Impact of Employee Job Insecurity and Work place Ostracism on Employee Work-life Balance

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Abstract

This study investigates the intricate relationships of Job insecurity, workplace ostracism, and work-life balance. Job insecurity, workplace co-worker ostracism, and employee work-life balance are inter-twined concepts and can significantly influence employee well being and employee performance, that have been the subject of research in recent years. Job insecurity directly affects employee work-life balance and this study tested the impact of coworker ostracism as mediator between job insecurity and work-life balance. A sample of 304 respondents were collected to measure these variables and their connection. The study use self reported instrument and purposive convenience sampling technique to measure the employees job insecurities and its impact on the employees work life balance. SPSS version 25 is used for statistical analysis and Hayes process is employed for obtaining the results of mediation. The study finds that both the variables job insecurity and co-worker ostracism influence employee work-life balance. There is a noteworthy relationship between job insecurity and coworker ostracism and subsequently, ostracism mediates the relationship of job insecurity and work-life balance. The results of this study suggested that organizations must take proactive steps to foster a supportive and inclusive organisational culture and work environment by identifying the connections between job insecurity, coworker exclusion, and work-life balance. The study results found implications for individuals to actively look for assistance, communicate honestly with coworkers, and research stress-reduction and work-life integration techniques to enhance their depleting performance and achieve organisation objectives.

Keywords – job insecurity, coworker ostracism, work-life balance

1. Introduction

Sustainability of employee job advancement is subjected to the instability of transformation in the labour market internally and externally (Fugate et al., 2021). The work life balance concerns are researched well however, measures to provide solutions are still inadequate Liu et al. (2024). Study results found work life concerns lead to family and work disparity because of job insecurity it is further aggravated by techno-overload and a predisposition to work excessively.

Shielding the job and advancing it to sustainability are becoming even more difficult because of globalization, vitality in jobs and constant change in employee-employer relationships Horney et al. (2010).

There are diverse factors which can make employee career sustainability more vulnerable in an employees' span of employment and hence driving the attention toward sustainable careers becomes more important Van der Heijden et al. (2024) essentials of job instability might obstruct employees' career sustainability, which is distressing as employers are demanding more flexibility from the employees with every passing day. Job insecurity/instability elements are comprised of apparent threats of losing the future cherished job benefits i.e. promotion prospects, working conditions and salary growth. Job insecurity is stated to be the employees' unpleasant encounters faced in the working life of individuals; considered to be one of the most described work life stressors (Jiang and Lavaysse, 2018).

Job insecurity is considered to be the basic reasons of all the disappointing work related fallouts i.e. job satisfaction, employee well being, employee engagement physical and mental health and turnover intentions (De Witte et al., 2016; Jiang and Lavaysse, 2018; Griep et al., 2021). Job satisfaction has a strong relation directly and indirectly with job insecurity through work-family conflict Duarte et al. (2024), ample studies has found the relationship of work stress and job insecurity. Job insecurity if seeps into work environment will adversely impact employee productivity Soomro et al. (2024). The dynamic business environment has incited distrustful employee attitudes which consequently lead to destructive behaviours in the organisations Kim & Jo (2024).

Job insecurity and instability has been further aggravated because of labour market dynamics and the radical changes associated to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and post-COVID-19 transformations, these changes brought more frustrations among employees' feeling of losing the job Finstad et al. (2024). Passionate entrepreneurs have a strong bond with their work more than their family life and accept no boundaries. They work long hours to achieve success in their business in the long term and are averse to work life balance Tahir (2024).

Our knowledge of workplace exclusion, its complex effects, and potential remedies that can improve working relationships and employee wellbeing is still lacking Ahmad et al. (2024). Prior studies focused on work-life balance and employment insecurity during the 2008 recession (Green et al., 2016; Imam et al., 2011; Stokes and Wood, 2016; Pakistan). This study

added the dimension of ostracism as a mediator to find its impact along with job insecurity on the employee work life balance. Studies have been conducted on workplace ostracism. However, emphases were not paid to the mechanism to cope with the workplace ostracism which has leaded it to a social endemic in the workplace. Resultantly, the diverse elements of interpersonal neglect remain ignored, i.e. employees' perception about ostracism and its coping mechanism. Factors that bring variations in employee perception, managing strategies and experiences remain un-investigated Sharma & Dhar (2024).

There are varied elements to investigate; future studies can incorporate the cultural and contextual factors which influence the elements of work life balance in diverse societal and organisational context, scant studies has been conducted on institutional structures, societal expectations about perceptions and practices to shape work-life balance (Zihan et al., 2024). This study aims to investigate the role of co worker ostracism in mediating the relationship between job insecurity and work-life balance. Future research inquiry might explore the role of an additional work–family balance mediator and hindrance stressor Petitta et al. (2024).

This study specifically aims to comprehend how co-worker ostracism mediates the relationship between job insecurity and an individual's ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Hence the study concludes to investigate on the research questions: the direct effect of job insecurity on work-life balance and, the mediation of coworker ostracism on job insecurity and work-life balance. The objectives of this study are to explore the relationship of job insecurity and work-life balance with the mediating effect of coworker ostracism.

Prior research on workplace ostracism and work life balance has yielded mixed results. This study integrates social cognitive theory by constructing a multilevel model to examine the relationship between coworker ostracism and work life balance that focuses on the mediating role of job insecurity. Social cognitive theory holds that a person's cognition, which is influenced by their reciprocal interactions with their living environment, is what drives their conduct Bandura (2001). This study investigated how job insecurity and workplace ostracism affect work-life balance, based on the social cognitive theory. Adding to this, Malik et al. (2020) suggested that protracted anxiety and panic can lessen workers' enthusiasm for their jobs and undermine personal drive to strive for efficiency and quality. Individuals may experience more job instability as a result, which could further impair performance by eroding their dedication to company objectives. For this reason, the theoretical foundation of this study is based on

Bandura's social cognitive theory.

Prior study on office isolation and work life stability has brought diverse outcomes. This study incorporates social cognitive theory to examine the relationship between coworker ostracism and work life balance that zeros in the mediating effect of job insecurity and thus construct a multilevel model. This study developed its hypotheses on Social cognitive theory which holds that a person's cognition is influenced by their reciprocal interactions with their living environment, is what drives their conduct Bandura (2001). This study investigated how job insecurity and workplace ostracism affect work-life balance, based on the social cognitive theory.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses development

Operational definitions

2.1 Job Insecurity

Job insecurity is perception to job failure or cherished job elements Klug et al. (2024). Job insecurity is the employee's perception or anticipation of the probable threat or risk of losing their job or experiencing unfavorable employment conditions DeWitte (2005). It has been defined as "perceived powerlessness to keep preferred continuity in a threatened process situation" by Moy et al. (2021). A person's assessment of the possibility of losing their job soon is known as perceived job instability (Vander Elst et al., 2016). The fear that one will not be able to hold their current position in the future is known as job insecurity (Witte, 1999).

2.2 Work life Balance

"Work-life balance is the ability to balance professional responsibilities with personal interests and obligations" (Brough & O'Driscoll, 2010). Work life balance has a significant role in employee performance and congenial work environment Leuhery et al. (2024). There is a high level of dedication and employee commitment on organizations having concern of work life balance (Weng et al. 2023). Employees' perception of organizations positive work life interventions demonstrate reduced level of anxiety and exhaustion and elevated levels of job satisfaction (Jayaraman et al. 2023; Khairy et al. 2023).

Flexible work arrangements have opposing views with respect to work life balance. it can be correlated with better work life balance, however it has negative association with creativity Mattarelli et al. (2024). Alternatively access to work environment of a social organisation designed to foster creativity can bring better level of idea creation at the cost of work life balance. Organizations ignoring work life balance has damaging effect on employee

self esteem, organizational productivity and performance. Employee negative perception of organizational support of work life balance may face increased level of anxiety, exhaustion frustration with their jobs (Ferreira & Gomes, 2023) which could lead to more absenteeism. This study investigates the antecedents of work life balance how job insecurity and co-worker ostracism affects the work life balance of an employee and hence add to the literature with the study's valuable contribution.

2.3 Workplace Ostracism

Employees workplace ostracism is stated as 'an employees' perception to be excluded from task related interventions and social gatherings by other members at work whereas the employee should have been taken on board responded, included and acknowledged ' (Sharma & Dhar, 2021). "it is referred as to the act of overlooking, excluding, with other people or isolating an individual in the work environment, leading to their perceived or actual exclusion from work-related interactions, relationships, and information sharing" (Williams & Jarvis, 2006).

2.4 Job Insecurity has a relationship with Work-life Balance:

Colleagues' worries of negative stereotypes and corroboration on employees' family obligations demonstrate even stronger relationships between emotional Job insecurity and work life balance. Employees who perceived higher levels of family and work threat perceptions are susceptible to the risk of losing one's employment and the reservations that go together with reactions of Job insecurity,   consequently they indulge in behaviours (e.g., working longer hours) detrimental to work–family limits and as a result more physical sufferings Petitta et al. (2024).

The organisation competitive environment creates more uncertainty and brings insecurity to job and its elements. These competitive forces push the employees in a fierce battle to secure their jobs at the cost of their work life balance Sanman et al. (2024). The imbalance of work-life increases stress and employee turnover intention Lestari and Margaretha (2021). Grigoryan (2024) the study finds considerable impact on employee turnover intention because of work life balance and job insecurity.

H1: Job insecurity has an effect on work life balance

2.4 Job Insecurity and its relationship with Co-worker Ostracism:

Intense consequences has been studied of workplace ostracism on employees and individuals, ostracism is correlated with work place isolation Başar et al. (2024) and turnover intention Zhang et al. (2024). Study findings revealed inverse correlation among ostracism and

job satisfaction; it further explore that female colleagues are more expose to ostracism than male counterparts which leads to lower job satisfaction Adnan et al. (2024).

According to Haldorai et al. (2021) coworker ostracism is a form of mistreatment that occurs when individuals in an organization intentionally exclude others from social activities or situations where it was expected to include them. It is widely recognized as a prevalent phenomenon and a topic of frequent discussion in contemporary organizations (Hsieh & Karatepe, 2019). Coworker ostracism increases job-related stress among employees. A study by Glambek et al. (2014) suggests that employees who are bullied, experienced job insecurity about the stability and nature of their work, and they may face the possibility of leaving their job and being marginalized from the workforce Berthelsen et al. (2011) it is found that employees who experience bullying and isolation tend to have the intention to leave their organization, and this intention remains stable over time. However, majority of the employees who has been undergone bullying choose to remain in their current position, even up to two years after reporting the incident, which suggests that the factors that keep them in the organization are highly influential.

Coworker ostracism has been linked to poor job performance, decreased organizational commitment, work discontent, increased unproductive work behavior, and higher intentions to quit Haldorai et al. (2021). Workers who are confident in their jobs may have a detrimental effect on the company Oberai (2021). Workers may believe that the company has broken the emotional contract by failing to provide a safe workplace, especially if they witness their coworkers being shunned (Tian et al., 2014). Employees may therefore view coworker ostracism as a violation of the emotional contract they have

H2: Job insecurity will increase co-worker ostracism are accepted.

2.5 Relationship between Coworker Ostracism and Work-life Balance:

Employees' perceived work place stress increases because of work place ostracism, which leads to work–family disagreements Sarwar et al. (2024). Resilient and supportive organizational culture is required to innovate, the prospective of work place ostracism, the positive organisational culture shields against workplace ostracism and it also endorse intellectual well-being by dealing with the distinctive challenges faced by academicians Jain (2024). Work place stress can be compounded because of employee competition and negative organisational culture. Whereas, positive organisational culture acts as a defensive mechanism of negative forces of work place ostracism

Recent studies show that workplace ostracism regulates a series of mentally

unpleasant events that is; anger (Chow et al., 2008) and negative or bad mood (Gonsalkorale & Williams, 2007) and co-worker ostracism will lead to nervousness and discouragement (Ferris et al., 2008). Ostracized employees take their adverse moods to their home, and it affects them and causes excessive tension in the work-family conflict. In particular, research shows that ostracism can cause actual pain that leads to aggressive behaviour and has a harmful impact on the employee at the workplace (Eisenberger, 2012). Furthermore, social ostracism is miserable in a workplace that is causing sadness, exhaustion (Ferris et al., 2008), ignoring, dissatisfaction (Hitlan et al., 2006), and displacement (De Clercq et al., 2019).

H3: Coworker ostracism has a relationship with work-life balance.
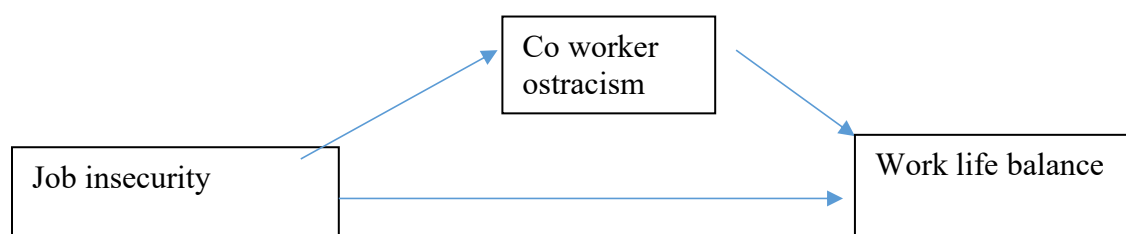
2.6 Coworker ostracism mediates the relationship of Job Insecurity and work life balance.

Workplace ostracism leads to employee counterproductive activities Gunathilaka & Rathnakara (2024). Ostracism is a universally unpleasant experience, but the extent of ostracism's aversive consequences is still being determined. Given ostracism's immediate harm, it is plausible ostracism's consequences are sufficiently strong to effect core aspects of the self. Ostracism leads to pro-social, anti-social and asocial behaviours being determined Wirth et al. (2024).

Job insecurity was found to be positively correlated with psychological strain, lower job satisfaction, and lower organizational commitment in the meta-analytic analysis conducted by Sverke et al. (2002). Ronen and Mikulincer (2012) found inconsiderate bosses can cause insecurity, which can lead to burnout or dissatisfaction in the workplace for subordinate staff members.

H4: coworker Ostracism mediates the relationship of Job insecurity and work life balance

2.7 Research Framework

3. Methodology

This empirical study aimed to investigate the relationship between job insecurity and work-life balance, considering the mediating effect of work place co worker ostracism. It is a causal and cross-sectional study in a non contrived environment. 304 respondents employed in the medium and large organizations were selected to participate in this study. Employees were informed prior to acquire response from each participant, and their privacy and confidentiality were maintained.

The survey was conducted using purposive convenience sampling method. Data was conducted online through Google Forms and by physical visits to the organization. Respondents were selected from a variety of organizations, including service sectors, government agencies, and non-profit organizations that the results could be generalized. The average age of the participants was 29 years, and the majority of the participants were male (58%). Respondents completed the survey that assessed their experiences with coworker ostracism, job insecurity, and their work- life balance.

Study Instruments: The survey instrument were adapted from Brondin et al. (2020) Multidimensional Qualitative Job Insecurity Scale (MQJIS) – 8 question scale, Hitlan and Noel (2009) Workplace Ostracism Sub scale (WOS)–17 question scale, and Fisher-McAuley, et al. (2003) Work/Personal Life Subscale (WPLE) – 15 question scale.

Measures: Responses were given on a seven-point scale, where 1=strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree. To assess the participants work life balance Job insecurity, participants were asked to rate their experiences of being ignored, excluded, or socially isolated in their workplace. Work-life balance was measured by assessing the level of satisfaction and perceived effectiveness in managing work and personal life domains. Job insecurity was examined by evaluating the participants' concerns about potential job loss or uncertain career prospects.

4. Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was used for this quantitative study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS software) version 25 and Hays process macros version 4 for mediation and hypotheses testing were employed.

4.1 Reliability Statistics

Table 1; Cronbach Alpha value of the study variable, Job insecurity; .846 and work life balance792; Work place ostracism is .928, the reliability of all the variables are acceptable at 0.7

is considered to be good where it is considered internally consistent.

Table 1 Cronbach's Alpha:

Work place Ostracism	0. 846	
Job Insecurity	0. 928	
Work life Balance	0.792	

4.2 Demographics

Table 2 shows the study demographics: Majority of respondents (58%) were male, while (42%) were female. The average respondent was between 18-40 years old this suggests that the age distribution was slightly skewed towards younger respondents. The level of qualification was bachelor's degree (42%) and Masters were (38.8). The majority of respondents (64%) were employed full-time, while 24% were employed part-time and 12% were contract employees. The majority of respondents (56%) were married, while 36% were single and engaged and 8% were divorced or widowed. 63% of respondents were parents, while 37% were not parents.

Table 2 Demographic Statistics

Variable	Range	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	176.00	57.9
	Female	128.00	42.1
Age	18 to 25	94.00	30.9
	26 to 40	120.00	39.5
	41 to 50	61.00	20.1
	51 to 60	2.00	9.5
Marital Status	Married	161.00	53.0
	Single	96.00	31.6
	Engaged	30	9.9
	Divorced	17	5.6
Qualification	Matric	31	10.2
	Bachelors	140	46.1
	Masters, MS/M.Phil	118	38.8
	PhD	15	4.9
Experience	upto 5 years	118	38.8
	6-10 years	54	17.8
	11-15 years	40	13.2
	16-20 years	39	12.8
	21 years +	53	17.4
Employment Status	FT	214	70.4
	PT	70	23.0
	C	20	6.6
Parental Status	Parent	148	48.7

Non-parent	145	47.7
Caregiver	11	3.6

Note: N=304, FT (full time employment), PT (part time employed), C (contract)

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 shows the descriptive statics of the study. The average level of co-worker ostracism is 3.03 out of 7, with a standard deviation of 1.31. This suggests that most respondents experience some level of co-worker ostracism, but that the experience is not particularly severe. The average level of job insecurity is 3.76 out of 7, with a standard deviation of 1.22. This suggests that most respondents feel somewhat insecure about their jobs, but that the insecurity is not particularly severe. Similarly, the average level of work- life balance is 4.09 out of 7, with a standard deviation of 0.87. This suggests that most respondents feel that their work-life balance is somewhat not balanced, but that the imbalance is not particularly severe.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Job Insecurity	1.00	7.00	3.76	1.228
WP Ostracism	1.00	6.54	3.03	1.313
Work Life Balance	1.47	6.33	4.09	.877

N=304

4.4 Correlations

The correlation of the variables is illustrated in the correlation Table 4 the study's dependent variable WLB has a correlation of .548** with Independent variable job insecurity, work place ostracism with job insecurity .566**, and mediator work place ostracism has a correlation of .496** all the variables has positive and significant. The study shows a strong correlation among the variables.

Table 4 Correlations

	JI	WLB	WO
Job Insecurity	1		
Work Life Balance	.548**	1	
WP Ostracism	.566**	.496**	1

4.5 Control Variables

The study employs two control variables Marital Status and Parental Status to find out their impact on the dependent variable. Table 5 depicts the model summary of independent variable, mediator with dependent variable. Model is significant, correlation is sixty percent and Change in model R^2 is .3655 which means model is bringing thirty six percent changes in the dependent variable in the direct relationship model.

Table 5 Model summary IV&M-DV (Direct effect) relationship with control variables

R	R^2	F	Df^1	Df^2	P
0.6046	0.3655	43.056	4.000	299.000	0.000

4 .6 Regression Analysis

Inferring the results of table 6 it is found that independent variable Job insecurity has an effect of .2862 means twenty eight percent effect on dependent variable and the results of direct relationship are significant. Mediator work place ostracism has an effect of .1767 means over seventeen percent effects on dependent variable work life balance. The study result also illustrates the results of control variable parental status and marital status. Control variable marital status has an effect of .1070 eleven percent and parental status has -.1812 eighteen negative percent effect on dependent variable work life balance in the direct relationship. These findings suggest that job insecurity and co-worker ostracism are both important predictors of work-life balance

Table 6 Summary IV&M-DV Direct relationship with control variables

	coeff	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
JI	.2862	.0400	7.1494	.0000	.2074	.3650
WO	.1767	.0374	4.7232	.0000	.1031	.2503
Marital Status	.1070	.0516	2.0738	.0390	.0055	.2085
Parental Status	-.1812	.0790	-2.2950	.0224	-.3367	-.0258

Table 7 illustrate the model summary of independent variable relationship with dependent variable, this is the total effect model where independent variable impact is assessed with dependent variable in the presence of mediator, whereas the results of the mediator is not displayed in the model but in the summary it is depicted as indirect effect. Model is significant, correlation is fifty six percent and Change in model R^2 is .3181 which means model is bringing thirty two percent changes in the dependent variable.

Table 7 Model summary IV&M-DV (Total effect) relationship with control variables

R	R²	F	Df¹	Df²	P
0.5640	0.3181	46.658	3.000	300.000	0.000

Inferring the results of table 8 it is found that independent variable Job insecurity has an effect of .3928 means forty percent effect on dependent variable and the results are significant. The result also depicts the results of control variable parental status and marital status. Control variable marital status has .1235 twelve percent and parental status has -.1950 negative nineteen percent effect on dependent variable work life balance.

Table 8 Summary IV& -DV relationship Total effect with control variables

	Coeff	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
JI	.3928	.0342	11.4803	.0000	.3255	.4601
Marital Status	.1235	.0533	2.3183	.0211	.0187	.2283
Parental Status	-.1950	.0817	-2.3869	.0176	-.3557	-.0342

The study's findings of the direct, indirect and total effect of job insecurity, mediation of work place ostracism in the relationship between job insecurity and work-life balance had been displayed in Table 9; the direct effect of job insecurity on work-life balance is also significant (B = 0.2862, SE = 0.0400, T = 7.1494), indicating that job insecurity has a direct impact on work-life balance. Hence **H1**: job insecurity has an effect on work life balance is accepted.

The indirect effect of mediation of co-worker ostracism on work-life balance is significant (B = 0.1066, Boot SE = 0.0285), and LLCI and ULCI are in the same direction, suggesting that co-worker ostracism partially mediates the relationship between Job insecurity and work-life balance and **H2**: Job insecurity will increase co-worker ostracism are accepted.

The results indicated that Job insecurity had a significant total effect on work-life balance (B = 0.3928, SE= 0.042, T = 11.4803). The total effect is the composition of direct and indirect effect (.2862+.1066=.3928), which has been increased from .28 to.39; revealing a significant increase ten percent in total effect. Hence H3: Coworker Ostracism has an effect on work life balance and H4: Coworker Ostracism mediates the relationship of and work life balances are accepted.

Table 9 Summary Direct, Indirect and Total effect

	Effect	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Total effect of X on Y	.3928	.0342	11.4803	.0000	.3255	.4601
Direct effect of X on Y	.2862	.0400	7.1494	.0000	.2074	.3650
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y: WO	.1066	.0285			.0550	.1669

5. Discussion

The research endeavor sought to empirically examine the proposed mediation model to ascertain the impact of coworker exclusion on the interrelation between job insecurity and work-life balance. The research inquiries posit whether coworker ostracism exerts an influence on work-life balance and whether the escalation of job insecurity exacerbates coworker ostracism, as established by the acceptance of hypotheses H1: Job insecurity influences work-life balance and H2: Coworker ostracism exacerbates job insecurity. The research inquiry of the study posits that job insecurity exerts an influence on employees' work-life balance, with coworker ostracism serving as a mediating variable in the relationship between job insecurity and work-life balance. This relationship is further encapsulated in the study hypotheses H3: coworker ostracism impacts work-life balance and H4: coworker ostracism mediates the association between job insecurity and work-life balance. Moreover, it is posited that coworker ostracism does indeed mediate the correlation between job insecurity and work-life balance. Elevated levels of job insecurity are associated with increased levels of coworker ostracism, which consequently results in diminished work-life balance.

Nevertheless, this research does not demonstrate an inverse correlation between coworker ostracism and job insecurity in relation to work-life balance; theoretically, such a relationship should exist, albeit not universally applicable. The study provides empirical evidence to substantiate this phenomenon; the work-life context can be integrated into employees' lives and is perceived as interconnected, where it cannot perpetually be construed negatively. According to Greenhaus and Powell (2006), contemporary literature presents a diverse array of findings that support both positive and negative ramifications (Gareis et al., 2009; Mauno et al., 2011). Certain entrepreneurs prioritize "work" over "family life," reflecting a profound passion for their professional endeavors and are disinterested in establishing boundaries. Sustained long working hours and the management of a successful enterprise over an extended duration have also been found to have a negative correlation with work-life balance (Tahir, 2024).

The examination of gender dynamics is imperative prior to reaching any definitive conclusions, specifically noting that males exhibit a greater propensity to pursue professional objectives as opposed to females, who tend to prioritize familial responsibilities. Individuals without children are generally inclined to enhance their lives through work-related endeavors when juxtaposed with those bearing parental responsibilities (Mauno et al., 2011); therefore, this investigation incorporates data reflecting respondents' parental obligations. To effectively

assess the interplay between parental responsibilities and work-life balance, this study utilized control variables encompassing marital and parental statuses to evaluate the influence of these control variables. The findings delineated in Table 6 reveal a significant effect of 11% attributable to marital status and an -18% negative impact associated with parental status, indicating that parental responsibilities adversely affect work-life balance when analyzed in conjunction with job insecurity and workplace ostracism. This aligns with the assertions made by Mauno et al. (2011), which posit that the parental status of employees can yield detrimental effects on work-life balance.

Considering the existing academic literature, this study posits that the interplay between job insecurity and coworker ostracism does not invariably detract from work-life balance. The descriptive statistics presented in Table 3 serve as a tool to assess the beneficial aspects of work-life balance, particularly as the levels of job insecurity and workplace ostracism reported by respondents are relatively low. Furthermore, a substantial proportion of respondents indicated that their work-life balance is somewhat unbalanced, albeit not acutely so; thus, the study concludes that the positive outcomes associated with work-life balance are deemed acceptable.

Heightened levels of job insecurity are correlated with increased instances of coworker exclusion, which indeed culminates in a detrimental work-life balance. The present study corroborates prior findings by Khalid, Malik, and Atta (2024), which identified employee isolation as a consequence of ostracism. It can be inferred that the research conducted by Shafique et al. (2021) is congruent with other scholarly inquiries and significantly contributes to the existing corpus of knowledge regarding workplace ostracism, as the result indicates a positive correlation between deviant behavior and ostracism within the work environment.

This investigation encompassed a sample of 304 participants, revealing a heightened propensity for stress, anxiety, and depression among individuals who perceived themselves as marginalized by their peers. Furthermore, these individuals exhibited a greater tendency to indicate challenges in reconciling their professional and personal lives. The results furnish empirical substantiation regarding the profound ramifications of coworker ostracism on work-life balance, operating both directly and indirectly via perceptions of job insecurity. Aligning with antecedent studies (Chung, 2018), our findings elucidate that elevated levels of coworker ostracism correlate with a deterioration of work-life balance.

The study's examination of the mediating function of coworker ostracism enhances our understanding of the fundamental mechanisms that interlink job insecurity with work-life balance. In accordance with the findings of László et al. (2010) and Sverke et al. (2002), a principal consequence of workplace maltreatment is job uncertainty. Our investigation specifically indicates that individuals who experience heightened levels of ostracism from colleagues are more inclined to perceive their employment as insecure, which detrimentally affects their work-life equilibrium. These findings corroborate the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which posits that individuals endeavor to acquire and protect resources, including stable employment and a favorable work-life balance. When confronted with coworker ostracism, individuals may perceive their social and psychological resources as jeopardized, culminating in increased job insecurity and subsequent disruptions in the domains of work and personal life. Prior research has established that employees experience job insecurities (Jung et al., 2020; Elshaer and Azazz, 2020; Chen et al., 2022), which consequently motivates them to transition to alternative employment, thereby elevating turnover intentions (Grigoryan, K., 2024).

Early recognition of ostracism possesses developmental advantages (Williams, 2009). Cultivating an inclusive and supportive organizational environment that mitigates coworker ostracism should be an imperative for corporations. The implementation of policies and programs that assist victims of mistreatment, promote robust interpersonal relationships, and address issues of job insecurity can enhance work-life balance and overall employee well-being (McIlveen et al., 2021). On an individual basis, acknowledging the potential ramifications of coworker ostracism and job insecurity on work-life balance can empower employees to pursue support, adopt coping mechanisms, and proactively navigate their professional and personal obligations. There exists a positive correlation between work-life balance and subjective well-being, which subsequently mediates the relationship between work-life balance and venture performance (Drnovšek et al., 2024).

5.1 Practical Implications

Work-life balance (WLB) constitutes an essential component of individuals' overall well-being and serves as a pivotal policy focus at both national and organizational levels across numerous industrialized nations (Filippi et al., 2024). It is advisable for organizations to recognize the sources of occupational stress, such as workplace ostracism and job insecurity, and to foster a more inclusive work atmosphere. Establishing an inclusive culture wherein all individuals are

regarded as welcome and respected, irrespective of their background, race, gender, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic, is paramount. It is crucial to provide training aimed at enhancing employee engagement and conflict resolution. Such training should raise awareness among employees regarding effective engagement and communication strategies, peaceful conflict resolution, and the cultivation of positive relationships with their colleagues. Furthermore, the provision of employee assistance programs, including counseling and coaching, is essential. These initiatives can offer employees vital support and resources to effectively manage stress, anxiety, and other mental health challenges.

Establishing boundaries between professional obligations and personal life is of utmost importance. This entails delineating limits on the amount of time dedicated to work while ensuring the incorporation of breaks and personal time. Open communication with management is essential for individuals experiencing feelings of overwhelm or stress, as they may be capable of assisting in workload reduction or enhancing work-life balance. Prioritizing self-care is critical; individuals should strive for sufficient sleep, maintain a balanced diet, and engage in regular physical activity, preferably through recreational activities. Sustaining one's physical and mental well-being will enhance the ability to cope with stress and improve overall wellness. The general health and well-being of individuals can be significantly improved by achieving a harmonious balance between professional and personal life, thereby enabling organizations to benefit from a more engaged and productive workforce (Shafie et al., 2020). This research serves to inform both readers and managers about the behavioral ramifications of job insecurity and ostracism, highlighting that such issue represent not only a detriment to the individual employee work life balance but also to the organization performance as a whole.

5.2 Limitations and Future Directions

The correlation among job insecurity, work-life balance, and coworker ostracism has been examined within this study; nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge several limitations. The reliance on self-report instruments heightens the possibility of social desirability bias and common method variance. The specific characteristics of the sample may constrain the generalizability of the findings. The quantitative nature of the study does not encapsulate the affective dimensions that may elucidate why, despite experiencing isolation and job insecurity, the participants did not perceive an imbalance in their work-life dynamics. Conversely, parental status demonstrates a deleterious effect on work-life balance. These divergent considerations may pave the way for future qualitative research, which could yield more

profound insights into how various behaviors may precipitate ostracism or job insecurity. Qualitative investigations could also elucidate the underlying reasons for ostracism or job insecurity, thereby enabling a more comprehensive exploration of the issue through qualitative methodologies.

While work place ostracism is recognized as a mediating variable, there exist additional potential mediators that could affect these relationships. Acknowledging these limitations, forthcoming research might adopt a multifaceted methodological approach and utilize objective measures while diversifying the participant samples. Future inquiries could also investigate the influence of organizational culture and the use of whatsapp on work-life balance to enrich our comprehension of this intricate relationship. Subsequent studies could augment the current research by incorporating the dimension of employee performance as an outcome of workplace ostracism.

Job insecurity represents one of the most prevalent stressors in modern occupational settings. Although existing literature demonstrates that the construct of job insecurity encompasses cognitive components (i.e., the perceived adverse alterations to one's employment) and affective components (i.e., emotional responses to the potential job changes) (Jiang and Lavaysse, 2018), future studies could further investigate the affective dimensions of job insecurity while continuing to explore moderating and mediating variables within the cognitive-affective relationship of job insecurity. Furthermore, external factors such as economic conditions or global occurrences could potentially influence workplace dynamics but have not been explicitly examined in this context. The extensive utilization of messaging applications such as WhatsApp and the implications of remote work merit exploration in future research endeavors.

5.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, job insecurity exerts both direct and indirect influences on the equilibrium between work and personal life. The relationship between work-life balance and job insecurity is mediated by coworker ostracism, suggesting that the presence of ostracism may exacerbate the adverse effects of job insecurity on work-life equilibrium. Organizations can implement strategies to mitigate job insecurity and workplace ostracism by cultivating a more inclusive work environment, particularly for female employees and parents who require an improved work-life balance.Training personnel in conflict resolution strategies and providing stress and anxiety alleviation through employee assistance programs are pivotal measures. Through the

adoption of these strategies, organizations can facilitate the enhancement of their employees' work-life balance, potentially leading to increased productivity, greater employee satisfaction, and improved morale within the workforce. Similarly, individuals can take proactive steps by engaging in dialogue with their supervisors, striving for effective interactions with colleagues, and prioritizing self-care to sustain a healthy work-life balance.

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