

# WORKPLACE OSTRACISM AND BANKING EMPLOYEES' COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOR IN THE MALAYSIAN BANKING SECTOR

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## ABSTRACT

*According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, individuals should be able to satisfy their needs for belongingness in their personal and work life. Individuals recognize the value of interpersonal connection as a form of social presence. As a result, it is critical to look at negative attitude and behavior that may occur when employees are disregarded, ignored, or dismissed by the group around them. Hence, this study seeks to examine the impact of workplace ostracism on the counterproductive work behavior of banking employees. Quantitative approach was used in this study where a survey was conducted on selected private commercial banks. Data were collected from 93 bank employees using a Likert scale close-ended questionnaire which included the scale of organizational ostracism and counterproductive work behavior. Regression analysis results revealed the relationship between counterproductive work behavior and workplace ostracism. Implications and limitations of the study are also discussed.*

**Keywords:** Ostracism, counterproductive work behavior, workplace ostracism, banking, bank employees.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The banking industry can be seen as a fast-growing industry in Malaysia where it consists of commercial banks, investment banks, and Islamic banks (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2020). In Malaysia, there are 26 commercial banks where eight are locally owned and 18 are foreign owned banks serving Malaysian and non-Malaysian population (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2020).

The banking industry plays a crucial role in the economy by promoting economic growth and development. According to Rahman et al. (2012), financial institutions function as the pillar of the country's economy and have a direct impact on the development of the nation. Hence, it is vital for the financial institutions to ensure that their employees perform their best to secure sustainability of the organization. Organizations must address the challenges faced by their employees who might lead them to behave in an unwanted manner which may in turn be detrimental and affect the organization (Kanten & Ulker, 2013). Based on KPMG's Malaysia Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Survey 2013, unethical behaviors in the workplace have resulted in over 70 percent of workers losing their morale and efficiency, in addition to financial losses because of unethical conduct in the organization.

Employees spend a large part of their day at work; hence the workplace is highly essential to them. A positive working environment is very critical for employees and to

their organizational success because it influences employees' behavior, which may either help or hurt the business. Therefore, building strong interpersonal relationships among employees has become necessary in their organizational lives and it is also important to ensure a safe working atmosphere. However, when employees are ostracized at work and there is a lack of healthy interpersonal relationships, it brings stress and discontentment to the employees who lower their self-esteem and their feeling of belongingness in the workplace (Yüksel, 2017). Workplace ostracism is where individuals feel that their co-workers are ignoring those (Williams, 2002). According to Wesselmann et al. (2018), employees' psychological health and physical well-being may be affected when there is a decrease in social contact, which is necessary for employees to meet their emotional needs.

Fatima (2016) found that ostracism at work has a positive effect on anti-productivity business behaviors. De Clercq et al. (2018) concurred that workplace ostracism has a negative impact on social interaction and, as a result, employees engage in counterproductive work behavior that could disrupt organizational culture, resulting in significant financial losses for the organization (Tariq & Amir, 2019; Zheng et al., 2016). Coffin (2003) reported that counterproductive work behaviors resulted in approximately 20 percent of business failures which proved that counterproductive work behaviors can be very detrimental even though it is not as apparent as compared to overt monetary measures.

In Malaysia, the study on counterproductive work behavior is still sparse and furthermore, most studies are centered on organizational and individual factors as the reason for counterproductive work behavior (Di Stefano et al., 2019; Kanten & Ulker, 2013; Khan et al., 2019; Nurmaya & Arshad 2020). Therefore, it is important to fill the gap by investigating work-related variable(s) which leads to employees' counterproductive work behaviors. Hence, this study examined the impact of workplace ostracism where the current study maintained that when employees' relationships are affected by workplace ostracism, it becomes a cause of stress which leads to counterproductive work behaviors. This study also examined the influence of demographic profiles on workplace ostracism and counterproductive behavior of employees. On the whole, this study contributes to the literature on counterproductive work behaviors.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Workplace Ostracism**

Workplace ostracism is where employees believe they are being ignored or rejected by others at work (Wu et al., 2010). Examples of behaviors that may lead to ostracism are leaving the room when someone enters, avoiding eye contact with another employee, and ignoring a greeting of an employee. Research reveals that workplace ostracism has a significant influence on individual behavior and attitude as well as organizational performance. According to Williams (2007), when workplace ostracism happens, employees lose their self-confidence and perceive that they are not valuable to the organization which leads to negative behavior. Twenge et al. (2001)

found that individuals who are ostracized are more likely to engage in hostile behavior. A study conducted by Hitlan et al. (2006) revealed that workplace ostracism and employees' mental health were negatively correlated. This study explained that the reaction of the cerebral cortex activation area was consistent with pain endured by an individual which led to despair, lonesomeness, sadness, and other negative emotions. According to Zadro et al. (2004), employees who perceive that they are being ostracized at work have negative emotions like unhappiness and discontentment because their basic needs of self-esteem and belongingness are not fulfilled.

According to Williams (2002), workplace ostracism affects an individual's self-esteem, need of belongingness, sense of control and meaningful existence of the individual. These are seen to be in line with Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory where the individual tries to fulfill these psychological needs. Firstly, the self-esteem of the individual is affected because the ostracized individual feels that he may have done something wrong or has unappealing characteristics to others. Therefore, it leads to a lower self-esteem (Williams, 2002). The need of belongingness is also negatively affected because the individual feels that he is not included in the group which he wants to be related to. Apart from that, it also affects the sense of control of the individual because the individual believes that he lacks the power to attract attention towards himself and his actions are not responsive to others (Williams, 2007). The sense of existence of an individual may also be threatened as the individual thinks there is no meaning for his existence, and he is worthless (Yaakobi & Williams, 2016). Hence, these needs are very important as it can influence the behavior of the individual. According to Eisenberger et al. (2003) numerous researchers have consistently suggested that workplace ostracism is painful, be it psychologically or physically. Therefore, when an individual experiences ostracism, it will increase the psychological distress of the individual (Wu et al., 2012); increase in unethical behaviors (Kouchaki & Wareham, 2015); damaged cognitive function of the individual (Baumeister et al., 2005), and leads to aggression as the individual lacks compassion for others (Twenge et al., 2001).

Robinson et al. (2013) proposed that ostracism can be perceived as behaviors which are either intentional or unintentional. Ostracism may be perceived as unintentional where people are not aware that their actions are socially excluding others (Robinson et al., 2013). However, ostracism is perceived as intentional when people are aware of their actions and are purposefully disengaging and excluding others. In any case, whether ostracism is intentional or unintentional, it is normally detrimental as it creates painful experiences (Williams, 2007).

According to Hartgerink et al. (2015), when there is a culture of ostracism in the workplace where individuals are subjected to exclusion and ignorance by co-workers, stress would naturally arise leading to counterproductive work behaviors. According to Di Stefano et al. (2019) workplace ostracism is pervasive and extensive which impacts on the work engagement and performance of employees in the service industry. For example, the banking sector which is distinct in terms of its inclusivity, interpersonal relationships, and collaborative efforts among its employees, and if employees are

absent due to workplace ostracism it will result in negative outcomes. Therefore, developing a positive working relationship with co-workers is a vital part of organizational life. Literature emphasizes that a strong network of relationships increases the level of organizational effectiveness (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999). When the network of relationships is disturbed by workplace ostracism, it can impact the way employees behave which leads to counterproductive work behaviors (Nasir et al., 2017).

### **Counterproductive Work Behavior**

Counterproductive work behavior is the unproductive act that is considered detrimental to the organization because it reduces the effectiveness of organizational operations and employee performance (Mann et al., 2012; Klotz & Buckley, 2013). Employee behavior that is detrimental to both the employees and the organization such as actions that go against the benefits and interests of the organization are referred to as unproductive work behaviors (Fatima, 2016; Khan et al., 2019). There are so many different terms used to refer to counterproductive work behavior such as aggression (Douglas & Martinko, 2001); workplace deviance (Robinson et al., 2013); organizational deviance (Berry et al., 2007) and antagonistic work behavior (Lehman & Simpson, 1992). All these terms seem to have some common characteristics; firstly, the behavior opposes the usual norms or principles of the organization; secondly, the behavior is damaging and threatens employees and the organization; and thirdly, the behavior results in adverse impact to the organization and employees including other stakeholders of the organization.

Various classifications of counterproductive work behaviors have been proposed from past research. Fox and Spector (1999) divided counterproductive work behaviors into two which are Interpersonal counterproductive work behaviors (CWB-I) and Organizational counterproductive work behaviors (CWB-O). Interpersonal counterproductive work behavior is targeted at individuals such as co-workers, superiors, or subordinates (for instance: shouting, fighting, harassing, scolding someone at work). However organizational counterproductive work behavior is targeted on the organization which affects productivity and performance including the property of the organization (for instance: stealing, damage to property, not being punctual, sabotage). Sackett and Devore (2002) proposed 11 categories of counterproductive work behavior which include: poor attendance; stealing; ruining of property; misappropriation of facts; wasting time and resources; unsafe behavior; low quality work; alcohol misuse; drug substance misuse; unsuitable oral communication; and unprofessional behavior towards co-workers. On the other hand, Spector et al. (2006) proposed five-categories of counterproductive work behavior which include: sabotage, production deviance, abuse, theft, and withdrawal.

Various researchers have found that counterproductive work behaviors affect both the organization and employees in terms of psychological, social, and financial aspects whereby it reduces commitment, productivity, and organizational citizenship behavior, which in turn leads to turnover, lateness, and absenteeism and increases organizational costs (Spector & Fox, 2002). Owing to the significance of

counterproductive work behaviors and the costs that come with it, factors that promote these behaviors should be recognized and managed carefully. Specifically for the banking sector, the adverse effect of counterproductive work behavior is instant, and its outcome will rapidly affect the industry with serious implications.

### **Workplace Ostracism and Counterproductive Work Behavior Relationship**

It can be very hurtful if someone is being ostracized at work because it is a place where friendship, social relationship and inclusion with others are pursued, and it can cause undesirable organizational outcomes. This is because ostracism in the workplace can contribute to employees behaving counter to social norms, resulting in negative behaviors as a reaction. Yang and Treadway (2018) conducted a study on a manufacturing company and found that front-line employees who felt ostracized were more inclined to behave negatively because they had lost their ability to control their behavior. On top of that, numerous previous researches have also revealed that the reason for the increase in counterproductive work behavior was due to workplace ostracism which has a huge impact on employees' attitude (Ullah, 2019; Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018). Based on the discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed: *There is a positive relationship between workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior.*

### **METHODOLOGY**

The target sample for this study consisted of bank employees at different types of banks located in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. A total of 93 responses were collected for this study. The survey instrument was a questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of the respondent's demographic information. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of workplace ostracism scale (Ferris et al., 2008) and counterproductive work behavior scale (Spector et al., 2006).

Workplace ostracism was measured using the 10-items Workplace Ostracism Scale (WOS) developed by Ferris et al. (2008) on a seven-point Likert scale where (1) indicated "never" and (7) indicated "always". Sample items included: "Others ignored you at work" and "You involuntarily sat alone in a crowded lunchroom at work". Cronbach's coefficient obtained from the research conducted by Zhao et al. (2016) was 0.93. The Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist (CWB-C) developed by Spector et al. (2006) was used to measure counterproductive work behavior. A 10-item multidimensional instrument on a five-point Likert scale where (1) indicated "never" and (5) indicated "every day" was used to assess five categories of counterproductive work behavior which included: abuse, production deviance, theft, sabotage, and withdrawal. Sample items included: "Purposely wasted your employer's materials/supplies" and "Stayed home from work and said you were sick when you weren't". Research by Spector et al. (2006) registered a Cronbach's coefficient of 0.90.

### **RESULTS**



To examine the relationship between workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior, correlation and regression analysis were performed by using SPSS. Responses collected through the questionnaires were added to compute workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior. Data were further classified according to the various demographic factors such as gender, marital status, education level, work experience and income groups. Details of participants from various groups are shown in Table 1. A total of 93 respondents were surveyed in this study where 45 were male and 48 were female.

The level of workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior were computed by adding the responses generated on a seven-point and five-point Likert scales, respectively. Since 10 items were included in the scale developed for workplace ostracism, the minimum possible value could be 10 and the maximum possible value could be 70. The mean value was computed by dividing the composite scores for workplace ostracism by the total number of respondents, this returned the mean value between 10 and 70.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Details of Respondents*

Demographic Factor	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	45	48.39
	Female	48	51.61
Age group	< 25 years	18	19.35
	25–35 years	26	27.96
	36–45 years	24	25.81
	46–55 years	23	24.73
	> 55 years	2	2.15
Marital status	Single	36	38.71
	Married	57	61.29
Educational qualification	SPM/STPM	20	21.51
	Diploma/Higher	29	31.18
	Diploma		
	Bachelor's degree	29	31.18
	Master's degree	15	16.13
Work experience	0–5 years	25	26.88
	6–10 years	27	29.03
	11–15 years	23	24.73
	16–20 years	12	12.90

	21 years or more	6	6.45
Monthly income	< RM000	8	8.60
	RM2000–3000	17	18.28
	RM3001–4000	29	31.18
	RM4001–5000	20	21.51
	RM5001–6000	13	13.98
	RM6001–7000	3	3.23
	>RM7000	3	3.23

Similarly, counterproductive work behavior was computed by adding the responses collected through a five-point Likert scale.

Since there were 10 items in the scale, the minimum possible value for counterproductive work behavior could be 10 and the maximum possible value could be 50. The mean value was computed by dividing the composite scores for counterproductive work behavior by the total number of respondents, this returned the mean value between 10 and 50. This approach has been used in previous studies (Parasuraman & Alutto, 1981; Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Hogan & McKnight, 2007; Schaufeli et al., 2001) to assess the mean value for constructs.

The level of workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior were compared across the gender groups by using t-test. As shown in Table 2, the mean value for workplace ostracism was 18.40 among the males and 19.21 among the females. Apparently, females have higher workplace ostracism than males. However, the t-value computed for comparing mean values across genders was -0.44 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Hence, it cannot be concluded that there is significant difference between male and female respondents for workplace ostracism. Similarly, the mean values for counterproductive work behavior were compared between male and female respondents. As shown in Table 2, the mean value of counterproductive work behavior for male respondents was 22.62 and for female respondents was 22.83. The available statistics did not show significant difference between male and female respondents for counterproductive work behavior ( $t = -0.07$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 2**  
*Comparing Mean Values Across Gender Groups*

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t Value	Sig.
Workplace	Male	45	18.40	7.90		

Ostracism						
	Female	48	19.21	9.81	-0.44	0.66
Counterproductive	Male	45	22.62	13.65		
Work Behavior	Female	48	22.83	15.62	-0.07	0.95

Further, the mean values were compared for workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior among respondents classified into two groups according to their marital status: single and married. As shown in Table 3, there were 36 single respondents and 57 married respondents. The mean value for workplace ostracism was 20.33 among the single respondents and 17.86 among the married respondents which showed that unmarried respondents seemed to have relatively higher workplace ostracism results, but the t-test value did not indicate the case. The t-value was 1.31 ( $p > 0.05$ ), hence it cannot be concluded that there is significant difference between single and married respondents for workplace ostracism. It also did not show significant difference between single and married respondents for counterproductive work behavior as the t-value obtained was 0.85 ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 3**  
*Comparing Mean Values Across Groups with Different Marital Status*

Variable	Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig.
	Single	36	20.33	9.73		
Workplace Ostracism	Married	57	17.86	8.28	1.31	0.19
Counterproductive	Single	36	24.36	15.55		
eWork Behavior	Married	57	21.70	14.05	0.85	0.39

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to compare the mean values for workplace ostracism across various groups of respondents based on their age, education, work experience, and monthly income. As shown in Table 4, respondents were categorized into five different age groups: below 25 years old, 25 to 35 years old, 36 to 45 years old, 46 to 55 years old, and above 55 years old. The mean value of workplace ostracism was apparently the highest (mean = 20.96) among respondents aged between 25 to 35 years old. The lowest mean value for workplace ostracism was observed among respondents aged above 55 years old. However, the F-statistic computed to compare the mean values across various age groups was not significant ( $F = 1.19$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Hence, it cannot be concluded that there is a significant difference among respondents of different age groups for workplace ostracism.

Mean values were also computed for workplace ostracism on the responses based on their educational qualifications classified into four levels: SPM/STPM, diploma/higher diploma, bachelor's degree, and master's degree. The mean value computed was highest (mean = 20.38) among respondents having a diploma/higher



diploma, and the lowest was among those who had attained their master's degree. However, the F-statistics was not significant ( $F = 0.73$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), therefore there is no significant difference in workplace ostracism among the respondents with different levels of educational qualifications.

**Table 4**  
*Comparison of Mean for Workplace Ostracism across Various Groups of Respondents*

Demographic Factor	Category	Mean Value of Work Ostracism	F-Statistic	Sig.
Age group	< 25 years	18.17	1.19	0.32
	25–35 years	20.96		
	36–45 years	19.96		
	46–55 years	16.17		
	> 55 years	13.50		
Educational qualification	SPM/STPM	17.25	0.73	0.54
	Diploma/higher Diploma	20.38		
	Bachelor's degree	19.28		
	Master's degree	17.00		
Work experience	0–5 years	19.80	1.04	0.33
	6–10 years	20.67		
	11–15 years	17.26		
	16–20 years	18.08		
	21 years or more	13.83		
Monthly income	< RM2000	18.13	1.48	0.19
	RM2000–3000	19.65		
	RM3001–4000	22.28		
	RM4001–5000	16.45		
	RM5001–6000	15.77		
	RM6001–7000	14.00		
	> RM7000	16.33		

Workplace ostracism was also compared according to the respondents' years of work experience which was between: 0–5 years, 6–10 years, 11–15 years, 16–20 years and more than 21 years. The computed figure shows that workplace ostracism was highest among respondents having 6–10 years of work experience (mean = 20.67), and it was lowest among respondents having more than 21 years of work experience (mean = 13.83). However, as shown in Table 4, the F-statistic ( $F = 1.04$ ) was not

significant which means that there is no significant difference in workplace ostracism among the respondents with different years of work experience.

Based on the monthly income of respondents, seven categories were created as shown in Table 4. The computed mean value of workplace ostracism was observed to be highest for the category with monthly income of RM3001–RM4000 (mean = 22.28) and the lowest was for the category with monthly income of RM6001–RM7000 (mean = 14.00). Results of ANOVA showed that the differences between mean values computed for the various income groups were not significant ( $F = 1.48$ , Sig. 0.19).

In Table 5, the mean values calculated for counterproductive work behavior were compared across various groups of participants. The mean values were observed to be as high as 27.27 among respondents in the age group of between 25 and 35 years old, and as low as 15.00 among those in the age group above 55 years old. The computed value of  $F = 1.65$ , Sig. 0.17 showed that there is no significant difference in the counterproductive work behavior between respondents of different age groups.

Similarly, the mean values for counterproductive work behavior were calculated for respondents categorized according to their educational qualifications. As shown in Table 5, the mean value was observed to be the highest among respondents with diploma/higher diploma (mean = 25.14) and the lowest was among those with master's degree (mean = 19.87). However, the ANOVA result did not show significant difference between respondents of different educational qualifications ( $F = 0.47$ , Sig. 0.70). For the groups created based on work experience, the mean value was highest among respondents having work experience of between 6 and 10 years (mean = 26.19) and the lowest was among respondents with work experience of more than 21 years (mean = 13.83). However, the value of  $F$  statistic was not significant ( $F = 1.70$ , Sig. 0.16) thus indicating that there is no significant difference in mean values for counterproductive work behavior across different groups of respondents in terms of their work experience.

**Table 5**

*Comparison of Mean Values for Counterproductive Work Behavior across Various Groups of Respondents*

Workplace Ostracism and Banking Employees' Counterproductive Work Behavior in the Malaysian Banking Sector

Demographic Factor	Category	Mean Values of Counterproductive Work Behavior	F Statistic	Sig.
Age group	< 25 years	22.61	1.65	0.17
	25–35 years	27.27		
	36–45 years	23.79		
	46–55 years	17.26		
	> 55 years	15.00		
<u>Educational qualification</u>	SPM/STPM	22.35	0.47	0.70
	Diploma/Higher Diploma	25.14		
	Bachelor's degree	22.07		
	Master's degree	19.87		
Work experience	0–5 years	25.76	1.70	0.16
	6–10 years	26.19		
	11–15 years	19.17		
	16–20 years	19.92		
	21 years or more	13.83		
Monthly income	<RM2000	24.88	2.10	0.06
	RM2000–3000	24.12		
	RM3001–4000	28.69		
	RM4001–5000	16.80		
	RM5001–6000	17.23		
	RM6001–7000	12.67		
	>RM7000	25.00		

Further, counterproductive work behavior across the groups created on the basis of monthly income were analyzed. The lowest mean value for counterproductive work behavior was observed among those who earned between RM6001 and RM7000 a month, and the highest was among those who earned between RM3001 and RM4000 a month. The ANOVA presented data ( $F = 2.10$ , Sig. 0.06) did not indicate that there is significant difference in the mean values for counterproductive work behaviors among the groups with different categories of monthly income.

Correlation coefficient was computed to analyze the relationship between workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior. Results of data analysis

showed a significant positive association between workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior ( $r = 0.95$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Regression analysis was performed to analyze the impact of workplace ostracism on counterproductive work behavior, and it was noted that workplace ostracism has significant impact on the counterproductive work behavior of the respondents. As shown in Table 6, the regression coefficients were -6.60 for constant and 1.56 for workplace ostracism. Hence, the hypothesis of this study has proven that there is a positive relationship between workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior.

**Table 6**  
*Regression Model Summary*

Dependent Variable		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	R	R Square	F	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta							
Counter Productive Behavior	(Constant)	-6.60	1.13			-5.85	0.00				
	Workplace Ostracism	1.56	0.05	0.95		28.74	0.00	0.95	0.90	826.17	0.01

## DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Ferris et al. (2008) stated that workplace ostracism is a common occurrence in an organization even though it is taken as less aggressive behavior. Nevertheless, if it persists in the long run, it can accumulate and cause negative effects to employees as well as the organization. Ostracized employees feel they do not belong in the organization, and this makes it difficult for them to engage in productive behaviors; thus, they have the propensity to be involved in negative work behaviors.

Zhao et al. (2013) found that workplace ostracism was positively associated with counterproductive work behaviors and similarly, Jahanzeb and Fatima (2018) also found that ostracism positively correlated with interpersonal deviant behavior. Furthermore, Yan et al. (2014), found that workplace ostracism positively correlated with both individual and organizational counterproductive work behaviors. Likewise, Yang and Treadway (2018) also revealed in their study that ostracism leads to counterproductive work behaviors of employees. Consistent with previous studies conducted, and as hypothesized, this study has found that workplace ostracism is positively related to counterproductive work behaviors among employees working in the banking sector (Nasir et al., 2017; Yang & Treadway, 2018; Zhao et al., 2013). Hence, it clearly shows that workplace ostracism deserves serious attention as it affects the counterproductive work behavior of employees in the organization.

The study provides understanding of how workplace ostracism can have an impact on counterproductive work behavior in the banking sector. Not many researchers have conducted studies on workplace ostracism in the Malaysian culture, which is

collectivist as compared to the western culture which is inclined to individualistic culture. This study has practical implications for the banking industry. Workplace ostracism increases the counterproductive work behavior of banking employees and therefore bank managers should take measures to address workplace ostracism to reduce negative work behavior among employees.

A culture to boost employees' sense of belonging and loyalty can be created to discourage workplace ostracism such as advocating teamwork, encouraging healthy and fair competition, discouraging small groups, and practicing a transparent and open working environment. Other than that, laying down rules and regulations in the organization is another measure that can be taken to eliminate workplace ostracism. Employees who engage in unacceptable behaviors should be penalized for harming the harmonious working atmosphere.

Consequently, organizations should provide psychological assistance such as psychological counseling and treatment for ostracized employees. This emotional support is important to assist employees to reassess their situation and decrease their psychological pressure of being ostracized. Hence, it is equally vital that the organization concerned identifies the source of ostracism.

## **CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The study undertaken was to investigate the relationship between workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior among bank employees in Malaysia where it has been identified that there is a positive relationship between workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behavior. The findings of this study are consistent with previous studies on workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behaviors. It states that an employee who faces ostracism at work will tend to behave in a negative manner. Hence, workplace ostracism leads and contributes to employees' counterproductive work behavior.

This research has some limitations. Due to the lack of time and resources, data were only collected from the banking sector in the Klang Valley that could affect the generalizability of the research. There were some factors such as organizational culture and policy which may have substantial impact on the employees and therefore may distort the study. Hence, further research in different settings is required. Besides that, the participation of the respondents was constrained due to the structured form of the survey. Thus, it would be better to explore further using semi-structured questions via interviews. Furthermore, a mediator could also be employed to explore underlying relationships such as job satisfaction. Employees who are experiencing workplace ostracism tend to experience suffering and dissatisfaction. Therefore, job satisfaction may have an effect on this relationship.

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