods, composing and delivering questionnaires, and evaluating the data through the most recent computerized software and techniques.

Data collection via email contacts and online web-based-survey is one of the most prevalent and escalating means of research in developed and developing countries (Dillman et al., 2014). Moreover, in online survey research, new technologies made it expedient to carry out computerized data analysis and better questionnaire designs. Therefore, the inclination for web-based survey methods has augmented as compared to traditional survey methods (i.e., paper, pencil) after the advent of email surveys in the 1980s and the first web-based survey in the 1990s.

Currently, the internet is in the approach of a relatively large population due to technological breakthroughs. However, the trend is achieving a positive slope (Curran et al., 2016). Advanced internet usage has increased internet access over smartphones, a key source of internet usage (Duggan & Smith, 2013). In other words, in this era of globalization, smartphones have become an essential source for approaching the internet (Duggan & Smith, 2013).

Due to technological advancements, internet-based research is emerging speedily. The term internet-mediated research was introduced by Hewson et al. (2003). It refers to the online data collection methods and analysis techniques used to describe new understandings in the framework of the research question. Consistent with conventional research methods, this method comprises primary and secondary data collection techniques.

Primary internet-mediated research is based on new and unique data collection. In contrast, secondary internet-mediated research involves finding and analyzing techniques from secondary resources (for example, online databases, research journals, web blogs, and documents). The current study followed the web-based approach for data collection. The time-lagged data was collected by conducting the online survey through self-administered questionnaires twice (Annexure A & Annexure B).

4.2 ONLINE SURVEY STRATEGY

An internet survey denotes a self-administered questionnaire posted on a website (Zikmund et al., 2010). The criteria to provide answers by respondents to questions displayed onscreen is highlighting a phrase, keying in an answer,

or clicking an icon. Internet surveys have advantages and disadvantages, like every other type of survey. The utmost advantages of internet surveys include speediness and timeliness (Kannan et al., 1998), less administration cost (Cooper & Schindler, 2000), the diversity of questions (Evans & Mathur, 2005), flexibility (Schonlau et al., 2002), geographically scattered applicants (Pohl et al., 2002), high-tech inventions (Mullarkey, 2004), and easier to access the probable respondents (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006).

The internet surveys are not without some disadvantages. For instance, when respondents are invited via emails, it is frequently professed as junk mail. As respondents might only be keen to participate if safety and confidentiality is certain, it may end in a low rate of response (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002). In addition, internet cannot be retrieved by all persons in the general population because mostly individuals do not have powerful computers in terms of advance software that has the compatibility with progressive features encoded into internet questionnaires. Also there are lot of individuals who lack the capability to steer through and deliver responses to an internet questionnaire. Thus, all the problems mentioned need to be minimized or removed to enable all the respondents to intermingle at the similar level of technical complexity.

The online survey questionnaire involves a web-based approach and a non-web-based one (Hewson & Laurent, 2008). In the *web-based approach*, by means of active internet connection respondents have the option to view the questionnaire that is posted on the web by the researcher. A uniform resource locator (URL) is used to visit the questionnaire and submit it online. In a *non-web-based approach*, the respondents receive the questionnaire via email. The current study followed the web-based approach as the large sample can be drawn with less time and cost.

Web-based surveys can be conducted in a variety of ways, for instance, website visitors can be invited to fill in the survey, email including a survey link, and email with the embedded survey). In addition, randomization of the questions has become easier with technological advancements. For example, according to the survey participants, questionnaires can quickly be revised in terms of language difficulties and demographics, (Schonlau et al., 2002).

Internet surveys are an efficient way to personalize individual messages, collecting confidential answers rapidly and economically and targeting a large audience, (Zikmund et al., 2010). With the help of these computer-to-computer self-administered questionnaires the cost of paper, postage, stationery, and data entry, as well as other administrative costs, have been eradicated.

Additionally, Respondents over the internet can collaborate and communicate expediently through the internet-mediated research (IMR) technique as this technique encompasses the survey technique to a highly developed level. (Hewson & Laurent, 2008). Online web-based surveys can incorporate multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions, close-ended questions, dichotomous questions, and scales.

4.2.1 Online Survey Design

The appearance and layout of a questionnaire have a significant impact on the responses and, consequently, on the validity and reliability of the data (Smith, 1997). Therefore, following the directions proposed by Dillman et al. (2014), the steadiness of the design of the survey is reconfirmed by the researchers through various browsers and electronic devices. Likewise, the researchers tested the questionnaire layout by observing several smartphone software, for instance, Android and iOS.

The survey instrument was designed in English, which is also an official language and medium of instruction in Pakistan. The email specified that participation in this research study is anonymous, confidential, and voluntary. Participants were also assured that the data and information would be strictly used by the research team only and would be used for research purposes only.

4.2.2 Time Lag Procedure

In the first-stage survey (t1), demographic information was provided by employees and completed the measures of workplace ostracism, need for affiliation, and neuroticism. In the second-stage survey (t2), conducted after three days of survey 1, the employees reported their feelings of job tension and hurt feelings concerning the instances of ostracism from the prior month and rated their overt and covert aggression. A coding system (last four digits of cell number) matched the time 1 and 2 surveys.

The online questionnaire was pretested on a sample of permanent employees of the business department from a private university in Lahore. The feedback and responses from the employees for the period of the survey established our supposition that a particular pool of employees with a background in business studies seems a suitable study sample.

4.2.3 Common Method Biases

One must recognize the common method variance (CMV) as it is a crucial methodological concern for business researchers and constant debate in the organizational literature (Simmering et al., 2015). Podsakoff et al. (2003) define the CMV as "variance that is attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent." Frequent possible justifications are attributed to the bias in participants, for example: reporting all questions at one time (Doty & Glick, 1998), answering questions as middling (neutral) responses (Krosnick, 1999), replying in communally satisfactory manners instead of their original judgment (Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 2001).

However, because of the effect of item context, CMV is still an issue even when data is gathered from diverse bases (Harrison & McLaughlin, 1993). Therefore, numerous researches debated diverse approaches to pawn the issues of CMV (Doty & Glick, 1998; Podsakoff et al., 2012; Williams & McGonagle, 2016). Generally, two types of counter remedies are extensively recognized. These are statistical remedies and procedural remedies. Considering the issues raised by previous work, the following procedural remedies were used to lessen the chances of common method bias. The researcher precisely educated all respondents in the invitation letter and assured them to keep their information unidentified and private.

Additionally, their data will be strictly used for research only. The data will be evaluated collectively; at any cost, the identity and personal information will not be revealed to anyone. Different problems may occur in measuring constructs and influence the results. The present study has taken remedial procedures to reduce the chance of error and such biases. Mediators, dependent and independent variables were measured separately in three surveys to decrease the chance of CMV likelihood. If the variables are measured in a single survey, then respondents try to answer according to the formerly asked question. Therefore, to minimize the likelihood, this research was conducted three times.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION

In order to collect the data from potential respondents, the survey instrument was placed on a *type form* website. The chosen respondents were invited to take part in the study through email with an embedded link to the survey online web page. When participants clicked on that link, they were redirected to a new page comprising questions about the variables.

The invitation method is a specific method of selecting the potential respondents instead of selecting random users accessible on the internet (Hewson, 2015). Hence, to augment the rate of response and concentration of respondents, the participants were addressed with their first name and second name instead of the title, dear participants in an online survey invitation (Heerwegh & Loosveldt, 2006) and mailed to all through mail merge (Dillman et al., 2014). Additionally, the researcher sent several follow-up reminders to those who did not fill out the survey (Bryman, 2016).

4.3.1 Target Population

The target population comprised alums of three Pakistan business schools who were doing jobs. The researcher selected business alums as universities had easy access to them. A list of names and emails of alums was taken from the universities, and links to the questionnaire were sent to them. We considered those respondents in the survey who were permanent employees with a tenure of one year. To ensure this, we entered screening questions related to organization tenure.

In IMR the complications of availability and inadequacy of the complete list made it impossible to carry out probability sampling procedures (Bryman, 2016). Consequently, the researcher can pull a possible sample by sending invites to potential participants on a web page (Hewson & Laurent, 2008). An email invitation method accomplished the restricted sample (survey) purpose, which lessened the partialities by governing numerous users on the internet (Fricker, 2008).

Concerning samples, there are definite restrictions for the internet population, for example, over the internet complete list of the population is unapproachable, one person can hold multiple email addresses, internet users' confidential information, and multiple internet service providers. Nevertheless, the email was sent to the participants with an embedded URL. The selected participants of the survey could continue to fill out the questionnaire. Furthermore an online survey was set in a way that before submission respondents must complete all questions. There were no missing values in the final data set.

4.3.2 Survey Instrument Time 1

The survey instrument (t1) has three sections along with demographic information, e.g., gender, marital status, last four digits of the mobile number

(to match the participants), and formal education. The respondents were informed about the study aims, i.e., investigating their workplace experiences and the description of them as a person. They were guaranteed complete privacy of their replies, and data will be utilized for academic purposes only. The first, second, and third sections contain the variables of workplace ostracism, need for affiliation, and neuroticism, respectively. In the first section, respondents specified the frequency with which they confronted workplace rejection experiences in the existing organization in the last month. In the second section, respondents specified their agreement or disagreement with the statements provided. Participants were asked to rate themselves as accurately as possible in the third section using the provided list of common human traits. They were asked to write a number before each trait indicating how accurately that trait describes them.

4.3.3 Survey Instrument Time 2

The survey instrument (t2) has four sections along with demographic information, e.g., gender, marital status, last four digits of the mobile number (to match the participants), and formal education. Respondents were informed that this is a follow-up survey that aims to analyze their feelings regarding the job and workplace behaviors. The first, second, third, and fourth sections contain the variables of job tension, hurt feelings, overt aggression, and covert aggression, respectively. In the first section, participants indicated their agreement or disagreement with the statements provided. In the second section, participants indicated the extent they *felt on average during the first survey's reporting period*, i.e., during the last month. In the third section, participants indicated how often they have behaved in the ways described. In the fourth section, Participants indicated when they were angry with a fellow worker at the workplace and how often they behaved in the ways described.

4.3.4 Administration of the Survey

The present study has followed a web-based approach in which respondents following a uniform resource locator (URL) visited the questionnaire placed on the web by the researcher. The respondents must have an active internet connection to complete the questionnaire and submit it online. A large sample can be drawn with less time and cost with the help of a web-based approach.

On the internet a URL was established with an embedded questionnaire. The invitation method was employed to control the respondents approaching and submitting the questionnaire. All the respondents were sent invitations over emails, including link to the online survey. This method of invitation cuts biases produced by casual visitors, i.e., the volunteer effect and frequent user effect (Hewson, 2003). The present study followed the suggestions of Dillman et al. (2014) to show only a single question at a time to improve the control over the researcher's side. The advantages of the web-based approach design are the opportunity for participants to approach and submit data to the selected URL at a suitable time (Assael & Keon, 1982).

Time-lagged data was collected through a self-administered online survey at two points. In the first stage (t1), demographic information, workplace ostracism, need for affiliation, and neuroticism was rated. The frequency by which the respondents confronted workplace rejection experiences in the current organization was indicated during the last month. The second stage (t2) was led three days after the first survey; the employees reported their job tension and hurt feelings and overt aggression and covert aggression were also rated by them. To accurately assess job tension and hurt feelings concerning the instances of ostracism, the opening statement of the scale provided them the time reference about ostracism. They indicated the extent they *felt on average during the first survey's reporting period*, i.e., during the last month. The study variables were measured separately in two surveys to decrease the chance of CMV likelihood. The coding system (last four digits of cell number) matched the time 1 and 2 surveys.

4.3.5 Final Sample

Kline (2015) suggested a standard sample size of 200 in management sciences. A traditional rule of thumb specified a 5:1 ratio between some cases and measured variables (parameters), respectively (Hair et al., 2006). While few researches also acknowledged lesser samples of respondents: 50-70 (Muthen & Muthen, 2002), 30 to 50 (Sideridis et al., 2014), and a minimum of 200 (Kline, 2015). The study yielded 502 useable questionnaires from the respondents, which fall above the threshold value suggested by previous studies. Therefore, the sample size ratio to the number of items in this study is approximately 10 to 1, which is quite acceptable (Hair et al., 2006).

4.4 MEASUREMENTS

4.4.1 Workplace Ostracism

We measured workplace ostracism with the 10-item scale by Ferris et al. (2008). A sample item is "Others left the area when you entered." Response options ranged from 1, "strongly disagree," to 7, "strongly agree." The Cronbach alpha is 0.88.

4.4.2 Job Tension

We measured *job tension* with a six-item scale (Hochwarter et al., 2005) developed by House & Rizzo (1972). A sample item is "I work under a great deal of tension." Response options ranged from 1, "strongly disagree," to 5, "strongly agree." The Cronbach alpha is 0.80.

4.4.3 Hurt Feelings

Hurt feelings were measured with the 10-item about negative moods developed by Watson et al. (1988). Sample items are 'distressed' and 'upset.' Response options ranged from 1, "not at all," to 5, "extremely." The Cronbach alpha is 0.84.

4.4.4 Need for Affiliation

We measured *the need for affiliation* with a 5-item scale (Wiesenfeld et al., 2001) excerpted from Hill (1987). A sample item is 'I think being close to others, listening to them, and relating to them is one of my favorite and most satisfying pastimes.' Response options ranged from 1, "strongly disagree," to 7, "strongly agree." The Cronbach alpha is 0.77.

4.4.5 Neuroticism

Neuroticism was measured with an 8-item scale (Saucier, 1994) from Goldberg's (1992) original measure of the Big Five personality traits. Sample items are 'temperamental,' 'touchy,' and 'moody.' Respondents indicated how accurately some characteristics described them 1, "extremely inaccurate," to 7, "extremely accurate." The Cronbach alpha is 0.95.

4.4.6 Overt Aggression

Overt aggression encompasses verbal and physical acts that are aggressive. We used the 14-item aggression questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992) to measure this variable. Because these items comprehensively capture the contents of overt aggression. These items are more suitable for our research question than the five items scale by Kaukiainen et al. (2001), which does not cover the physical aspects of aggression. Bradshaw & Hazan (2006) also used the 14-item scale to measure overt aggression. Sample items are: "If somebody hits me, I hit back" and "when people annoy me, I may tell them what I think of them." Response options ranged from 0, "never," to 4, "very often" The Cronbach coefficient is 0.81.

4.4.7 Covert Aggression

We measured covert aggression through the 6-item covert insinuating aggression scale developed by Kaukiainen et al. (2001). The sample items include 'insinuating negative glances and gestures.' Response options ranged from 0, "never," to 4, "very often." The Cronbach alpha is 0.90.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGY

Data were screened to prepare hypothesis testing and data quality; for unengaged responses, missing values, and outliers. Different software like Excel, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) was utilized. PROCESS macro, suggested by Hayes (2013), was used to test all hypotheses that correspond to Models 4, 7, 14, and 21. The study employed a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach to test the hypothesized relationships.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 THE DATA INPUT AND SCREENING

The data was collected through an online survey in two phases. The responses were added to the two separate Excel sheets automatically. The data were manually combined in a single excel sheet after completing the surveys using the unique codes assigned to each respondent. After combining the data into a single Excel sheet, it was screened against the unengaged responses and missing values.

After completing both surveys, the total data from 540 respondents were received. Only those responses were added to the final data from whom we received both questionnaires of time 1 and 2. Thirty respondents did not complete the questionnaire in the second survey. Out of 510 respondents, seven entries were deleted in the manual screening process due to the respondents' missing values and *unengaged* behavior.

We ran the Mahalanobis distance test to fulfill the SEM assumptions, and *multivariate outliers* were detected. The Mahalanobis distance test reveals that responses with a p-value less than 0.001 are outliers; therefore, one multivariate outlier was eliminated. After the missing values and outliers, the total usable data was 502.

Data *normality* is a critical milestone for various statistical tests (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Skewness and Kurtosis are well-known tests for the assurance of normality. The values of Skewness and Kurtosis are within +/- 2 for all variables in this study, showing that the data normality is assumed and ready for further descriptive and inferential analysis.

From data screening to hypotheses testing, a thorough data analysis has been done, and includes descriptive and inferential statistics. A two-step approach is utilized in this study (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Initially, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted, a statistical technique employed to decrease data to a smaller set of summary variables and explore the phenomena' underlying theoretical structure. It is used to find the relationship structure among the variable and the respondent. Then confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted by which measurement model was drawn and

tested the reliability and validity of the constructs. Second, the relationship among the variables is recognized in the structural model and tested the developed hypotheses.

5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented below in Table 5.1. In addition, respondents were inquired about gender, male and female. Out of 502 respondents, about 56% were male; in other words, male respondents slightly more than female respondents.

Table 5.1
Demographic Descriptive Results (n=502)

Variables	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	280	55.8
	Female	222	44.2
Age	Below 25	124	24.7
	26-36	269	53.6
	36-45	62	12.4
	46-55	25	5.0
	Above 55	22	4.4
Marital Status	Single	287	57.2
	Married	215	42.8
Education	14 or Below	58	11.6
	15-16	300	59.8
	17-18	134	26.7
	Above 18	10	2.0
Tenure	Below 1	7	1.4
	1-3	245	47.4
	3-6	159	31.7
	7-10	50	10.0
	11 & Above	48	9.6
Hierarchical Level	Lower	44	8.8
	Middle	381	75.9
	Upper	77	15.3
Public Sector Private Sector	Public	117	23.3
	Private	385	76.7
Industry	Services	414	82.5
	Manufacturing	88	17.5

It is observed that 25% of employees had less than 25 years of age, and 54% were from the 26-36 years age category, showing that 79% of our sample comprises young people. About 57% of respondents were single. Respondents also reported their education level; 14% had less than 14 years of education, and 89% had education above 15 years, so mainly the sample involves educated people as their qualification is at least graduation. About 47% of respondents have a tenure of 1-3 years, whereas the tenure of about 32% lies between 3-6 years. The remaining respondents (about 20%) have a tenure of more than seven years. Overall, the respondents have spent more than one year a reasonable time in their organization.

The data was collected from three hierarchical levels: lower, middle, and upper. A significant portion of the data belongs to middle management, i.e., 76%.

It is observed that about 77% of the data was collected from the private sector. However, in terms of the industry, about 83% of the data collected in the study belongs to the service industry. It may be relevant to mention here that Pakistan's service sector is continuously increasing; it now constitutes about 58% of the GDP.

5.2.1 Participants' Gender by Personal Characteristics

The cross-tabulations of gender by marital status, age, and education are shown in Table 5.2. It shows the interesting fact that, against the overall percentage of unmarried respondents (57.2%) in our sample, more females (70.3%) are single. This answer is very alike to the working arrangement of women in Pakistan. Most women tend to leave their job after marriage due to cultural limitations, pregnancy, and family responsibilities (Junaidi, 2014; Rehman, Naveed, & Raza, 2017). However, it is also observed that our sample consists of more married males (53.2%).

There are relatively more females (34.2%) than the overall percentage of females in our sample (24.7%) below the age of 25. Accordingly, in the higher age categories, women's representation is decreasing. For example, 13.6% of male respondents are more than 45 years old as against the overall percentage of 9.4% as the sample has few females in the upper age limit, complies with previous research in Pakistan and strongly advocates the argument that women rarely pursue their career in their higher age after marriage (John, 2017).

Table 5.2 also shows that there are slightly more males in the education range from 14 years or below, and there are slightly more females in the education range from 15 to 16 years than the overall percentage.

Table 5.2
Participants' Gender by Marital Status, Age, and Education

Variable	Category	Gender				Total	
		Male		Female		Freq	%
		Freq	%	Freq	%		
Marital Status	Single	131	46.8	156	70.3	287	57.2
	Married	149	53.2	66	29.7	215	42.8
Age	Below 25	48	17.1	76	34.2	124	24.7
	26-36	156	55.7	113	50.9	269	53.6
	36-45	38	13.6	24	10.8	62	12.4
	46-55	19	6.8	6	2.7	25	5.0
	Above 55	19	6.8	3	1.4	22	4.4
Education	14 or Below	37	13.2	21	9.5	58	11.6
	15-16	162	57.9	138	62.2	300	59.8
	17-18	74	26.4	60	27.0	134	26.7
	Above 18	7	2.5	3	1.4	10	2.0
Total		280	100	222	100	502	100

5.2.2 Participants' Gender by Firm-Related Characteristics

The cross-tabulations of gender by sector, industry, hierarchical level and tenure are shown in Table 5.3. It shows that there are relatively more males (26.4%) in the public sector than the overall percentage of 23.3%. Accordingly, the situation is reversed for the female respondents; that is, there are relatively more females (80.6%) in the private sector than the overall percentage of 76.7%.

In the industry, there are relatively more males (22.1%) in the manufacturing firms than in the overall percentage of 17.5%. Accordingly, the situation is reversed for the female respondents; that is, there are relatively more females (88.3%) in the service firms than the overall percentage of 82.5%.

The table also provides insights into gender representation at different hierarchical levels. For example, at the lower level, the ratio of males and females is almost the same. However, at the middle level, there are relatively more females (80.6%) than the overall percentage of 75.9% of respondents. On the contrary, at the upper level, there are relatively more males (18.6%) than the

overall percentage of 15.3% respondents. These numbers suggest that in Pakistani organizations, women are less represented at a higher level.

The table also provides gender representation in different tenure categories. In the tenured category below one year, there are just 7 participants. Therefore, we can ignore the difference. However, among the respondents having tenure between 1-3 years, there are relatively more females (55.9%) than the overall percentage of 47.4% respondents. Very little difference is noted in the tenured category of 3-6 years. In contrast, in the tenure categories of above six years, there are relatively more males (25%) than the overall percentage of 19.6% respondents.

Table 5.3
Participants' Gender by Sector, Industry, Hierarchical Level, and Tenure

Variable	Category	Gender				Total	
		Male		Female			
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Sector	Public	74	26.4	43	19.4	117	23.3
	Private	206	73.6	179	80.6	385	76.7
Industry	Services	218	77.9	196	88.3	414	82.5
	Manufacturing	62	22.1	26	11.7	88	17.5
Hierarchical Level	Lower	26	9.3	18	8.1	44	8.8
	Middle	202	72.1	179	80.6	381	75.9
	Upper	52	18.6	25	11.3	77	15.3
Tenure (years)	Below 1	5	1.8	2	0.9	7	1.4
	1-3	114	40.7	124	55.9	238	47.4
	3-6	91	32.5	68	30.6	159	31.7
	7-10	35	12.5	15	6.8	50	10.0
	11 & Above	35	12.5	13	5.9	48	9.6
Total		280	100	222	100	502	100

5.3 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

EFA was conducted to testify to the consistency of the factors. The extraction of factors was fixed at seven factors. The Maximum likelihood and Promax rotation were employed. Items having a cross-loading greater than 0.30, multi-loading, and items loading less than 0.40 were deleted from the data as per the thumb rule (Comrey, 1973). Factors having an absolute value less than 0.30 are considered insignificant and commonly suppressed (Fabrigar et al., 1999).

A total of 8 items were deleted. From the scale of workplace ostracism, 2 items were deleted. From the scale of job tension, 1 item was deleted. From the scale of hurt feelings, 2 items were deleted. From the scale of overt aggression, 3 items were deleted. No item was deleted from the need for affiliation, neuroticism, and covert aggression scales.

The results of the EFA provide support for the factorial independence of the study variables. Table 5.4 provides the factor loadings for the study variables. As the data was collected on the rating scales, all the values were within the given range.

Table 5.4
Exploratory Factor Analysis

Scale	Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Workplace Ostracism	WO_5	0.788						
	WO_9	0.783						
	WO_7	0.735						
	WO_3	0.706						
	WO_4	0.688						
	WO_6	0.685						
	WO_1	0.617						
Need for Affiliation	NA_3		0.781					
	NA_2		0.767					
	NA_1		0.722					
	NA_4		0.638					
	NA_5		0.409					
Job Tension	JT_2			0.804				
	JT_1			0.721				
	JT_3			0.578				
	JT_4			0.558				
	JT_6			0.525				
Hurt Feeling	HF_15				0.785			
	HF_7				0.766			
	HF_8				0.680			
	HF_6				0.602			
	HF_18				0.558			
	HF_20				0.547			
	HF_13				0.516			
	HF_11				0.475			

Scale	Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Neuroticism	NSM_6					0.897		
	NSM_1					0.862		
	NSM_4					0.857		
	NSM_8					0.854		
	NSM_7					0.844		
	NSM_5					0.837		
	NSM_3					0.818		
	NSM_2					0.769		
Overt Aggression	OA_4						0.597	
	OA_13						0.584	
	OA_6						0.571	
	OA_12						0.569	
	OA_14						0.558	
	OA_5						0.552	
	OA_2						0.542	
	OA_3						0.522	
	OA_1						0.512	
	OA_8						0.474	
	OA_11						0.447	
Covert Aggression	CA_5							0.785
	CA_3							0.709
	CA_4							0.661
	CA_6							0.656
	CA_1							0.628
	CA_2							0.526

- Notes:**
- a) Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood
 - b) Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization
 - c) Rotation converged in 6 iterations

5.4 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND RELIABILITY

Descriptive statistics represents the overview of the data in a meaningful manner. One of the few indices used in descriptive statistics is the central tendency, variability, and shape measure. Mean is used to measure the central tendency of the data; standard deviation is the measure of variability represented by dispersion among the scores.

The results of descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5.5, representing the variables' mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and Cronbach alpha values. The standard deviation of most of the variables is less than 1 (ranging from 0.69 to 0.80), except for the need for affiliation and neuroticism, which had a standard deviation of 1.29 and 1.75, respectively.

Skewness and Kurtosis are the measures of the data's shape, which indicates the data's normality. For example, data is assumed normal if skewness is between -2 to +2 and kurtosis is between -7 to +7 (Hair et al., 2010; Byrne, 2010). The skewness and kurtosis (Table 5.4) are within the acceptable range, indicating the data's normality.

Finally, Cronbach's Alpha is a measure used to assess the reliability, or internal consistency, of a set of scale or test items. The Alpha values of all scales are above 0.77, which is excellent as the generally accepted threshold value is 0.70.

Table 5.5
Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Items	Alpha
Workplace Ostracism	1.66	.69	1.25	1.01	7	0.875
Need for Affiliation	4.54	1.29	-.45	-.52	5	0.798
Job Tension	2.56	.80	.47	-.24	5	0.767
Hurt Feelings	2.09	.72	.87	.65	8	0.841
Neuroticism	3.96	1.75	.41	-.98	8	0.951
Overt Aggression	1.44	.68	.28	-.27	11	0.811
Covert Aggression	.66	.62	1.52	2.43	6	0.819

5.5 VALIDITY ANALYSIS

After ensuring the unidimensionality and reliability of all scales, the next step is to assess the scale's validity. Validity is the degree of scale accuracy for the variable.

5.5.1 Discriminant and Convergent Validity

After determining the model fit measures, we test for discriminant validity. Discriminant validity represents the degree of distinction between two

conceptually similar variables. Discriminate validity is established when the value of AVE is greater than the values of maximum shared variance (MSV) and average shared variance (ASV). The discriminant validity test was conducted by taking the square root of AVE and comparing it against the inter-construct correlations of other constructs. This study found that the square root of AVE is higher than the value of the correlation of other constructs. The values of the square root of AVE are in bold at diagonals in Table 5.6, showing a good discriminant validity explaining that constructs are significantly different from each other.

Convergent validity refers to the degree that two scales measure the same concept. The results are provided in Table 5.6, clearly showing that there are no major issues of convergent validity as all values of the square root of AVE exceed 0.50; in fact, it ranges from 0.53 to 0.84.

Table 5.6
Validity Analysis - Square Roots of Average Variance Explained

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Workplace Ostracism	0.658						
2. Need for Affiliation	-0.01	0.839					
3. Job Tension	0.177**	0.047	0.716				
4. Hurt Feelings	0.423***	0.130*	0.215***	0.532			
5. Neuroticism	0.257***	0.029	0.447***	0.315***	0.629		
6. Overt Aggression	0.093†	-0.016	0.032	0.218***	0.225***	0.684	
7. Covert Aggression	0.271***	0.037	0.259***	0.303***	0.501***	0.429***	0.644
Note: *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.010; * p < 0.050; † p < 0.100							

5.6 GROUP COMPARISONS

Group comparisons are drawn to summarize and compare the differences in means of the study variables. Independent sample t-test and ANOVA were run for the comparisons of means between respondents' dichotomous grouping (gender, marital status, industry, sector) and more than two categorical groups (age, education).

5.6.1 Group Comparisons by Gender

The t-test was run to determine the group difference between males and females over study variables. Table 5.7-A shows group comparison by gender. Group comparisons of study variables with gender show insignificant differences, except job tension and hurt feelings. The values show that female respondents (M = 2.18, SD = 0.76) show more hurt feelings than male workers (M = 2.01, SD = 0.68). On the other hand, the mean values show that males (M = 2.50, SD = 0.77) experience less job tension than female workers (M = 2.65, SD = 0.83). For complete detail, please refer to the following table.

Table 5.7-A
Comparisons of the Study Variables by Gender

Variables	Gender	Mean	SD	P-value
Workplace Ostracism	Male	1.66	0.69	0.934
	Female	1.66	0.69	
Need for Affiliation	Male	4.44	1.34	0.064
	Female	4.66	1.21	
Job Tension	Male	2.50	0.77	0.043
	Female	2.65	0.83	
Hurt Feelings	Male	2.01	0.68	0.010
	Female	2.18	0.76	
Neuroticism	Male	3.94	1.67	0.780
	Female	3.99	1.86	
Overt Aggression	Male	1.47	0.66	0.350
	Female	1.41	0.71	
Covert Aggression	Male	0.69	0.62	0.205
	Female	0.62	0.63	

5.6.2 Group Comparisons by Age

The values of ANOVA (Table 5.7-B) show that six study variables, including workplace ostracism, need for affiliation, job tension, neuroticism, overt aggression, and covert aggression, have insignificant mean differences. However, the value of hurt feelings shows a significant difference between the respondents of different age groups. For example, employees under 25 get slightly more hurt ($M = 1.89$, $SD = 0.63$) than the other mentioned age groups. Complete detail is provided in the following table.

Table 5.7-B
Group Comparisons by Age

Variables	Age	Mean	SD	P-value
Workplace Ostracism	Below 25	1.45	0.59	0.227
	26-36	1.37	0.53	
	Above 36	1.34	0.53	
Need for Affiliation	Below 25	4.39	1.34	0.887
	26-36	4.40	1.27	
	Above 36	4.32	1.46	
Job Tension	Below 25	2.69	0.83	0.275
	26-36	2.70	0.76	
	Above 36	2.56	0.80	
Hurt Feelings	Below 25	1.89	0.63	0.050
	26-36	1.87	0.57	
	Above 36	1.72	0.55	
Neuroticism	Below 25	3.69	1.65	0.257
	26-36	3.94	1.74	
	Above 36	4.06	1.93	
Overt Aggression	Below 25	1.33	0.38	0.282
	26-36	1.35	0.37	
	Above 36	1.28	0.43	
Covert Aggression	Below 25	0.75	0.59	0.272
	26-36	0.76	0.58	
	Above 36	0.65	0.58	

5.6.3 Group Comparisons by Formal Education

The values of ANOVA (Table 5.7-C) show that six study variables, including the need for affiliation, job tension, hurt feelings, neuroticism, overt aggression, and covert aggression, have insignificant mean differences. However, the value of workplace ostracism shows that there is a significant difference between the respondents belonging to different education groups. Employees with 15-16 years of education experience have more workplace ostracism ($M = 1.44$, $SD = 0.59$) than the other mentioned education groups. Complete detail is provided in the following table.

Table 5.7-C
Group Comparisons by Formal Education (Years)

Variables	Education	Mean	SD	p-value
Workplace Ostracism	14 or Below	1.34	0.46	0.024
	15-16	1.44	0.59	
	Above 16	1.29	0.48	
Need for Affiliation	14 or Below	4.29	1.43	0.848
	15-16	4.40	1.26	
	Above 16	4.38	1.43	
Job Tension	14 or Below	2.73	0.84	0.467
	15-16	2.69	0.77	
	Above 16	2.60	0.79	
Hurt Feelings	14 or Below	1.76	0.45	0.206
	15-16	1.88	0.61	
	Above 16	1.80	0.57	
Neuroticism	14 or Below	3.96	1.63	0.188
	15-16	4.00	1.77	
	Above 16	3.68	1.78	
Overt Aggression	14 or Below	1.38	0.40	0.510
	15-16	1.33	0.39	
	Above 16	1.31	0.36	
Covert Aggression	14 or Below	0.87	0.64	0.057
	15-16	0.74	0.60	
	Above 16	0.66	0.51	

5.6.4 Group Comparisons by Sector

The t-test was run to determine the sector's group difference over study variables. The results in Table 5.7-D reveal that employees in the public sector ($M = 1.48$, $SD = 0.57$) are more ostracized than private sector employees ($M = 1.35$, $SD = 0.54$). Moreover, employees in the public sector ($M = 1.39$, $SD = 0.34$) show more overt aggression than private sector employees ($M = 1.31$, $SD = 0.40$). The respondents from the public and private sectors are statically the same in terms of the other six study variables.

Table 5.7-D
Group Comparisons by Sector

Variables	Sector	Mean	SD	p-value
Workplace Ostracism	Public	1.48	0.57	0.028
	Private	1.35	0.54	
Need for Affiliation	Public	4.43	1.36	0.618
	Private	4.36	1.32	
Job Tension	Public	2.65	0.73	0.760
	Private	2.67	0.80	
Hurt Feelings	Public	1.90	0.54	0.228
	Private	1.83	0.60	
Neuroticism	Public	4.02	1.86	0.407
	Private	3.87	1.73	
Overt Aggression	Public	1.39	0.34	0.041
	Private	1.31	0.40	
Covert Aggression	Public	0.78	0.57	0.344
	Private	0.72	0.58	

5.6.5 Group Comparisons by Industry

Another interesting comparison was drawn using a t-test among study variables and respondents' industry. The results in Table 5.7-E show that workers in the services industry ($M = 0.76$, $SD = 0.60$) show more covert aggression than the manufacturing industry ($M = 0.62$, $SD = 0.45$). The services and manufacturing industry respondents are statically the same in terms of the other six study variables.

Table 5.7-E
Group Comparisons by Industry

Variables	Industry	Mean	SD	P-value
Workplace Ostracism	Services	1.39	0.54	0.406
	Manufacturing	1.34	0.59	
Need for Affiliation	Services	4.35	1.32	0.269
	Manufacturing	4.52	1.38	
Job Tension	Services	2.67	0.77	0.940
	Manufacturing	2.66	0.83	
Hurt Feelings	Services	1.84	0.57	0.614
	Manufacturing	1.87	0.65	
Neuroticism	Services	3.93	1.79	0.404
	Manufacturing	3.76	1.63	
Overt Aggression	Services	1.33	0.39	0.956
	Manufacturing	1.33	0.38	
Covert Aggression	Services	0.76	0.60	0.016
	Manufacturing	0.62	0.45	

5.6.6 Group Comparisons by Hierarchical Level

Group comparisons of study variables using ANOVA for various hierarchical levels do not reveal any difference, as all the variables have insignificant mean differences. This shows that hierarchical levels do not make any difference among the respondents regarding the means of the variables under study. Complete detail is provided in Table 5.7-F.

Table 5.7-F
Group Comparisons by Hierarchical Level

Variables	Level	Mean	SD	P-value
Workplace Ostracism	Lower	1.53	0.67	0.142
	Middle	1.38	0.53	
	Upper	1.34	0.54	
Need for Affiliation	Lower	4.17	1.36	0.526
	Middle	4.39	1.33	
	Upper	4.43	1.34	
Job Tension	Lower	2.72	0.79	0.883
	Middle	2.66	0.78	
	Upper	2.65	0.80	
Hurt Feelings	Lower	1.96	0.64	0.391
	Middle	1.83	0.57	
	Upper	1.84	0.62	
Neuroticism	Lower	3.82	1.79	0.403
	Middle	3.86	1.70	
	Upper	4.15	2.05	
Overt Aggression	Lower	1.33	0.41	0.962
	Middle	1.32	0.38	
	Upper	1.34	0.42	
Covert Aggression	Lower	0.88	0.76	0.171
	Middle	0.73	0.55	
	Upper	0.67	0.59	

5.6.7 Group Comparisons by Organizational Tenure

The group comparison of study variables against organizational tenure using ANOVA was run to understand the impact of organizational tenure on study variables. The results in Table 5.7-G reveal that employees having organizational tenure between 3-6 years develop more hurt feelings ($M = 1.98$, $SD = 0.59$), or it can be said that employees with lesser organizational tenure develop hurt feelings easily as they are not strongly connected with the organization owing to the less time in the organization. Results also reveal that employees with organizational tenure between 3-6 years show more covert aggression than larger organizational tenures ($M = 0.84$, $SD = 0.68$).

Table 5.7-G
Group Comparisons by Organizational Tenure

Variables	Tenure	Mean	SD	P-value
Workplace Ostracism	Below 3	1.37	0.55	0.096
	3-6	1.43	0.55	
	7-10	1.23	0.48	
	11 & Above	1.47	0.58	
Need for Affiliation	Below 3	4.39	1.26	0.983
	3-6	4.39	1.36	
	7-10	4.32	1.43	
	11 & Above	4.35	1.51	
Job Tension	Below 3	2.67	0.78	0.729
	3-6	2.71	0.78	
	7-10	2.59	0.76	
	11 & Above	2.61	0.86	
Hurt Feelings	Below 3	1.80	0.57	0.001
	3-6	1.98	0.59	
	7-10	1.64	0.55	
	11 & Above	1.82	0.57	
Neuroticism	Below 3	3.85	1.73	0.260
	3-6	3.88	1.77	
	7-10	3.80	1.55	
	11 & Above	4.38	2.05	
Overt Aggression	Below 3	1.31	0.37	0.128
	3-6	1.37	0.39	
	7-10	1.23	0.36	
	11 & Above	1.36	0.44	
Covert Aggression	Below 3	0.69	0.53	0.047
	3-6	0.84	0.68	
	7-10	0.70	0.50	
	11 & Above	0.65	0.53	

5.7 CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

After EFA, the next step is to confirm the factor reliability and validity by running the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). As a mandatory part of structural equation modeling, CFA confirms factor structure. CFA testifies the significance of the items to the related scales according to the theory. CFA is more parsimonious than EFA in greater modeling flexibility. CFA was performed using AMOS. The validity of measures in the study is based on the data from 502 respondents. All the factors extracted from EFA were entered together. EFA was run using Maximum likelihood, a prerequisite of AMOS to conduct CFA (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Different researchers in different studies use many fit indices. Anyhow, mostly chi-square/degree of freedom ratio (CMIN/df), Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Steiger & Lind, 1980), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI)(Bentler, 1990) are used in social science studies.

Table 5.8
CFA Model Fitness Comparisons

Measure	Alternative Measurement Models			Proposed Model
	One Factor Model	Three Factors Model	Five Factors Model	Seven Factors Model
CMIN	9287.87	4863.75	3668.39	1678.29
DF	1635.00	1632.00	1625.00	1146.00
CMIN/DF	5.68	2.98	2.26	1.46
CFI	0.42	0.75	0.84	0.95
RMSEA	0.13	0.08	0.07	0.04
PClose	0.10	0.06	0.05	0.03

Notes: CMIN = Chi-square; DF=Degree of Freedom; CFI=Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA=Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

For the model fitness measure, we use the threshold values proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999), who suggested that the values of CMIN/df below 3; CFI above 0.90; RMSR below 0.08; RMSEA below 0.08 and PClose above 0.05 represent a good model fit between the proposed model and the data. Further, the value of PClose confirms the hypothesis that RMSEA is less than 0.05. This study includes the above-mentioned fit indices, and the results in Table 5.8 show a good fit between the measurement model and observed data. The values of

CMIN/DF (1.55), CFI (0.90), and RMSEA (1.00) show good fit indices for the measurement model. The results in the table shows that the proposed measurement model of seven factors performs better than the alternative models. These models were drawn by using different arrangements of the variables, for example, by combining the mediating variables, independent variables, and moderators and then at last combining all the variables in a single factor.

5.8 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Correlational analysis was conducted by using a two-tailed Pearson bivariate correlation. There are 15 variables, out of which 8 are demographic, and 7 are study variables. Table 5.9 shows the correlation coefficients of the variables.

Among the 8 demographic variables, the correlation coefficient of workplace ostracism is significant only with sector ($r = -0.101$, $p < 0.01$), showing that employees in the private and public sectors are ostracized. The correlation coefficient of the need for affiliation is insignificant with all demographic variables. Job tension is positively correlated with gender ($r = 0.105$, $p < 0.01$) and negatively correlated with marital status ($r = 0.090$, $p < 0.01$). Hurt feelings are positively correlated with gender ($r = 0.112$, $p < 0.01$) and negatively correlated with age ($r = -0.111$, $p < 0.01$). The correlation coefficient of neuroticism is insignificant with all demographic variables. Overt aggression ($r = -0.090$, $p < 0.01$) and covert aggression ($r = -0.130$, $p < 0.01$) is negatively correlated with age.

Among the study variables, the correlation coefficient of workplace ostracism with job tension ($r = 0.298$, $p < 0.01$) and hurt feelings ($r = 0.504$, $p < 0.01$) is significant and positive. Similarly, the correlation coefficient of workplace ostracism with overt aggression ($r = 0.250$, $p < 0.01$) and covert aggression ($r = 0.205$, $p < 0.01$) is significant and positive. Workplace ostracism has an insignificant relationship with moderators. Job tension is positively correlated with overt aggression ($r = 0.0363$, $p < 0.01$) and covert aggression ($r = 0.320$, $p < 0.01$). Hurt feelings are positively correlated with overt aggression ($r = 0.373$, $p < 0.01$) and covert aggression ($r = 0.303$, $p < 0.01$). The correlation coefficient of the need for affiliation shows an insignificant correlation with all. The correlation coefficient of neuroticism shows a significant correlation with overt aggression ($r = 0.146$, $p < 0.01$) and an insignificant correlation with covert aggression, which is partially in line with our derived hypothesis.

Table 5.9
Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Gender	1													
2. Marital Status	-.236**	1												
3. Age	-.226**	.507**	1											
4. Sector	.083	-.113*	-.150**	1										
5. Industry	-.136**	.088*	.005	.143**	1									
6. Level	-.063	.206**	.363**	.016	-.052	1								
7. Education	.017	.103*	.155**	-.084	.026	.084	1							
8. Tenure	-.180**	.420**	.670**	-.295**	-.001	.239**	-.005	1						
9. Workplace Ostracism	-.007	-.055	-.064	-.101*	-.037	-.079	-.067	.044	1					
10. Need for Affiliation	.075	-.068	-.001	-.022	.049	.041	.007	-.009	.039	1				
11. Job Tension	.105*	-.090*	-.086	.014	-.003	-.019	-.065	-.038	.298**	.493**	1			
12. Hurt Feelings	.112*	-.065	-.111*	-.054	.023	-.038	-.028	-.004	.504**	.263**	.577**	1		
13. Neuroticism	.010	.056	.064	-.037	-.037	.053	-.076	.060	.051	-.018	.041	.032	1	
14. Overt Aggression	-.018	-.013	-.054	-.077	.007	.005	-.090*	.054	.250**	.257**	.363**	.373**	.146**	1
15. Covert Aggression	-.056	-.034	-.066	-.035	-.078	-.084	-.130**	.007	.205**	.112*	.320**	.303**	-.010	.498**

Notes: *p < 0.05; ** P<0.01

The correlation results provide initial support to the study hypotheses that there is a positive relationship between independent mediators and dependent variables. The following sections report the hypotheses testing.

5.9 HYPOTHESIS TESTING – COR PATH

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) uses AMOS to test the study hypotheses. SEM is widely used as a multivariate method for simultaneous analysis of all the study variables. The model shows a good model fit, which is reported in Table 5.9. Indicators of each latent variable are first tested through CFA, establishing the conceptual soundness of the variables used in the final model (Schreiber et al., 2006). The model includes direct and indirect hypothesized relations. The bootstrap method used 5000 bootstrap samples to test the mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). This section will present the test result for each hypothesis one by one.

5.9.1 The Mediation of Job Tension

The study's first hypothesis is about the mediation of job tension between Ostracism and aggression. The results in Table 5.10 show a significant indirect impact of workplace ostracism on overt and covert aggression. Furthermore, the results show that job tension mediates the relationship between ostracism, overt aggression, and covert aggression.

Table 5.10
SEM Direct and Indirect Results-COR Path

Predictor	Outcome	Std. Beta	p-value	
Workplace Ostracism	Job tension	0.298	0.00	
Job tension	Overt aggression	0.199	0.00	
Job tension	Covert aggression	0.189	0.00	
Indirect Effects				
Workplace Ostracism through Job tension	Overt aggression	0.040	0.00	Full
	Covert aggression	0.038	0.00	Full

5.9.2 The Moderation of Need for Affiliation and Neuroticism

The second hypothesis is about the moderation of need for affiliation in the relationship between workplace ostracism and job tension. The results in Table 5.11 show a robust positive moderation implying that the need for affiliation strengthens the positive relationship between workplace ostracism and job tension. Figures 5.4 and 5.5 present this relationship.

Table 5.11
Moderation results-COR

Predictor	Outcome	Std. Beta
Workplace Ostracism x Need for Affiliation	Job tension	469***
Job tension x Neuroticism	Overt aggression	.143 **
Job tension x Neuroticism	Covert aggression	0.007

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.010$; * $p < 0.050$; † $p < 0.100$

The third hypothesis posits the moderation of neuroticism on the relationship between job tension and aggression. The results support the hypothesis partially. The coefficient values in Table 5.11 show the moderation of neuroticism on job tension and overt aggression. It implies that employees with neuroticism personality traits are more indulged in overt aggression. Figure 5.5 suggests that neuroticism strengthens the positive relationship between job tension and overt aggression. In other words, the people who are more neurotic when got tensed at the workplace engage more in overt aggression as compared to those who are low in neuroticism.

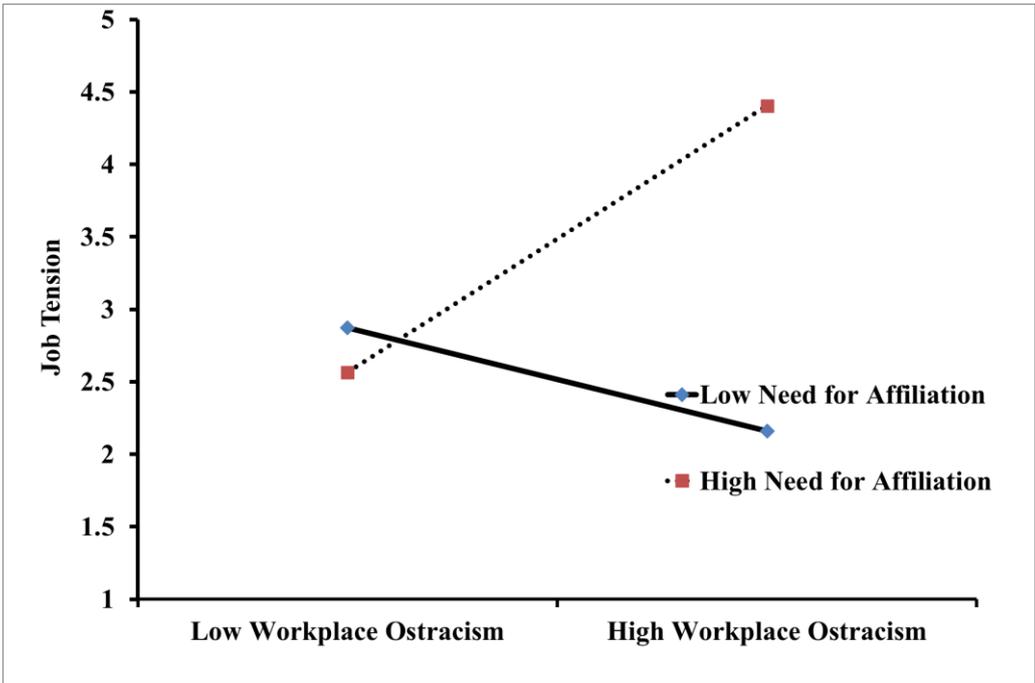


Figure 5.4: Moderation of Need for Affiliation on Ostracism → Job Tension Relationship

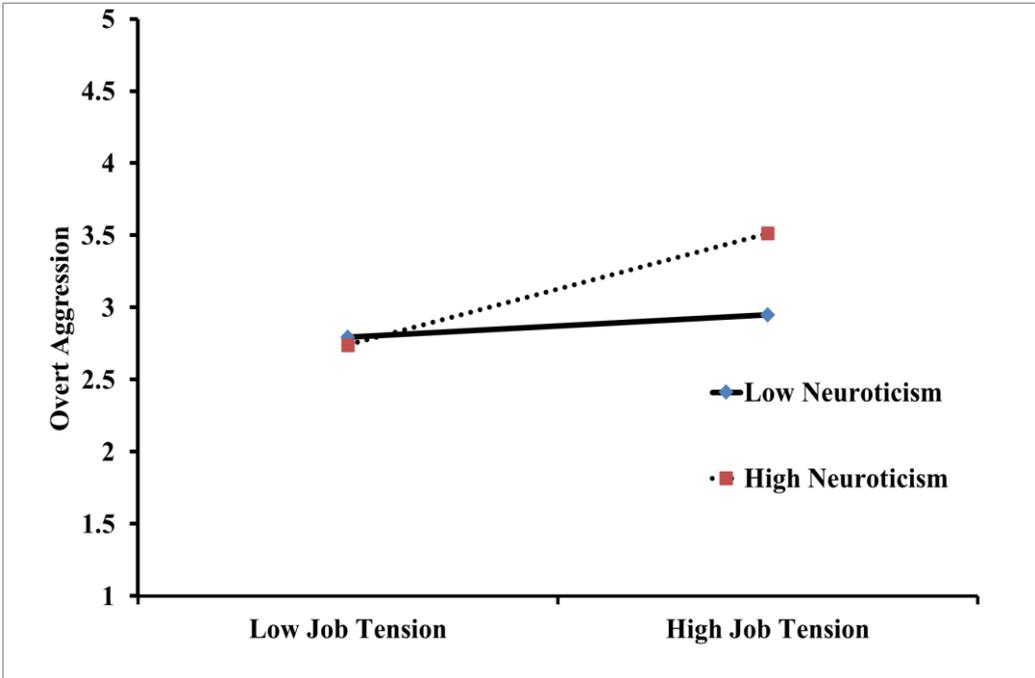


Figure 5.5: Moderation of Neuroticism on Job Tension → Overt Aggression Relationship

5.10 HYPOTHESIS TESTING – AET PATH

5.10.1 The Mediation of Hurt Feelings

The fourth hypothesis posits that hurt feelings could be the underlying mechanism between ostracism and aggression. Results show a significant indirect impact of hurt feelings between ostracism and the two dimensions of aggression. The results in Table 5.12 show that hurt feelings mediate the relationship between ostracism and overt aggression ($\beta = 0.218$, $p < 0.05$) and covert aggression ($\beta = 0.203$, $p < 0.05$). The results also show that in the presence of hurt feelings, the direct relationship between ostracism and overt aggression, and covert aggression becomes insignificant.

Table 5.12
SEM Direct and Indirect Results-AET Path

Predictor	Outcome	Std. Beta	p-value
Workplace Ostracism	Hurt Feelings	0.373	0.000
Hurt Feelings	Overt aggression	0.218	0.000
Hurt Feelings	Covert aggression	0.203	0.000
Indirect Effects			
Workplace Ostracism through Job tension	Overt aggression	0.081	0.00
	Covert aggression	0.076	0.00

5.10.2 The Moderation of Neuroticism

The fifth hypothesis posits the neuroticism's effect on the relationship between workplace ostracism and hurt feelings. The coefficient values in Table 5.13 show an insignificant relationship. The results do not support neuroticism's role in the relationship between workplace ostracism and hurt feelings. (i.e., *H5 is not supported*).

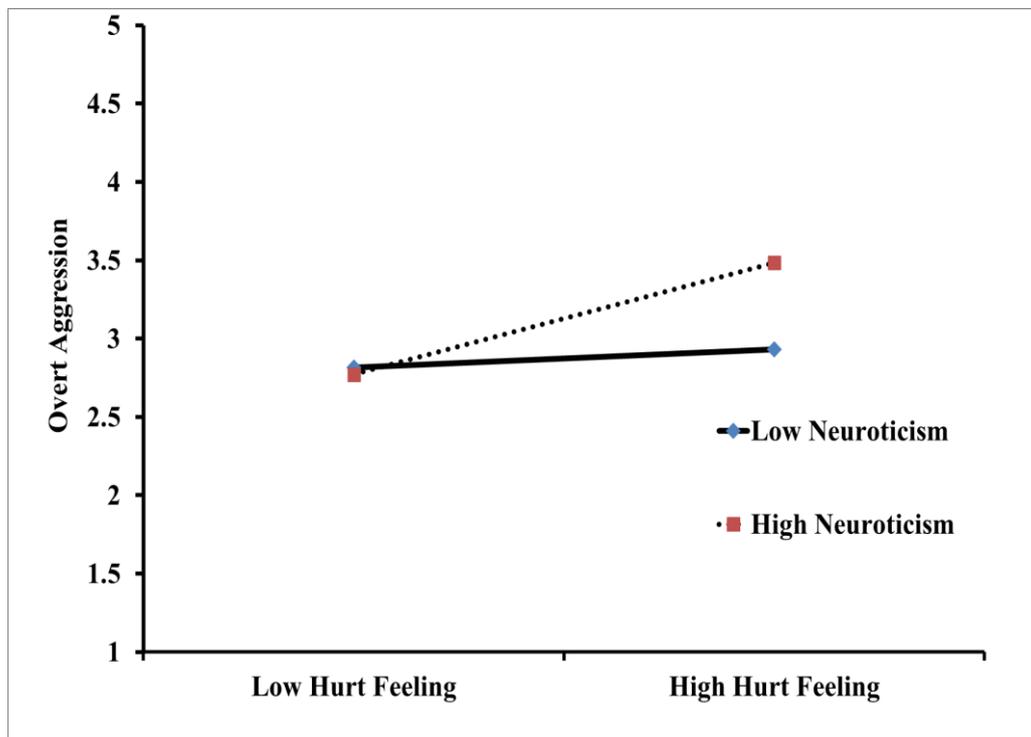
The sixth hypothesis posits the neuroticism's effect on the relationship between hurt feelings and the two dimensions of aggression. The coefficient values show the moderation of neuroticism on hurt feelings-overt aggression ($\beta = 0.138$, $p < 0.05$) relationship (i.e., *H6a is supported*). It indicates that employees with high neuroticism personality traits are more likely to indulge in aggressive behaviors due to hurt feelings. The results do not support neuroticism's role in the relationship between hurt feelings and covert aggression. (i.e., *H6b is not supported*). Figure 5.7 suggests that neuroticism

strengthens the positive relationship between workplace ostracism and overt aggression. When more neurotic people get hurt at the workplace, they engage more in overt aggression than those low in neuroticism.

Table 5.13
Moderation Results-AET

Predictor	Outcome	Std. Beta
Workplace Ostracism x Neuroticism	Hurt Feelings	-0.015
Hurt Feelings x Neuroticism	Overt aggression	.138 **
Hurt Feelings x Neuroticism	Covert aggression	-0.049

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.010$; * $p < 0.050$; † $p < 0.100$



**Figure 5.7: Moderation of Neuroticism on Hurt Feeling
→ Overt Aggression Relationship**

5.11 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The summarized results are stated in the following table.

Statement of the Hypothesis		Result
H1	Job tension mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression.	Supported
H2	Need for affiliation moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and job tension.	Supported
H3a	Neuroticism moderates the relationship between job tension and overt aggression	Supported
H3b	Neuroticism moderates the relationship between job tension and covert aggression	Not Supported
H4	Hurt feelings mediate the relationship between workplace ostracism and a) overt aggression and b) covert aggression.	Supported
H5	Neuroticism moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and hurt feelings.	Not supported
H6a	Neuroticism moderates the relationship between hurt feelings and overt aggression.	Supported
H6b	Neuroticism moderates the relationship between hurt feelings and covert aggression.	Not Supported

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of SEM stated that workplace ostracism has a significant indirect impact on overt and covert aggression. Furthermore, the results show that job tension mediates the relationship between ostracism, overt aggression, and covert aggression. It is also determined that hurt feelings mediate the relationship between workplace ostracism, overt aggression, and covert aggression. Further, the moderation hypotheses also got support.

6.1 DISCUSSION

The experience of ostracism in the workplace is very prevalent (Fox & Stallworth, 2005). It is considered one of the workplace stressors that deplete the employees' resources to perform a job and may lead to job tension, instigating aggression among them. Numerous studies have given attention to workplace ostracism as a deprivation of social engagement that directs to a significant threat to belonging, leading to aggressive responses (Buckley et al., 2004; Chow et al., 2008; Chen & Li, 2018; Twenge & Campbell, 2003; Van Beest et al., 2012). When individuals are subject to the state of being alone and forgotten, it is hurtful for them and they are provoked into aggressive behaviors (Steinbauer et al., 2018). Owing to the negative impact of workplace ostracism on the targets' attitudes and behaviors, it is considered one of the risk factors for employees.

It is not surprising that workplace ostracism leads to aggression. However, the present study takes a step forward by identifying the overt and covert dimensions of aggression due to workplace ostracism. No research to date has comprehended the underlying mechanism of how and when employees exhibit overt and covert aggression following ostracism. The present research addresses the questions a) How and when does workplace ostracism lead to overt and covert aggression? b) How does job tension mediate the relationship between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression? c) How do hurt feelings mediate the relationship between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression? d) When does the need for affiliation play any role in changing the workplace ostracism-job tension relationship? e) When does neuroticism play any role in changing job tension-overt and covert aggression

relationships? f) When does neuroticism play any role in changing hurt feelings-overt and covert aggression relationships?

The findings of the first question suggest that workplace ostracism is positively related to covert aggression, but the relationship with overt aggression is insignificant. The result is aligned with aggression literature that when employees are ostracized in the workplace, they exhibit aggression (Buckley et al., 2004; Chow et al., 2008; Chen & Li, 2018; Twenge & Campbell, 2003; Van Beest et al., 2012). The finding is also in line with the notion that the experience of ostracism at the workplace is unwanted, and employees vulnerable to this experience can be provoked into aggressive behavior. As overt aggression is open in intention and does not hide the aggressive intent (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994a), the possible reasons for the insignificant relationship between workplace ostracism and overt aggression might be that employees are hesitant to openly record their responses regarding their clear and open intent to behave aggressively. Employees are also concerned about losing their jobs in a country like Pakistan, which is a developing country with a high unemployment rate, so they might prefer to exhibit covert aggression if they have to, which is a more subtle form of aggression, hide the aggressive intent, and the employee may go unidentified.

The findings of the second question are associated with the intervening impact of job tension between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression. It was proposed that workplace ostracism would positively influence employees' aggressive behavioral outcomes in the presence of job tension. The results indicated the empirical support for the study hypotheses exhibiting the partial mediation of job tension between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression because, in the presence of job tension, the direct effect of workplace ostracism on overt and covert aggression becomes insignificant.

Workplace ostracism is found to affect aggression through the route of job tension. The results are consistent with the previous research and provide evidence that employees psychologically react to environmental disturbances, which may make them aggressive (Chisholm et al., 1983; McAllister et al., 2018). Under COR, the personal resources of employees get depleted due to workplace stressors like ostracism, and they may develop job tension consequently, which leads them to exhibit overt and covert aggression. The results fortify the previous studies that found a positive relationship between job tension and aggression (Duffy et al., 2006; Zhao et al., 2017).

The findings about the third question are related to the intervening impact of hurt feelings between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression. It was proposed that workplace ostracism would positively influence employees'

aggressive behavioral outcomes in the presence of hurt feelings. The results presented mediation of hurt feelings between workplace ostracism, overt aggression, and covert aggression.

The fourth question's findings concern the moderating role of the need for affiliation on the relationship between workplace ostracism and job tension. The need for affiliation was found to have a strong moderation effect. The desire to connect socially is a feature of the need for affiliation. It is proposed that employees with a high need for affiliation are interdependent on others and would sense ostracism effortlessly. According to previous research, individuals with a high need for affiliation are badly affected by workplace ostracism because their self-worth is undermined (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019). Our results support this notion.

The fifth question's findings concern the moderating role of neuroticism on the relationship between job tension and overt and covert aggression. According to the results, neuroticism was found to have a partial moderation effect, and no moderation was found between workplace ostracism and covert aggression.

The sixth question's findings concern the moderating role of neuroticism on the relationship between hurt feelings and overt and covert aggression, respectively. According to the results, neuroticism was found to have a moderating effect between workplace ostracism and overt aggression. When neurotic employees are hurt following workplace ostracism, they may respond aggressively (Watson, 2000).

6.2 RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The present study offers various implications for both theory and practice. A rich framework is offered to academicians and organizational practitioners for extensive research and designing appropriate policies by proposing a model presenting the heinous consequences of workplace ostracism.

6.2.1 Theoretical Implications under COR

The present study makes various contributions theoretically to enrich the ostracism literature. Firstly, the literature on workplace ostracism is expanded by adding negative consequences to the present. The current consequences of workplace ostracism are extended to overt and covert dimensions of aggression. Although it is not surprising that ostracized employees respond aggressively

(Mao et al., 2018) but it has not been anticipated yet that workplace ostracism leads to the overt and covert dimensions of aggression. So the present study takes the initiative to explore these critical dimensions of aggression following workplace ostracism.

Secondly, we examine the effect of ostracism on employee aggression in the workplace. Keeping in view that aggression is most prevalent in workplaces. The behavior of employees has a significant impact on the proper functioning of the organizations. The present study extends the literature on organizational behavior by identifying that ostracism may lead employees to lash out (overt aggression) or display more subtle aggression (covert aggression) at the workplace. Both of these dimensions of aggression can have a devastating impact on organizational productivity.

Thirdly, the present study builds a bridge between two kinds of literature on workplace ostracism & workplace aggression. It extends both pieces of literature by offering empirical evidence for the proposed conceptual framework. Such empirical evidence will be a building block in ostracism leading to aggressive behaviors.

Fourthly, the study unravels the mediating mechanism between workplace ostracism and a) overt aggression & b) covert aggression. Despite considerable research on workplace ostracism, the process through which ostracism leads to overt and covert aggression has yet to be studied. According to the call of researchers, comprehensive studies are needed to explicate the mediating mechanisms (e.g., Balliet & Ferris, 2013; Zhao et al., 2013). The present study investigates the effect of job tension as a process variable between workplace ostracism and a) overt and b) covert aggression drawing upon COR theory. In line with this theory, ostracism depletes the individual resources necessary to support them at work. To protect against further resource loss, the individuals may feel continuous stress leading to destructive behaviors. The findings offer a considerable contribution to the literature on workplace ostracism by going beyond the scope of the underlying mechanisms of workplace ostracism. It also cater for the call for assimilating ostracism within other theoretical frameworks (Ferris et al., 2008).

Fourthly, the present study enhances our knowledge and understanding of antecedents that may exhibit overt and covert aggression in response to workplace ostracism within organizations within the perspective of COR. Such findings on antecedents will play a vital role in determining the factors contributing to aggressive behaviors in the workplace.

Fifthly, our study tests the moderating effect of the need for affiliation between workplace ostracism and job tension. It also tests the moderating effect of neuroticism between job tension, a) overt aggression, and b) covert aggression and further establishes these relationships. Individuals experiencing ostracism feel pain, and the result reinforced the contention that the effect of workplace ostracism may be highly distressing to particular individuals who have a high need for affiliation. Previous research is extended by examining the need for affiliation as a strengthening boundary condition of workplace ostracism. The present study also calls for further provision of moderators that may strengthen or weaken the negative influence of workplace ostracism (Ferris et al., 2015).

6.2.2 Theoretical Implications under AET

The literature on Organizational behavior has been advanced in several ways to the present study findings. First, the current research contributes to the area by offering a theoretical model in the light of AET that explicates the relationship between workplace ostracism and overt and covert dimensions of aggression.

The present study integrates research findings and concepts from workplace ostracism, hurt feelings, neuroticism, overt aggression, and covert aggression literature to suggest a theoretical mechanism by which present consequences of workplace ostracism extend to overt aggression and covert aggression via hurt feelings. The current study takes the lead to introduce hurt feelings as a process variable between workplace ostracism and overt aggression and covert aggression.

The core objective of the present research is to form a theoretical bridge between research on workplace ostracism and workplace aggression by specifying the relationship between ostracized employees and aggressive behaviors. Employing AET, ostracism as an adverse workplace event triggers a negative emotional response, instigating negative workplace behaviors as overt and covert aggression.

The boundary condition of neuroticism extends our understanding of the factors that influence aggressive behaviors and how these factors affect aggressive behaviors at work. The proposed mechanism may inform the organizations how to cope with such circumstances. Organizations can formulate such interventions and programs that may render mitigation and prevention of probable adverse consequences.

Through the theoretical lens of AET, the present study contributes by examining the antecedent of overt and covert dimensions of aggression. Furthermore, the study takes the initiative to provide a direct path that connects adverse workplace events and emotions to negative behavioral reactions, as the path of workplace ostracism leading to overt and covert dimensions of aggression via hurt feelings was still unexplored.

6.2.3 Practical Implications

Given the costly consequences of workplace aggression, it is generally recognized that employees' aggressive behavior is detrimental to organizational productivity and its members. Hence, it is of great concern for organizational practitioners to comprehend what triggers employees to exhibit overt and covert aggression. Both dimensions of aggression are prevalent in workplaces, so the present study's findings offer further insight by examining workplace ostracism and job tension under the conservation of resources theory and workplace ostracism and hurt feelings under affective events theory as possible causes for provoking adverse behavioral reactions. In this vein, organizational practitioners must be aware of workplace stressors and adverse workplace events and cautiously monitor the adverse emotional reactions that may ascend.

The findings of the present study indicate that when employees are ostracized, they tend to have high levels of job tension and develop hurt feelings, which provoke them to behave aggressively in the workplace. Considering the costly consequences of workplace ostracism, managers should exercise preventive measures or try to reduce its adverse effects. There are several ways through which organizations can lessen the occurrence of workplace ostracism. Managers should work on social skill development programs and team-building activities to promote interpersonal interaction among coworkers and supervisors. Task complexity and interdependence among coworkers can be augmented to foster a culture of cooperation (Li et al., 1999; Wu et al., 2015).

Firms should formulate an upbeat response system to detect and cater to existing workplace ostracism. There must be early intervention strategies for helping ostracized employees as ostracism acts as a workplace stressor and depletes the resources of employees necessary to perform at work and leads to job tension. Employees also experience hurt feelings following ostracism, which may trigger aggressive behaviors among them. Managers should take account of the psychological distress observed among employees and should come up with effective measures to alleviate mental stress, such as by offering expert psychological guidance. They should also control adverse workplace events to reduce negative emotional reactions like hurt feelings among employees and

instigating aggressive behaviors. This would help in ensuring a positive workplace climate.

The study's findings identified the need for affiliation and neuroticism as a reinforcer that fortifies the negative impact of workplace ostracism on the aggressive behavior of employees. Therefore employees who are highly in need for affiliation and neuroticism should be catered to by managers with care. Organizations should plan internal social gatherings and leisure clubs to compensate for the resource loss suffered by employees high in need for affiliation from workplace ostracism. Neurotic employees should be provided with an ostracism-free environment and positive workplace climate to ensure their pro-social behaviors are productive for the efficient working of the organization.

Organizations should develop comprehensive policies and procedures that explicitly define and prohibit workplace aggression. These policies should outline the consequences for engaging in aggressive behavior and provide clear reporting mechanisms for employees to report incidents of aggression.

Organizations should also offer training programs that equip employees with conflict resolution skills and emotional intelligence. These programs can enhance employees' ability to manage and resolve conflicts constructively, communicate effectively, and regulate their emotions in challenging situations.

Create a safe and confidential reporting mechanism for employees to report incidents of workplace aggression. Ensure that employees are aware of these reporting channels and are encouraged to utilize them without fear of retaliation. Provide support systems such as counseling services or Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) to assist employees who have experienced or witnessed workplace aggression.

6.3 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTION

The present study inevitably consists of limitations as well. First, as our data is cross-sectional, it limits the causality and directionality of proposed relationships despite the correct theoretical ordering of our variables. In addition, our time-lagged data to capture ostracism instances, hurt feelings, and aggression retrospectively over the previous month may limit the confidence in results. Emotions are short-lived, and asking participants to rely on their memory to express their general feeling on average during the previous month is not an ideal data collection. Therefore, it is encouraged to design daily dairying in the future to assess individuals' affectedness (and subsequent

behavior), specifically in response to an instance of ostracism. It is encouraged to follow longitudinal studies in the future so that a) direction of the proposed relationship will be supported in this study, b) causality will be established, and c) the effects of study constructs will be explored over time.

Second, although our sample is in line with the theoretical tenets used in this study (Highhouse & Gillespie, 2009), the generalizability of the findings of the study may be restricted due to the convenience sampling technique. Future researchers can use more robust sampling techniques to address this issue. We followed the recommendations of Podsakoff et al. (2003) and took all precautionary measures to avoid common method bias. We suggest that multisource and multi-time data should be used in the future to prevent the occurrence of common method bias.

Third, we have used time lag, but still, the self-report nature of overt and covert aggression could be perplexed by social desirability. Fourth, our model is being tested using an Asian sample; future studies may focus on whether employees belonging to collective culture are much less likely to ostracize or experience ostracism. We observed the influence of workplace ostracism on the aggressive behavior of employees in the Asian context, due to which the generalizability of our research findings is limited. We expect forthcoming research to reproduce our study in diverse countries. We collected the data using the snowball sampling technique. Although this is a better technique than convenience sampling, it still has some limitations. The sample may create bias as snowballing may result in a homogeneous sample. Due to the homogeneity in the sample, it may be challenging to generalize the results over the entire population. We recommend that future studies use probability sampling techniques to avoid bias in the sample.

Fifth, the focus of the study remained on intended ostracizing behaviors led by coworkers. Future studies should take into account unintended ostracizing behaviors and the application of different approaches like laboratory and field experiments so that the external environment would be controlled better. The present study has not differentiated the sources of workplace ostracism, i.e., whether coworkers or supervisors are exercising the ostracism. Some researchers explain that different foci of ostracism may exert different influences (Ferris et al., 2008; Williams, 2007). We did not establish what would be the effect of workplace ostracism on employees' overt and covert aggression if we differentiate the sources of workplace ostracism. So, future studies may respond to this call by further investigating the influences of different foci of ostracism on job tension and hurt feelings of employees and their overt and covert aggression.

The present study used the theoretical lens of COR and AET to examine the mediating mechanisms between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression. We hope that future studies will apply different theoretical frameworks to expound on the influential process of workplace ostracism. We investigated that workplace ostracism is more harmful to employees under the boundary conditions of the need for affiliation and neuroticism. Other individual differences can also be considered moderators like narcissists, keeping in view that such individuals are self-centered and need to be adored extraordinarily; they may be more vulnerable to workplace ostracism (e.g., Campbell & Foster, 2002). Future studies can also consider individual coping behavioral strategies like impression management.

Our research model consisted of job tension and hurt feelings as mediators under the path of COR and AET, respectively; future research should consider other mediating variables like perceived intensity, perceived intent and anger. Emotional intelligence and organization based self-esteem can also be potential moderators for future investigation. Many personality dispositions can be a part of our model in the future as a coping strategy for workplace ostracism, like psychological capital and self-compassion. Research investigating the moderating role of psychological capital on the influence of workplace ostracism on work-related behavioral outcomes is limited (Zheng et al., 2016). Self-compassion can also be a potential moderator in our model. Considering that individuals who are self-compassionate show self-kindness and mindfulness, they may easily cope with instances of stress and pain (Neff, 2003). Future research should examine the moderating role of self-compassion on the effects of workplace ostracism on adverse behavioral outcomes. Attributes of both psychological capital and self-compassion are favorable towards the coping mechanism between workplace ostracism and aggressive behaviors, so it is recommended to test the buffering effects of these personal resources on the relationship between the mediator and outcome variables (job tension and a) overt aggression b) covert aggression and hurt feelings and a) overt aggression b) covert aggression in our model). This way, valuable insights would be added to the framework of COR and AET.

Future research may also outspread the scope of affective workplace events from negative to positive. Future studies may ascertain the effects of perceived support and empowering leadership on employee aggression through the mediating mechanism of affect. We hope valuable insights will be produced through this stimulating research avenue for theory and practice.

6.4 CONCLUSION

Under the path of COR and AET, the present study examines whether, how, and when workplace ostracism affects employees' aggressive behaviors. A potential theoretical framework was identified indicating the influence of workplace ostracism on targets' aggressive behaviors by focusing on the overt and covert dimensions of aggression. This framework helps understand what predicts overt and covert aggression in the workplace. The study also contributes to the literature on organizational behavior by explicating the role of workplace ostracism in recognizing what makes employees lash out and display subtle aggression. We got the support that workplace ostracism positively influences job tension which in turn instigates aggression among employees. We also got partial support that workplace ostracism generates hurt feelings that lead to aggression among employees. The study did not provide evidence that the need for affiliation and neuroticism have moderation effects on the ostracism-overt and covert aggression relationship. We hope the present study will stimulate future research to explore the effects of workplace ostracism, contingencies, and other processes that form the relationship between workplace ostracism and overt and covert aggression. The managers may find this study helpful in reducing the costs associated with such negative behaviors.

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ANNEXURE A

Survey Questionnaire

(For Permanent Employees – Time 1)

Dear Sir/Madam!

The study aims at investigating your experiences at the workplace and the description about yourself as a person. We are ethically bound to assure the confidentiality and anonymity. The data will only be used for academic purpose without any individual analysis. We highly appreciate you for extending honest support and sparing precious time in this research endeavor.

1. Please indicate the frequency with which you were subjected to following experiences at work in the current organization during the <u>last one month</u> (X)	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Often	Constantly	Always
a. Others ignored you at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Others left the area when you entered.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Your greetings have gone unanswered at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. You involuntarily sat alone in a crowded lunchroom at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. Others avoided you at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f. You noticed others would not look at you at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g. Others at work shut you out of the conversation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h. Others refused to talk to you at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i. Others at work treated you as if you weren't there.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j. Others at work did not invite you or ask you if you wanted anything when they went out for a coffee break.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Qadeer & Abrar

2. Please encircle only one number against each of the following statements that represent the extent of <u>your</u> agreement or disagreement (M1)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I think being close to others, listening to them, and relating to them on a one to-one level is one of my favorite and most satisfying pastimes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Just being around others and finding out about them is one of the most interesting things I can think of doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. I feel like I have really accomplished something valuable when I am able to get close to someone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. One of the most enjoyable things I can think of that I like to do is just watching people and seeing what they are like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. I would find it very satisfying to be able to form new friendships with whomever I liked.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

How Accurately Can You Describe Yourself?

3. Please use this list of common human traits to describe yourself as accurately as possible.

Describe yourself as you see yourself at the present time, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you are generally or typically, as compared with other persons you know of the same sex and of roughly your same age.

Before each trait, please write a number indicating how accurately that trait describes you, using the following rating scale:

<i>Inaccurate</i>				?	<i>Accurate</i>			
<i>Extremely</i>	<i>very</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Slightly</i>		<i>Slightly</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Very</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
-----	Careless	-----	Fretful	-----	Organized	-----	Systematic	
-----	Cold	-----	Harsh	-----	Practical	-----	Temperamental	
-----	Cooperative	-----	Inefficient	-----	Relaxed	-----	Touchy	
-----	Disorganized	-----	Jealous	-----	Rude	-----	Unenvious	
-----	Efficient	-----	Kind	-----	Sloppy	-----	Unsympathetic	
-----	Envious	-----	Moody	-----	Sympathetic	-----	Warm	

Personal and Organizational Information						
Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female			Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married			
Age: <input type="checkbox"/> Below 25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-45 <input type="checkbox"/> 46-55 <input type="checkbox"/> 56 – 65 <input type="checkbox"/> Above 65						
Sector: <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private			Industry: <input type="checkbox"/> Services <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing			
Hierarchical Level: <input type="checkbox"/> Lower <input type="checkbox"/> Middle <input type="checkbox"/> Upper						
Formal Education (years):			Tenure in this organization (years):			
Last four digits of your cell number:						

Qadeer & Abrar

Thank You Very Much

ANNEXURE B

Survey Questionnaire

(For Permanent Employees – Time 2)

Dear Sir/Madam!

This is a follow-up survey, and it aims to analyze your feeling regarding the job and your workplace behaviors. The anonymity of participants will be strictly retained, and aggregate results will be used for research purposes only by combining several hundred questionnaires. An honest feedback will be very helpful to enhance our workplace knowledge. Thank you so much for the time and cooperation.

1. Please read each of the following words and indicate to what extent you feel the following way corresponding to the first survey's reporting period, that is, how you feel on average. Please use the following scale to mark the appropriate answer in the space adjacent to that word. (Hurt feelings-M2)

<i>Very slightly or not at all</i>	<i>A little</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Quite a bit</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
1	2	3	4	5
----- Interested	----- Guilty	----- Irritable	----- Determined	
----- Distressed	----- Scared	----- Alert	----- Attentive	
----- Excited	----- Hostile	----- Ashamed	----- Jittery	
----- Upset	----- Enthusiastic	----- Inspired	----- Active	
----- Strong	----- Proud	----- Nervous	----- Afraid	

2. Please encircle only one number against each of the following statements representing the extent of your agreement or disagreement. (Job Tension-W1)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I work under a great deal of tension	1	2	3	4	5
b. I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job	1	2	3	4	5
c. My job tends to directly affect my health	1	2	3	4	5
d. I have felt nervous before attending meetings in this company	1	2	3	4	5
e. If I had a different job, my health would probably improve	1	2	3	4	5
f. I have had trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep	1	2	3	4	5

3. For each of the following statements, how often you have behaved in the ways described. Please fill in the number in the box to the right of each statement on the 5 point scale (OA-Y1)

<i>Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Very often</i>	<i>Always</i>
<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
a. Once in a while I can't control the urge to strike another person.				
b. Given enough provocation, I may hit another person.				
c. If somebody hits me, I hit back.				
d. I get into fights a little more than the average person.				
e. If I have to resort to violence to protect my rights, I will.				
f. There are people who pushed me so far that we came to blows.				
g. I can think of no good reason for ever hitting a person.				
h. I have threatened people I know.				
i. I have become so mad that I have broken things.				
j. I tell my friends openly when I disagree with them.				
k. I often find myself disagreeing with people.				
l. When people annoy me, I may tell them what I think of them.				
m. I can't help getting into arguments when people disagree with me.				
n. My friends say that I'm somewhat argumentative.				

4. When you were angry with a fellow worker at the workplace, how often you have behaved in the ways described as under:	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Always
a. Reducing the other person's opportunities to express opinions.	0	1	2	3	4
b. Judging others' work in an unjust manner.	0	1	2	3	4
c. Openly dismissing the opinions of other employees.	0	1	2	3	4
d. Publicly questioning the other person's sense of judgment.	0	1	2	3	4
e. Criticizing an employee's work unfairly .	0	1	2	3	4
f. Reducing or increasing an employee's duties to hamper his or her work.	0	1	2	3	4
g. Isolating someone from the group	0	1	2	3	4
h. Spreading false rumors to the other employees.	0	1	2	3	4
i. Backbiting.	0	1	2	3	4
j. Ignoring the person.	0	1	2	3	4
k. Insinuating negative glances and gestures.	0	1	2	3	4
l. Do-not-speak-to-me behavior.	0	1	2	3	4
m. Interrupting someone on purpose.	0	1	2	3	4
n. Imitating an employee's style of walk, expressions, or gestures in a derogative manner.	0	1	2	3	4
o. Refusing to listen to the other person.	0	1	2	3	4
p. Insinuating that the other person has mental problems.	0	1	2	3	4

Personal and Organizational Information	
Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married
Sector: <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private	Industry: <input type="checkbox"/> Services <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing
Last four digits of your cell number:	

Qadeer & Abrar

Thank You Very Much