Organizational cynicism as a mediator in the relationship between workplace ostracism and employee deviant behaviour: A proposed framework

Yusuf Abdulrahim Otori[1] Bakare Mutiu[2] and Ojeleye Yinka Calvin[3]

[1]Department of Actuarial Science & Insurance, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
[2&3]Department of Business Administration, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Kaduna State
Nigeria
Email: E-mail: abdulrahimotori@gmail.com

Abstract
The mechanism or concept of ostracism is based on the proposition of the 'Social Exchange Theory'. Negative responses are generated once any individual or employee feels that he or she is being neglected by peers, co-workers or groups. In the course of reviewing literatures, the relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational cynicism, organizational cynicism and workplace deviant behavior have been established. However, the gap in the literature lies in the non existence of studies that have examined organizational cynicism (OC) as an apparatus through which workplace ostracism affect workplace deviant behavior. It is based on this gap that this article proposed a framework employing organizational cynicism as an intervening factor in the relationship between workplace ostracism and workplace deviant behavior. The on the basis of the literature reviewed, proposes three hypotheses, workplace ostracism and Organizational cynicism have a significant effect on workplace deviant behavior, workplace ostracism has significant effect on organizational cynicism and Organization cynicism mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and workplace deviant behavior.

Keywords: Cyberloafing, organizational cynicism, workplace deviance behaviour

1.0 Introduction
Deviant behavior has been reported to constitute serious threat to service delivery in both public and private sector organizations (Alias & Mohd Rasdi, 2007; Olabimitan & Alausa, 2014), with a prevalence rate of 35% to 75% among workers in Nigeria (Fagbohungbe, Akinbolade & Ayodeji, 2012). Workplace deviant behavior describes the acts of employees in the workplace which are not only considered as being against the norm of work rules and behaviours but also damaging to the organization (Robinson & Bennet, 1995). When the behavior is targeted at the organization (for example stealing, absenteeism or bribery), it may slow down the pace of work and reduce productivity, thereby affecting organizational profitability and loss of legitimacy among external stakeholders (Scott, 2015).

Specifically, willful disobedience, coming late to work and using or taking company properties without authorization have been reported to have 65%, 40% and respectively 80% prevalence rates (Akikibofori (2013). In the same way, stealing organization's properties, scam, deceit, disruption, discourteous, impolite and aggression are known quick way of developing workplace deviance especially among workgroups in

Nigeria in recent times (Otaotu, 2016). Employee deviant behavior is an intention, self inflicted behavior which significantly violates the norms and set rules of the organization and threatens her existence (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). It is also known as wrongful behaviour, organizational misbehaviour, antisocial behaviour, dysfunctional behaviour and counter-productive behaviour (Faridahwati, Chandrakantan & Hadziroh, 2011).

Some factors have been put forward to account for why employees get involve in deviant behaviour at work. Some of these factors are encapsulated in organizational cynicism (OC) (Ay, 2016; Rayan, Aly, & Abdelgalel, 2018; Shahzad & Mahmood, 2012) others attributed employee involvement in deviant behavior to workplace ostracism (R. Chen, Song, Road, Subdistrict, & District, 2019; Y. Chen & Li, 2020; Taimur & Khan, 2017). OC is the harmful approach that is established by persons not in favor of the organization in which they work and involves three dimensions (Ahmed, Kiyani, &Hashmi, 2013).

OC is the characteristics of the employees that are normally be unstable and targeted at employer or the organization (Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998), OC is a trait of employees which may change after some time and it is aimed at the employer or organization. Adverse behavior or emotions about employer organization which is known as cynicism can also be produced to have unfavorable consequences on the productivity of the organization (Tariq & Amir, 2019a). There have been few studies on the field of OC especially in its relationship with workplace ostracism thereby requiring more studies. Cynicism affects adversely on job or task and adaptive performance whereas it is assumed that it

increases CWB. Shahzad and Mahmood, (2012) observed that OC may be an intervening factor in the link between workplace ostracism and various organizational outcomes. After all these outcomes of OC, the proposed research model assumes that OC may lead to enhancing CWB. Cynical behaviour from employees will result in negative working attitudes like CWB.

Workplace ostracism, although some scholars have pointed out that workplace ostracism may lead to counterproductive behaviors of employees. The intrinsic link between workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior may be complex. Therefore, the internal operating mechanism must be further examined. Workplace ostracism is the influencing factor of counterproductive behavior (Chen et al., 2019).

In addition, the development in organizational cynicism is not without enhancement from the organization atmosphere and frame of mind. Organizational cynicism is directly related with the various dimensions of performance like task, contextual or adaptive, consequently affect employee behavior in the workplace. In the course of reviewing literatures, the relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational cynicism, organizational cynicism and workplace deviant behavior have been established (see., Chen & Li, 2020; Haq, n.d.; Liu & Xia, 2016; Mahfooz, Arshad, Nisar, Ikram, & Azeem, 2017; Shafique, Qammar, Kalyar, Ahmad, & Mushtaq, 2020; Tariq & Amir, 2019b; Yeik, 2018), however, the gap in the literature lies in the non existence of studies that have examined OC as a apparatus through which workplace ostracism affect workplace deviant behavior. It is based on this gap that this article

proposed a framework employing organizational cynicism as an intervening factor in the relationship between workplace ostracism and workplace deviant behavior.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Workplace ostracism and Employee deviant behavior

Workplace ostracism is a negative form of interpersonal interaction. It is a painful experience for the ostracized. To Ferris (2008), workplace ostracism is the feeling that employees are rejected and ignored by others in the workplace. For example, the employee is neglected, treated indifferently, or excluded from collective activities, avoided from contact, and hided from public affairs.

Silent treatments, not inviting to lunch, avoiding eye contact and ignoring suggestions of a person in meetings are some fundamental examples of ostracism at work. According to Fox and Stallworth (2005), the Organizations constitute a significant component and field where ostracism frequently takes place. As a unique and powerful phenomenon (Zheng, Yang, Ngo, Liu & Jiao, 2016), ostracism causes feelings of social pain similar to physical pain amongst those individuals who perceive themselves to be ostracized by their colleagues (Eisenberger, Lieberman & Williams, 2003). In contrast to other forms of workplace mistreatment, ostracism can be either purposeful (when the ostraciser deliberately hurts his/her colleagues) or non-purposeful (when the ostraciser inadvertently hurts his/her peers) (Anjum et al., 2019).

To date, many studies have attempted to identify those factors that trigger employee deviance. This stream of research has linked compensation and rewards system, injustice, lack of trust, job performance ambiguity, negative attitudes and injustice to deviant behavior (Litzky, Eddleston, & Kidder, 2006; & Khattak, Khan, Fatima & Shah, 2019). While recent studies have turned their attention towards the impacts of interpersonal negative behavior, such as mistreatment (Mayer et al.,2012) and abusive supervision from supervisors (Tepper et al., 2009; & Javed, Fatima, Yasin, Jahanzeb & Rawwas, 2019), only few have examined the link between ostracism and deviant behavior.

Shafique *et'al*. (2020) examined the influence of workplace ostracism on deviant behaviour and testified the mediating roles of organizational identification, burnout and organization-based self- esteem. The study revealed ostracism to directly relate to deviant behavior. According to them Nurses who are ostracized experience higher burnout in the job and consequently their behaviors in the workplace. Similarly, Chen and Li (2020) examined whether the stressor model can determine the intervening factor between workplace ostracism and employees' unsafe behaviors. The study utilized survey construction workers. The findings showed that that WO has a significant positive effect on psychological detachment and burnout and this consequently influences unsafe behaviors of employees.

According to a study by Baumeister (2007), workers who are ignored from the place of work display little social behavior or provide little assistance to others in the organization. These workers are more inclined to exhibiting behaviors capable of leading to their down fall. Hitlan and Noel (2009) employed survey questionnaires in their study and the result supported the position of Baumeister. Chen et al., (2019) assessed the link between workplace ostracism and unwelcome work behavior of workers. The

study adapted the frustration-attack model proposed by Berkowitz and Spector, and findings were that workplace ostracism has significant effect on work behavior, and psychological contract violation plays an intervening role in the relationship between workplace ostracism and deviant work behavior.

Proposition₁: workplace   ostracism significantly affects deviant behavior

2.2 Organizational cynicism and Employee deviant behavior

Cynicism infers the behavior that can shape a number of thing, Hashmi and Waqar (2018) defined organizational cynicism as employees' attitudes (i.e., negative beliefs, feelings, and other related behaviors) towards their employing organization. To buttress more on this, cynicism is considered a reaction from the traces of employee experience in terms of individual and social reactions. Johnson et al. (2003) believed that social exchange in organizations refers to the actions of organizational members that are prompted by the reciprocity from others. To Johnson *et'al.* (2003), social exchange theory can assist in the framework upon which organizational cynicism should be based.

A positive and significant relationship between OC and deviant behavior has been put forward by Hashmi and Waqar (2018). Furtherr, Bashir (2011) while referring to the previous studies also put forth that adverse behavior follows adverse attitude thus negative actions, OC is related to deviant work behavior and there is a positive relationship between organizational cynicism and DWB. In another study on organizational factors and deviant work behavior on medical officers, Ahmed, Kiyani, and Hashmi (2016) employed instruments from previous researches and the findings showed that organizational

injustice, breach of psychological contract have significant association with deviance but OC has an insignificant impact on the doctors' and nurses' deviance.

Proposition₂: Organizational cynicism has significant effect on Employee deviant behavior

2.3 Workplace Ostracism and Organizational cynicism

The mechanism or concept of ostracism is based on the proposition of the 'Social Exchange Theory'. Negative responses are generated once any individual or employee feels that he or she is being neglected by peers, co-workers or groups. Wu, Yim, wan and Zhang (2012) have identified that these negative responses are not only restricted to reduce social interactions at work thus unable to fulfill the social and emotional requirements of the individuals. Williams, (2007) had found that enhanced sadness and increased sadness and frustration. Williams (2007) investigated and found that these negative responses might lead to bad moods; mental and physical ailment. The negative responses may also lead to loss or damage to the organization which may include reduced job satisfaction (Yeik, 2018); less organization citizenship behavior (OCB) or reduced adaptive performance and enhanced turnover intentions.

Tariq and Amir (2019a) while noting that various employees had reported being left out at the workplace and this might have reduced in-role performance or enhanced counterproductive work behavior. Their study as a consequent put forward a research framework to harness the link between workplace ostracism and organizational cynicism. Yeik (2018) assessed the association between ostracism and cyberloafing based on the principle of CRT. The utilized burnout as an intervening factor between WOS and cyberloafing, the results

of the PLS-SEM revealed that both workplace ostracism and emotional exhaustion have a significant positive relationship with cyberloafing. Similarly, burnout fairly mediates the association between ostracism and cyberloafing.

Proposition3: Workplace Ostracism has significant effect on Organizational cynicism

2.4 Organizational cynicism as a mediator

Violent and aggressive has a positive relationship with organizational cynicism (Lobnikar & Pagon, 2004). Unfavorable results are associated with violation of the psychological contract in workplace that is created of OC (Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003). There are many other causes of organizational cynicism when management lacks trust element (Kim, Bateman, Gilbreath, & Andersson, 2009), biasness in employee related decisions, perceived injustice (FitzGerald, 2002), executives' high compensation policies (Andersson & Bateman, 1997), exhausted from work (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006), fake manifestation (Helm, 2004) and adverse working conditions (Simbula & Guglielmi, 2010)

Empirical research on cynicism in the workplace has found it to be both a consequence of behavioral outcomes (Chiaburu, Peng, Oh, Banks & Lomeli, 2013). However, cynicism has also been associated with positive organizational outcomes. Challenging one's organization and leader exposes one to reprisals, and cynical employees have been found to be burdened by higher levels of emotional exhaustion and lower levels of job satisfaction.

Despite these negative personal consequences, the cynics appear to remain steadfast in their hopeful determination or faith that improvements are possible

(Shahzad & Mahmood, 2012) Organizational cynicism and workplace deviant behavior are two major themes in organizational behavior literature. Ahmed et al., (2016) examined organizational cynicism and workplace deviant behavior relationship. Data were surveyed through self-administered instrument from 332 employees working at separate cadres banks in Pakistan. The findings disclosed that OC and deviance relationship were significant and the link between organizational cynicism and workplace deviant behavior was partially mediated by burnout and negative affectivity moderates the relationship between burnout and workplace deviant behavior.

Kudo, Sakuda and Tsuru (2016) examined the relationship between hope, organizational cynicism and global job performance. This study contributes to the existing literature by discovering a positive relationship between hope and job satisfaction, as well as evidence of partial mediation in regards to organizational cynicism.

Proposition4: Organizational cynicism mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and workplace deviant behaviour
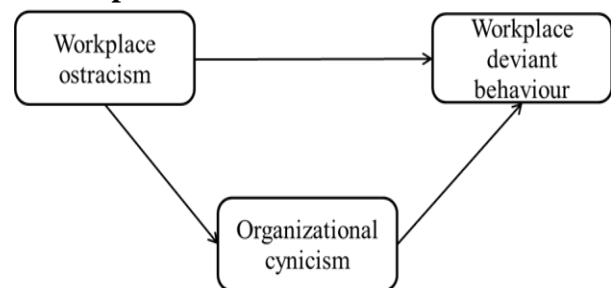
2.5 Proposed model

Figure 1: Research model

3. Conclusion and Implication

This paper has proposed a model on the possible mediating effect of organizational cynicism on the relationship between workplace ostracism and workplace deviant

behavior as shown in Figure 1. The model has a number of implications for curbing employee deviance problem in the workplace, this model put forward if validated finding will provide the management imminent factors causing deviance in the workplace. The paper will also assist in explaining the mechanism through which ostracism in the workplace affect deviance. Further, the paper suggests if the proposed model is empirically confirmed, the finding will have practical implications for choosing appropriate ways of reducing ostracism in the workplace and establish suitable policies to reduce cynicism among employees. Lastly, further researches in this area can take these propositions to the next level by empirically validating the proposed model.

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