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Workplace Ostracism, Emotional Exhaustion, and Deviant Behavior: The Moderating Role of Workplace Spirituality

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Abstract

Deviant behavior poses great risk to the long-term viability of an organization. Nonetheless, available literature in higher education institutions have paid more attention to positive behaviors rather than the negative. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the external factor of workplace ostracism, and the internal factor of emotional exhaustion, to provide a comprehensive view of the causes of such behavior. Additionally, this study tested workplace spirituality as a moderator of the relationship between emotional exhaustion and deviant behavior and between workplace ostracism and deviant behavior. The social exchange theory served as the foundation for the development of the research model. Questionnaires were used to collect data from 194 teachers in Central Java, Indonesia, while PLS-SEM was employed to examine the structural equation model analysis. The results showed that workplace ostracism significantly affects emotional exhaustion ($\beta = .55, p < .00$) and deviant behavior ($\beta = .14, p < .01$). On the other hand, emotional exhaustion affects deviant behavior ($\beta = .11, p < .05$). Workplace spirituality was found to moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and deviant behavior ($\beta = -.10, p < .05$), and between emotional exhaustion and deviant behavior ($\beta = -.14, p < .01$). This research contributes to the advancement of social exchange theory in the context of employees' workplace behavior by exploring the negative side of the exchange between the individual and environment at workplace and how to mitigate it. These findings indicate that universities could support workplace spirituality support and to reduce deviant behavior.

In education teachers emerge as the most critical resource during the learning process (Alkadash, 2020; Pariyanti et al., 2022). Consequently, the governing body of the university has focused on developing the teachers' capacity to handle the various responsibilities associated with their job. However, the vast majority of the literature has mainly focused on members' positive behavior which may support the organizational success, rather than negative ones (Preena & Janadari, 2021). Yet, negative behavior also has real consequences on the organization and may even put the entire organization at enormous risk. Akanni et al. (2018) have stated that employees' deviant behavior has adversely contributed to the service delivery of both private and public sector organizations. Thus, deviant behavior has become a widely discussed and concerned topic around the globe (Adawiyah, 2015). The ratio of organization deviance in the university's workspace is more dominant as compared to interpersonal deviance and the male teaching staff of a university in Pakistan is more deviant at workplace as compared to female teaching staff (Anwar et al., 2011).

Deviant behavior is one of the undesirable acts that pose the most significant risk to the long-term viability of an organization (Jiang et al., 2021). The concept of deviant workplace behavior is becoming essential due to technological advancement and globalization and is crucial to study because it influences employees' behavior at work and damages the image of organizational misbehavior. Deviant behavior is intentional conduct that materially violates organizational norms and endangers the organization's survival, its members' welfare, or both (Agwa, 2018). It is also proven to damage the overall work climate, affect employee productivity, and hinder organizational effectiveness (Liu et al., 2020). Researchers have examined deviant behavior at various levels and forms, such as counterproductive work behavior, antisocial work behavior, workplace violence, organizational breaches, harassment, theft, and others (Jiang et al., 2021; Liu & Ma, 2021; Pariyanti et al., 2022; Zaman et al., 2021). However, research on deviance in non-profit organizations is still limited (Sathappan & Adamu, 2022). Therefore, further investigation might be required to improve the quality of education in the educational environment, which may impact the overall institution performance (Asrar-ul-Haq et al., 2019; Maseri et al., 2022).

Previous research has used workplace ostracism as an antecedent for deviant behavior. Teachers who experience workplace ostracism may feel frustrated, resentful, and abandoned by co-workers or superiors. These feelings can lead to dissatisfaction and an inability to express oneself, leading to deviant behavior as a form of emotional fulfillment or a reaction to perceived injustice. Ostracism in the workplace is a negative form of interpersonal interaction, and it is a traumatic experience for those who are ostracized (Ferris et al., 2008). Ostracism in the workplace is a part of human life because it is a prevalent occurrence that individuals can encounter. It has also been a significant motivator for people to engage in deviant behavior (Gürlek, 2021; Jiang et al., 2021; Keshf & Anjum, 2020; Preena & Janadari, 2021; Shafique et al., 2020; Zaman et al., 2021). Exclusion typically results in negative outcomes because it causes social pain, thus it is comparable to those who experience physical pain because social rejection stimulates similar brain activation (Zimmerman et al., 2016). In general, ostracized individuals believe they have undesirable qualities or are distinct from others (Zaman et al., 2021). Employees subjected to workplace ostracism might be worried about retaliation if they criticize their managers and coworkers (Gürlek, 2021). They engage in deviant behavior to contend with their suffering (Karim et al., 2021).

one antecedent of deviant behavior is emotional exhaustion, which refers to the feelings of energy depletion (Chen & Chen, 2012). It is defined as a lack of energy and a feeling that an individual's emotional resources are used up because of excessive psychological demands (Kim et al., 2009).

Alternatively, Preena and Janadari (2021), and Zhang (2020) found that workplace ostracism negatively affects employees' emotional exhaustion. Workplace ostracism is a part of human life because it is a common phenomenon that can be experienced by individuals, exclusion tends to produce negative consequences because it causes social pain so that it is similar to individuals who experience physical pain because social rejection stimulates comparable brain activation (Zimmerman et al., 2016).

Workplace ostracism is a common experience. For example, in a study conducted by O'Reilly et al. (2015), 70% of the employees stated that they were exposed to ostracism in the past. Again, in a study conducted by the Irish government on 5,200 employees in 2001, 35% of the employees expressed that they were exposed to bullying including exclusionary behavior in the last six months of the study (Hitlan et al., 2006). In a study conducted by Hitlan et al. (2006) with the participation of 5000 people, 13% of the participants stated that they were exposed to ostracism in the last six months of the study. Furthermore, in a study conducted with 2000 managers/employees in the USA, 67% of the participants stated that they did not talk to someone else deliberately, and 75% stated that they were exposed to such a behavior at least once (Harvey et al., 2019). Teachers experiencing workplace ostracism may feel neglected or unappreciated by co-workers or superiors. This feeling can lead to loneliness and social isolation at work, increasing the risk of emotional exhaustion. Workplace ostracism can interfere with social relations and reduce the social support typically obtained from co-workers. Lack of social support can increase feelings of emotional

exhaustion because employees feel they have no place to share the burden or seek help when needed. Emotional exhaustion has been shown to affect both workplace ostracism and deviant behavior (Jiang & Jiang, 2020). Those who are emotionally exhausted feel worn out from their obligations at work result (Golparvar et al., 2014). Emotionally exhausted employees feel less energetic, work less diligently, and are averse to assist others, where deviant behavior is also a consequence result (Golparvar et al., 2014; Jiang et al., 2021). Therefore, reducing employee emotional exhaustion is essential for preventing deviant behavior. While others found no correlation between emotional exhaustion and deviant behavior (Golparvar et al., 2014).

It is imperative that workplace ostracism should be treated seriously to decrease deviant behavior (Gürlek, 2021). The investigation of an intermediary variables is crucial as an effort of findings the solution in minimizing the negative consequences. The importance of intermediary variables in the association is illustrated by a number of researches (Gürlek, 2021; Lim et al., 2021; Muavia et al., 2022). Workplace spirituality has been acknowledge as a significant factor in enhancing positive outcome and promoting healthier environment in organization (Adawiyah, 2020; Sholikhah et al., 2019). Workplace spirituality used in this research is about feeling connected with and having compassion toward others, experiencing a mindful inner consciousness in the pursuit of meaningful work and that enables transcendence (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009). Thus, it is crucial to investigating the spiritual mechanisms involved in the relationship between workplace ostracism and deviant behavior (Jiang et al., 2021). Muavia et al. (2022) emphasized workplace spirituality plays a relatively understudied function in the domain. As a result, we propose that spirituality in the workplace might serve as a moderating variable in the study. The dualistic concept of workplace spirituality is unattached to religion and instead refers to the sustenance of one's soul through interpersonal relationships and a sense of belonging to the workplace and organization (Adawiyah, 2020; Iqbal et al., 2020; Muavia et al., 2022) discovered that workplace spirituality helps workers internalize their company, resulting in positive behaviors that are advantageous to their company. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that workplace spirituality lowers deviant behavior (Adawiyah, 2020; Jiang et al., 2021; Muavia et al., 2022; Pariyanti et al., 2022). Based on the available explanations, it is projected that workplace spirituality will minimize the relationship between workplace ostracism, emotional exhaustion, and deviant behavior. This study employs the notion of social exchange theory to develop a comprehensive model in explaining the mechanism of deviant behavior emergence. Social exchange theory explains how behavior can be formed as a response to the treatment received by someone (Blau, 1964). This logic highlights how organizations can influence the behavior of their employees, particularly in preventing the development of negative attitudes.

The results of this study contribute a novel viewpoint to the existing body of research on employee behavior by investigating the role that spirituality in the workplace plays as a moderating factor in the relationship between ostracism in the workplace and deviant behavior. The present investigation aims to provide a broader explanation of the correlation between workplace ostracism, emotional exhaustion, and deviant behavior and how workplace spirituality will be beneficial in creating desirable results for the organization. The findings also contribute to the advancement of Social Exchange Theory in employee workplace behavior by enhancing literature from different viewpoints and contextual settings.

Literature Review

In this section, the conceptual framework that serves as the foundation for this research will be described. Social exchange theory is a prominent theory that investigates reciprocity between two parties in social research (Blau, 1964), Workplace ostracism refers to the degree to which individuals report feeling ignored or excluded while they are on the job, emotional exhaustion a chronic state of emotional and physical depletion and deviant behavior intentional conduct that materially violates organizational norms and endangers the organization's survival, its members' welfare, or both, workplace spirituality, about feeling connected with and having compassion toward others, experiencing a mindful inner consciousness

in the pursuit of meaningful work and that enables transcendence and the research hypotheses. A more detailed explanation is offered.

The social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory states that interactions among human beings are built to maintain the parity of giving and taking (Blau, 1964). When an organization or company grants rewards, respect, fairness, and several other things to employees, they will have a high level of trust in the organization or company. Then it will increase their willingness to work hard. They will give their best efforts as a reward to the organization (Sora et al., 2021). Previous research on workplace deviance has found empirical evidence showing that employees are more likely to engage in misconduct when they perceive their employers as unfair in their treatment or the allocation of outcomes (Kumari & Dat, 2021). According to this theory, workers are more likely to participate in productive behaviors like improving performance and loyalty when they believe the company pays them appropriately for their contributions. On the other hand, the disparity between employees' contributions and the rewards they receive can lead to a sense of underappreciation and a lack of motivation for them to exhibit positive behavior.

In these circumstances, employees may exhibit their deviant behavior at work as a response to or retaliation against an unjust company that does not provide appropriate rewards. Some examples of deviant behavior are sabotage, stealing, and unlawful absences. According to the social exchange theory, deviant behavior at work is an attempt to get what one deserves in the form of a benefit or reward. Deviant behavior at work for teachers refers to actions that violate the norms and ethics that apply in the academic environment. For example, plagiarism or academic cheating, discrimination, neglect of academic obligations, manipulation of data or research results, involvement in conflicts of interest, arriving late to work without permission, taking extra or longer breaks than is acceptable at work, and spending too much time daydreaming instead of working. In addition, this theory highlights that the relationship between workers and organizations depends on social exchange, in which workers give the organization their time, effort, and skills in exchange for rewards like salary, benefits, and job security. Deviant behavior in the workplace can have many root causes, one of which is an imbalance in social exchange.

Emotional Exhaustion and Deviant Behavior

The main elements of job burnout are “excessive emotional feelings and tiredness”, which are referred to as “emotional exhaustion” (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Employees experience job burnout, according to Hobfoll (1989), when they think their valuable resources are in danger. Emotional exhaustion, described as a chronic state of emotional and physical depletion, has emerged as an essential part of Maslach and Jackson (1981) theory of burnout. In a competitive work environment, employees continuously fear losing resources due to the constant demands placed upon them (Kalra et al., 2021). Emotional exhaustion is a prelude to several critical outcomes of variables in an organization, such as deviant behavior (Reb et al., 2017). In addition, previous research has demonstrated the correlation between deviant behavior and emotional exhaustion (Golparvar et al., 2014; Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018). Based on these theoretical and empirical arguments, the following hypothesis is developed as follows:

H1: Emotional exhaustion has a positive effect on deviant behavior.

Workplace Ostracism and Deviant Behavior

Ostracism, the act of being ignored or ostracized, occurs frequently in the workplace (Ferris et al., 2008). Ostracism in the workplace refers to the degree to which individuals report feeling ignored or excluded while they are on the job (Ferris et al., 2008). It also demonstrated to have a substantial impact on both individuals and organizations (Howard et al., 2020). The effects of workplace ostracism on victims have been exhaustively investigated in management literature (Wu et al., 2011). In a dyadic relationship, those who are shunned by others (such as colleagues or supervisors) may experience harm, loss, or hardship.

In contrast to other forms of workplace mistreatment, ostracism can be either intentional (when the ostracizer deliberately harms his/her peers) or unintentional (when the ostracizer accidentally harms his/her peers) (Keshf & Anjum, 2020). Numerous studies have attempted to determine the underlying reasons of employee deviance to date. This concentrated line of research has linked the compensation and rewards system, inequity, lack of trust, ambiguity in job performance, negative attitudes, and injustice to deviant behavior (Khattak et al., 2019; Litzky et al., 2006). Recent research has focused on the effects of negative interpersonal behavior, such as maltreatment and abusive supervision from supervisors (Tepper et al., 2009), however few studies have examined the relationship between ostracism and deviant behavior in the context of higher education organizations. In addition, there is still a lack of research on specific mechanisms of workplace ostracism (Harvey et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2023).

According to the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Neves & Caetano, 2006), interpersonal relationships are primarily predicated on mutual benefit. Further, interpersonal relationships can only be sustained and harmonious when both parties benefit from the physical and verbal interactions. The Social Exchange Thesis (Gouldner, 1960), proposes that coworkers influence a person's behavior at work. Workers who feel rejected by their colleagues may perceive that they are being treated unfairly and that their basic needs are not being met (Zadro et al., 2004). Consequently, employees may engage in deviant behavior such as fraud, vandalism, and absenteeism to ensure justice and as a reaction to their rejection (Robinson & Bennet, 1995). Thus, workplace ostracism is expected to have a significant impact on the deviant behavior of employees. Previous studies have also suggested a connection between deviant behavior and workplace ostracism (Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018; Jiang et al., 2021). Therefore, this research proposed the following hypothesis:

H2: Workplace ostracism has a positive effect on deviant behavior.

Workplace Ostracism and Emotional Exhaustion

According to Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), employees' emotional perceptions and behavior are affected by affective events. Employee experiences of ostracism in the workplace correlate positively with emotional exhaustion. Workplace ostracism is perceived by the perpetrator as covert or inconspicuous behavior and unfavorable working conditions (Leung et al., 2011; Peng & Zeng, 2017) and according to Robert and Brown (2004), ostracism can put social resources in jeopardy. Workplace ostracism might result in stress symptoms such as anxiety, dread, and depression. As a consequence, those who are rejected at work are stressed and eventually depleted of emotional resources (Wu et al., 2011). The former research found that ostracism at work impacts people at practically every stage of their lives and leaves victims with emotions of helplessness and isolation (Altun et al., 2020; Yang & Treadway, 2018). Moreover, the emotional exhaustion of male employees is significantly correlated with workplace ostracism (Choi, 2019). Considering what was stated, emotional exhaustion might occur from a lack of job and emotional resources. Consistent with previous findings (Chen & Li, 2020; Peng & Zeng, 2017), this study suggests that teachers who experience workplace ostracism may become emotionally fatigued. Consequently, the third hypothesis is as follows:

H3: Workplace ostracism has a positive effect on emotional exhaustion.

Workplace Spirituality has a Moderating Effect on the Correlation between Workplace Ostracism and Deviant Behavior

Organizations with workplace spirituality have better work efficiency than others (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Research has indicated that workplace spirituality can help individuals to become more responsible for self-action and more motivated by their environment (Howard, 2002). Moreover, workplace spirituality has become a topic of discussion in the field of human resources (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Most studies on workplace spirituality have focused on organizational performance (Mohamed & Ruth, 2016).

According to Ahmad and Omar (2014), spirituality in the workplace can help employees monitor their behavior due to how it can function as a form of self-control. Therefore, spirituality in the workplace is expected to reduce inappropriate behavior. A study by Haldorai et al. (2020) involving 360 school employees discovered that workplace spirituality reduces unproductive job behavior. Ostracism at the workplace was found to have a positive correlation with deviant behavior, while the presence of spirituality in the workplace was found to moderate this correlation. Specifically, workplace spirituality was found to reduce the strength of the relationship between workplace ostracism and deviant behavior (Shafique et al., 2020). The present study fills a research gap by demonstrating that workplace spirituality moderates the relationships between workplace ostracism and deviant behavior. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is as follows:

H4: Workplace spirituality negatively moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and deviant behavior.

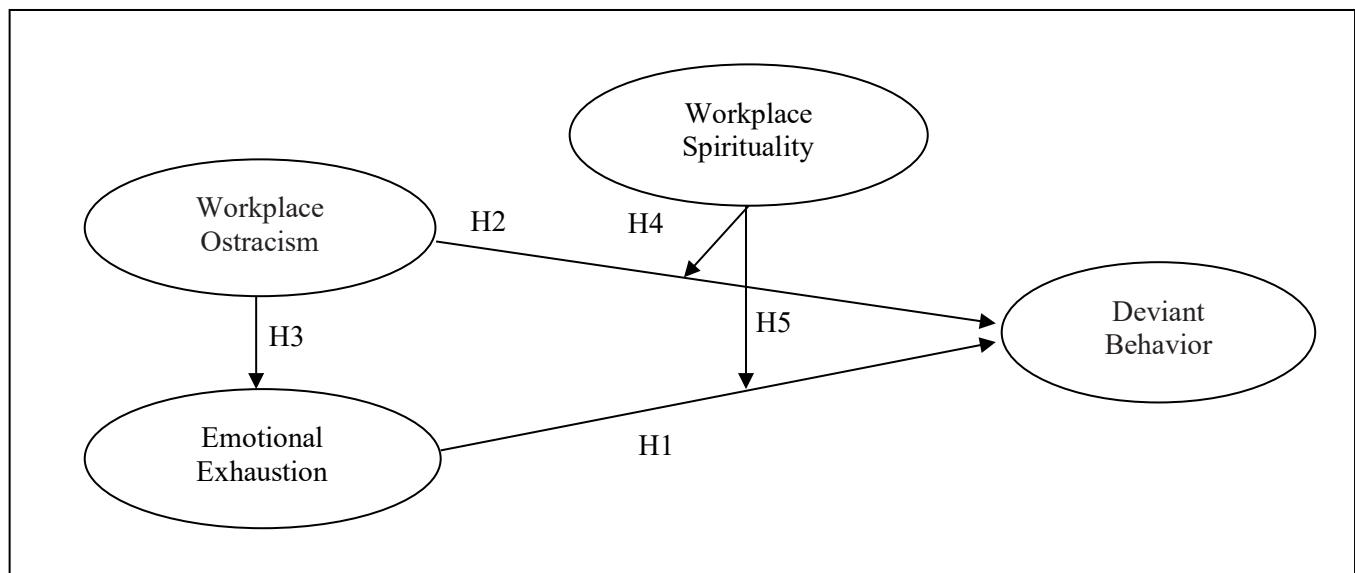
Liu and Ma (2021) examine the moderating role of workplace spirituality in the relationship between emotional exhaustion and deviant behavior. The study proposes a moderated mediation model and tests it using data collected from 366 Chinese employees. The results suggest that emotional exhaustion is positively related to deviant behavior, and workplace spirituality negatively affects deviant behavior. Furthermore, workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between emotional exhaustion and deviant behavior through the mediating effect of negative affect. The findings of this study highlight the importance of promoting workplace spirituality to reduce deviant behavior in the workplace. Employees with high levels of spirituality experience tranquility and patience, therefore, they shall not retaliate against their organization (Pariyanti et al., 2023). Spirituality at work must be well considered and applied at individual, group, and organizational levels, as it can enhance positive effects (Adawiyah, 2020). Based on this, it is proposed that workplace spirituality might play as a moderating variable in the relationship between workplace ostracism and deviant behavior. Thus, the fifth hypothesis is as follows:

H5: Workplace spirituality negatively moderates between emotional exhaustion and deviant behavior.

Through a review of prior research and the hypotheses development regarding the correlation between workplace ostracism, emotional exhaustion, deviant behavior, and workplace spirituality, the following conceptual research model is proposed.

Figure 1

The Proposed Conceptual Framework



Method

Participants

This study involved teachers from various Indonesian universities especially the province of Central Java, including private and state, with a minimum working period of 1 year to test our hypotheses. Data from the respondents were gathered through an online survey utilizing the convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling (also known as haphazard sampling or accidental sampling) is a type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target population meet specific practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or willingness to participate, and are included in the study (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012). Data were obtained from the respondents using Google forms, and questionnaires were used as the data collection medium. Questionnaires were distributed online and via sharing links containing questionnaires via private messages to teachers at various universities. Researchers ask for cooperation through private messages to share links and build connections with other teachers. Questionnaires were prepared in Indonesian language and distributed from December 24, 2022, to March 31, 2023. Questionnaires were sent to 210 teachers, and 194 of them returned (response rate of 92.38%). The number fulfills the minimum requirement of sample, which calculated by multiplying the total measurement items to ten (Hair et al., 2019; Peng & Lai, 2012). According to demographic data, 118 of the 194 (60.82%) respondents were male, 124 respondents (63.91%) hold a master's degree, and a majority of respondents (86.59%) worked in private institutions (n= 168). Finally, 92 respondents (47.42%) were older than 46 years old.

Instruments

In this study, a self-reported questionnaire was employed to measure each variable. The items were measured using a 1-to-5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The measurement items for each variable are explained.

First, workplace spirituality was measured using eight items questionnaire adopted from prior study (Milliman et al., 2018). The sample items are “My work is connected to what I think is important in life” and “I see a connection between work and social goodness”. The scale showed good level of reliability with Cronbach's alpha of .95. Second, emotional exhaustion was measured using three items questionnaire adopted from prior study (Kalra et al., 2021). The sample items are “I feel emotionally drained from my job”, “I feel exhausted from my job”, and “I feel I work too hard at my job”. The scale showed good level of reliability with Cronbach's alpha of .86. Third, workplace ostracism was measured using five items questionnaire adopted from prior study (Ferris et al., 2008). The sample items are “You unknowingly sit alone in a crowded dining room at work. Other people at work treat you as if you were not there”. The scale showed good level of reliability with Cronbach's alpha of .91. Lastly, deviant behavior was measured using the 18-items questionnaire adopted from prior study (Robinson & Bennet, 1995). Some sample items are “Making ethnic, religious, or racial statements at work”, “Taking additional or longer breaks than is acceptable at your workplace”, “Arriving late to work without permission”, and “Discussing confidential company information with unauthorized persons”. The scale showed good level of reliability with Cronbach's alpha of .94.

Procedure

Following the completion of the data collection process, it was double verified and cleaned before it could be analyzed. In order to verify the validity of the assumptions, the structural equation modeling PLS-SEM method was utilized.

Ethical Considerations

This research has been carefully reviewed and approved by the research ethics team of the Management Study Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Indonesia, with certificate no. A 11-III/833-.S.Kep/FEB/2023 issued on March 24, 2023.

Results

This study assessed the convergent validity (CV) and discriminant validity (DV) of a measurement model using the methodology suggested by Hair et al. (2021). The CV could be executed by evaluating the loading factor item using the content validity of the measurement model (Hair et al., 2021). The proposed empirical model was evaluated by calculating the loading factor with cut-off value at .60 using partial least square structural equation model (PLS-SEM) (Hair et al., 2021). PLS-SEM is a statistical program that investigates the relationships between a number of variables, including latent variables and indicators. Furthermore, Smart-PLS 3 was used when the sample size is small and the model is complex (Hair et al., 2021).

The Measurement Model

The measurement model was initially examined to determine the model's reliability and validity. The measurement model was initially examined to determine its reliability and validity. According to Hair et al. (2019), a loading value between .4 and .6 is still permissible, even though an indicator is deemed valid if it is greater than .70. Therefore, the value threshold adopted for this study ranged between .40 and .60. Table 1 presents the results of the convergent validity analysis with factor loadings average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR).

Table 1

The Results of Validity and Reliability Test

Construct	Items	Loading Factor	CR	AVE
Emotional exhaustion	3	.85 - .91	.91	.88
Workplace ostracism	6	.79 - .84	.93	.83
Workplace spirituality	8	.81 - .89	.96	.86
Deviant behavior	11	.72 - .84	.95	.79

According to Table 1, all of the indicators had a loading value greater than .70, allowing the next phase of analysis to be conducted. According to the results of the analysis, the Cronbach alpha values for all variables were greater than .70. Consequently, the research variables were deemed reliable. Table 1 demonstrates that for the constructs of workplace spirituality, workplace ostracism, emotional exhaustion, and deviant behavior, the AVE root value exceeded the correlation value while meeting the required criteria.

Furthermore, according to Hair et al. (2019), discriminant validity is then determined by Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT), taking into account the sensitivity of HTMT in determining discriminant validity. If the A HTMT value < .90, it means there is no significant issue in discriminant validity. The output is shown in the Table 2.

Table 2

The Results of Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) Test

Variable	Deviant Behavior	Moderation Effect 1	Moderation Effect 2	Emotional Exhaustion	Workplace Ostracism
Deviant behavior					
Moderation effect 1	.31				
Moderation effect 2	.40	.32			
Emotional exhaustion	.31	.02	.03		
Workplace ostracism	.38	.04	.08	.23	
Workplace spirituality	.74	.19	.37	.28	.36

Table 3
The Results of Hypotheses Testing

Effect	β	<i>p</i> Value	Conclusion
Emotional exhaustion → deviant behavior	.11	.03	H1 is Supported
Workplace ostracism → deviant Behavior	.14	.00	H2 is Supported
Workplace ostracism → emotional exhaustion	.55	.00	H3 is Supported
Workplace ostracism → workplace spirituality → deviant behavior	-.10	.02	H4 is Supported
Emotional exhaustion → workplace spirituality → deviant behavior	-.14	.00	H5 is Supported

Hypotheses Testing

The final step of this research is hypothesis testing, which is essential for understanding the correlation between each construct. The correlation is considered significant if the t-statistic is more significant than 1.96 and the p-value is < 0.05 . In addition, the direction of the correlation could be determined using a coefficient. The results of hypotheses testing are presented in Table 3.

From the SEM analysis it was found that the deviant behavior influenced workplace exhaustion ($\beta = .11$; $p < .05$), followed by the workplace ostracism ($\beta = .14$; $p < .01$), with statistic significant. The emotional exhaustion influenced workplace ostracism ($\beta = .55$; $p < .00$). The results of this study show that the relationship between workplace ostracism and deviant behavior is moderating by workplace spirituality ($\beta = -.10$; $p < .05$) indicating that H4 is supported. Furthermore, the relationship between emotional exhaustion and deviant behavior is moderating by workplace spirituality ($\beta = -.14$; $p < .01$), indicating that H5 is supported. Following (Shafique et al., 2020), when workplace spirituality entered the relationship between exhaustion and deviant behavior the direct effect was significant. When workplace spirituality entered the relationship between workplace ostracism and deviant behavior, the direct effect was significant. Hence, workplace spirituality is considered as a moderator for emotional exhaustion on deviant behavior and workplace ostracism on deviant behavior

Discussion and Conclusion

This research aimed to investigate the correlation between workplace ostracism and deviant behavior and test workplace spirituality's moderating role. First, the results showed that emotional exhaustion has a positive effect on deviant behavior. Teachers who experience emotional exhaustion are typically dissatisfied with their jobs and feel powerless in the workplace. It further can lead to deviant behavior such as sabotage, data theft, and drug and alcohol abuse at work. Similarly, Zhang (2020) explained that emotionally exhausted teachers are more likely to engage in deviant behavior at work. This result is also in line with the affective event theory, which states that affective events affect employees' emotional perceptions, which in turn influence their behavior (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Long-term exposure to workplace ostracism precipitated by stressful situations leads to emotional exhaustion or a depletion of emotional resources (Wu et al., 2011). This finding also supports the results of studied conducted by previous studies (Golparvar et al., 2014; Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018).

The second finding is that workplace ostracism positively affects deviant behavior. Workplace ostracism may promote deviant behavior in teachers. The majority of teachers who experience exclusion at work respond by engaging in negative behaviors, such as verbal or physical harassment or sabotage (Hüsrevşahi, 2021; Wu et al., 2011). Deviant behavior may occur due to the effect of exclusion at work that may increase stress levels and job disenchantment among teachers. In accordance with the theory of social exchange (Blau, 1964), the essence of interpersonal relationships is mutual advantage (Neves & Caetano, 2006). Interpersonal relationships can only be maintained and harmonious when people's physical and

mental exchanges are mutually beneficial. According to the notion of reciprocity in Social Exchange Theory, employees' behavior at work is influenced by the people with whom they work (Gouldner, 1960). When employees experience isolation or exclusion within an organization, they may feel disproportionately treated in organizational relationships and as if their fundamental sense of belonging has been neglected met (Zadro et al., 2004). To maintain fairness, they may engage in deviant behavior such as larceny, vandalism, and absenteeism (Markova, 2018; Robinson & Bennet, 1995), as a response to exclusion. Further, the findings of this study are consistent with those of Jiang et al., 2021, which demonstrated that workplace ostracism has a positive effect on deviant behavior.

The third finding confirmed the positive effect of workplace ostracism on emotional exhaustion. Workplace ostracism or exclusion can contribute to emotional exhaustion for employees. The pressure of excessive work demands can cause a person to feel drained of emotional energy, feel helpless, and experience feelings of excessive fatigue. Workplace ostracism can lead to stress and emotional exhaustion, while emotional exhaustion can increase feelings of isolation and neglect. Teachers who experience exclusion at work tend to experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion compared to teachers who do not experience exclusion at work (Peng & Zeng, 2017; Wu et al., 2011). In an academic environment, workplace ostracism can be brought on by a variety of factors, including disagreements in viewpoints, discrimination, unfair competition, or cultural mismatch with the milieu of the company. When teachers are subjected to ostracism in the workplace, it has the potential to provide an unsupportive work atmosphere, lead them to feel isolated, and disrupt the ability of academic staff and colleagues to maintain good social interactions. As a consequence of this, the teachers might have feelings of isolation and unappreciation, which would make them less motivated to complete their academic responsibilities. Significant amounts of mental and emotional strain can be placed on the teachers when they are excluded from the profession for an extended period of time. It is possible for it to lead to emotional exhaustion, in which their vitality is depleted, and they feel less capable of coping with the day-to-day obstacles and stresses that they face at work. It has been also demonstrated by Choi (2019) that ostracism in the workplace is positively associated to emotional exhaustion experienced by male employees. Additionally, affective event theory give a supporting explanation that affective events affect employees' emotional perceptions, which in turn affect their behavior (Cropanzano et al., 2003).

The fourth finding indicates that spirituality in the workplace negatively moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and deviant behavior. It is suggested that the spirituality level of employees may help them to reduce the negative outcome of ostracism, especially in developing deviant behavior. Workplace spirituality can help employees cope with stress and strain at work, boost motivation, and enhance organizational performance as whole. Given that they have a strong moral and spiritual foundation, they are better able to cope with difficult circumstances at work, maintain positive behavior, and minimize risks, all of which may result in deviant behavior. This result supports previous study by Haldorai et al. (2020), which suggested the healing effect of spirituality between the presented relationship.

Finally, the results demonstrated the moderating effect of workplace spirituality on the relationship between emotional exhaustion and deviant behavior. Spirituality in the workplace can reduce the possibility of deviant behavior due to the emotional exhaustion experienced. Teachers who experience emotional exhaustion are more likely to engage in deviant behavior given they believe they have lost emotional control and are unable to manage with stress and pressure at work. Spirituality in the workplace can help teachers overcome emotional exhaustion and maintain positive behavior, despite experiencing high levels of tension and pressure at work. According to Milliman et al. (2018), workplace spirituality has three dimensions: meaningful work, a sense of community, and alignment with organizational values. Spirituality can help teachers realize the meaning and purpose behind their work, feel connected to the greater purpose of educating and inspiring students. Consequently, their work becomes more meaningful, which reduces the impact of emotional exhaustion. Through spirituality, teachers can cultivate positive qualities such as empathy, respect, patience, and humility. These positive attitudes and behaviors can help reduce workplace

conflict and create a more harmonious work environment. Moreover, teachers with solid workplace spirituality tend to more easily deal with emotional exhaustion and minimize the risk of deviant behavior. This finding aligns with the study results of James et al. (2011), stating that workplace spirituality reduces counterproductive work behavior. Haldorai et al., (2020) also found that workplace spirituality can moderate the relationship between emotional exhaustion and employee deviant behavior.

Limitations

Despite this study's significant contribution, several parts can be improved for deeper understanding. First, this study only examined the moderating effect of workplace spirituality as a form of individual internal control mechanism. Future research can examine other variables that moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism, emotional exhaustion, and deviant behavior. Second, the data was collected from both state and private universities which may differ in the organizational culture and other environmental factors affecting situational perceived by the participants. Future research can highlight this difference and conduct deeper investigation on the effect of different environmental factors. Third, the study is conducted in Central Java, Indonesia context which may limit the generalizability to countries with similar culture and education system. Future research may examine the model in different setting to increase the generalization and conduct a comparison study between countries.

Implications for Behavioral Science

The study strengthens the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) by incorporating workplace spirituality into the research design. This study provides practical and theoretical implications for behavioral science. First, this study expands on past literature by developing a research model that predicts deviant behavior by examining both environmental factors using workplace ostracism and internal factor using emotional exhaustion. The model provides a comprehensive process by incorporating the theory of social exchange. Second the study also enhances the understanding of the positive coping role of workplace spirituality, especially in minimizing the negative outcome of negative treatment at work. Finally, the study adds an additional investigation related to implementation of social exchange theory especially in higher educational organization.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that emotional exhaustion and workplace ostracism positive effect on deviant behavior. Further, it is also proven that workplace ostracism may increase employee level of emotional exhaustion. Empirical evidence indicates that spirituality in the workplace mitigates the effect of workplace ostracism and emotional exhaustion in developing employees' deviant behavior. This research contributes both theoretically and practically to organizational development, particularly regarding to the importance of managing spirituality in the workplace. Managing high level of spirituality may help organization in coping with the consequences of unpleasant factor of the working environment. Ultimately, management must comprehend that the organization needs to incorporate spirituality in the workplace in order to establish a thriving organization. Finally, this study concludes by highlighting the significance of workplace spirituality as a means to promote employee morale, thereby promoting positive behavior among employees.

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