

# Can Perceptions of Fairness Buffer the Negative Effects of Workplace Ostracism?

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	Abstract

## 국문초록

본 연구는 기업 조직 내에서 일어나는 사회적 상황의 중요성을 토대로 직장 내 따돌림, 공정성, 조직시민행동, 일탈행동, 그리고 역할행동을 연구 하였다. 직장 내 따돌림이 야기하는 결과와 관련된 연구들은 어느 정도 나와 있지만, 아직까지 이러한 연구들은 직장 내 따돌림이 야기시키는 행동적 결과의 조절 변수 효과를 포함 하고 있지 않다. 본 연구는 근로자 246명을 대상으로 종단 적 연구 되었으며, 연구 결과에서는 직장 내 따돌림이 조직시민행동과 역할행동 사이의 부적 관계를 보여준 반면에, 직장 내 따돌림과 일탈행동은 정적 관계를 갖는 것으로 나타났다. 더 나아가, 공정성은 따돌림이 갖는 조직시민행동과 일탈행동 사이의 부적 관계를 줄일 수 있는 것으로 나타났다. 따라서 공정성 인지도가 직장 내 따돌림이 야기시키는 부정적인 행동적 결과를 완화 시킬 수 있다는 것을 본 연구에서 제시하고 있다.

**주제어** : 직장 내 따돌림, 공정성, 조직시민행동, 일탈행동, 역할행동

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## I. Introduction

Social interactions among organizational members is an essential facet of individual and organizational performance (LePine, Hanson, Borman, & Motowidlo, 2000; Sundstrom, McIntyre, Halfhill, & Richards, 2000). The nature of work is becoming more reliant on teamwork thereby increasing the significance of interpersonal relationships. In this perspective, establishing and maintaining positive interpersonal relationships among organizational members is critical. Feeling “out of the loop,” excluded, ignored, or shunned is a common phenomenon that individuals experience across all social contexts (Williams, 1997). The workplace is also a social context where ostracism has been creating some negative effects. Subsequently, research on workplace ostracism has been gaining some attention (Robinson, O’Reilly, & Wang, 2013) as it has been found to negatively affect individuals and result in unfavorable workplace attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, it is pertinent for organizations to address this issue and provide ways to prevent workplace ostracism as well as to mitigate the effects of workplace ostracism on workplace attitudes and behaviors.

Previous research has found workplace ostracism to be associated with numerous job attitudes and workplace behaviors such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, aggressive behavior, and job withdrawal (Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008; Twenge, Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Bartels, 2007). Studies have consistently concluded that workplace ostracism results in negative organizational outcomes and that workplace ostracism

is becoming an organizational concern as its frequency and impact have increased over the years (Robinson et al., 2013). However, empirical studies have not yet included boundary conditions that can affect the relationships between workplace ostracism with organizational outcomes.

Recently, Robinson, et al. (2013) suggested several factors such as motivation and the importance of resources that can potentially mitigate the negative effects of ostracism on workplace behaviors. In this notion, justice perceptions should be able to moderate the relationships between workplace ostracism with workplace behaviors as justice perceptions have been frequently associated with motivation. In addition, workplace ostracism has not been investigated in organizational behavior research in Korea. Hence, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of workplace ostracism on workplace behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior, deviant behavior, and in-role behavior and further examine the moderating effects of fairness for those relationships.

## II. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

### 1. Workplace Ostracism

Ostracism is a common phenomenon that humans can experience. Ostracism is a part of human life and can come in various forms such as exile and banishment on one extreme and

complete end while simply being given the silent treatment or avoiding eye contact from the other end (Ferris et al., 2008). Ostracism may not always be intentional or punitive because in some cases, people may ignore others simply because they are sometimes so engaged in their own work; thereby, unintentionally ignoring people and their responses (Williams, 2001). In addition, ostracism can be non-purposeful and occur when individuals are unaware that they are engaging in behaviors that socially exclude others (Robinson et al., 2013). This form of ostracism is very common as people are oblivious of their own inactions (Sommer, Williams, Ciarocco, & Baumeister, 2001). For instance, people can forget to include another person's email address when sending group email messages thinking that it has already been included. Ostracism may even be ambiguous because an individual may or may not know whether he or she is purposely being ostracized (Williams, 1997). In this perspective, motive may not be part of the definition as ostracism is not necessarily be intended to cause harm (Robinson et al., 2013). In contrast, ostracism can be purposeful and occur when individuals are aware of their inactions to socially engage another individual and do so intentionally in order to hurt the target or help the actor. For example, the silent treatment can be used to intentionally punish, retaliate, or hurt the target person as well as to avoid conflict, social awkwardness, or unpleasant emotions (Robinson et al., 2013). Yet, ostracism generally tends to be harmful although it may not always have malicious intentions or even without any intentions of any kind because it results to a painful experience (Williams, 1997).

Ostracism causes a painful and aversive experience. Ferris et al. (2008) argued that ostracism causes a sense of "social pain." Studies found brain structures that were activated in physical pain were also activated after individuals experienced social rejection. Ostracism is aversive because it can simultaneously threaten the four fundamental human needs: the need for self-esteem, the need to belong, the need to control, and the need for a meaningful existence (Williams, 1997; 2001; 2007). First, ostracism affects self-esteem because when individuals are ostracized, they feel they have done something wrong or that they have some unattractive characteristics; therefore, negatively affecting their sense of self-esteem. Second, the need to belong is negatively affected because an individual will feel they are removed from a group that they want to be associated with. Third, ostracized individuals' sense of control is undermined because others' responses are not given to their actions and ostracized individuals do not have a way of influencing an end to the ostracism. Last, ostracism affects the sense of a meaningful existence because it represents a form of "social death" and shows how life would be if one did not exist (Sommer et al., 2001).

Authors have suggested that workplace ostracism is similar with several other constructs such as social exclusion, rejection, and organizational shunning (Anderson, 2009; Blackhart, Nelson, Knowles, & Baumeister, 2009). Consequently, workplace ostracism research has not been able to develop because determining whether workplace ostracism, social exclusion, and rejection can be distinctly differentiated or interchangeable has been difficult to conclude. However, Williams'

(2007) review suggests that there are virtually no distinctions between them, especially in terms of their consequences. Recently, Robinson et al. (2013) clarified workplace ostracism in comparison to its similar constructs and defined it as “when an individual or group omits to take actions that engage another organizational member when it is socially appropriate to do so” (p.206). They argued that the definition is comprehensive as it includes social rejection, social exclusion, ignoring, and shunning and other behaviors that involve the exclusion of appropriate behaviors. Further, they elaborated by arguing that workplace ostracism is “defined by acts of omission rather than commission; that is, it results from the purposeful or inadvertent failure to act in ways that socially engage another” (p.208).

## 2. Hypothesis Development

Workplace ostracism has been argued to cause maladaptive responses. Studies have found that when individuals are excluded, it negatively affects their cognitive state. Twenge, Catanese, and Baumeister (2003) suggested that the deconstructed cognitive state results in individuals to minimize self-awareness, focus more on the present state, and have no concern for long-term goals. The effect of ostracism influences an individual's ability to self-regulate or adapt behavior to comply with social norms; thus, ostracized individuals will have a higher tendency to engage in maladaptive behaviors (Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Twenge, 2005). Individuals need to know how to regulate their behaviors in order to maintain the persistence and effort to perform their tasks appropriately.

When individuals cannot regulate their behaviors, they will be less likely to engage in positive reciprocal behaviors such as citizenship behaviors.

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is behavior that is “discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, 1988: 4). Empirical and conceptual research suggests OCB is grouped in to two broad categories. OCBO are behaviors that benefit the organization (e.g., follows informal rules to maintain order) while OCBI are behaviors that benefit specific individuals and that indirectly through these means contribute to the organization (e.g., helps others who have been absent). In this perspective, as workplace ostracism lowers the ability to regulate one's behavior, he or she will be less inclined to voluntarily help others and the organization; thus we propose the following:

Hypothesis 1: Workplace ostracism will be negatively related to OCB.

Deviant behavior has been defined as voluntary behavior that violates organizational norms and threatens the well-being of the organization or its members, or both (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Robinson and Bennett (1995) identified a typology of workplace deviant behavior and argued that the target (individual or organization) is important as the dimension of deviant behavior identifies a pertinent qualitative difference between the deviant behaviors. Also, deviant behavior can vary within a continuum depending on severity, from minor forms to more serious forms. In this notion, deviant

behavior can be understood to be a lack of self-control or self-regulation (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996; Marcus & Schuler, 2004). Deviant behavior is similar to a lack of self-regulation as it focuses on the short-term benefit of an individual's actions without much consideration of long-term consequences (Baumeister & Scher, 1988). In this note, exclusion has been found to impair logical reasoning (Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002); thereby, as workplace ostracism can negatively influence one's ability for self-regulation, we propose the following:

Hypothesis 2: Workplace ostracism will be positively related to deviant behavior.

According to conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 1998), resources are things that people value and individuals attempt to protect and sustain them. Resources are objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these objects, personal characteristics, conditions or energies (Hobfoll, 1989). Studies have found that job resources can help an individual's workplace effectiveness (Wright & Hobfoll, 2004). In general, resources are motivational and consequently affect one's work engagement (e.g., Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). Moreover, conservation of resources theory suggests that an individual will experience stress when there is a loss of resources, a perceived threat of loss, or a lack of resource gain following an investment of resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Thus, individuals will try to conserve their

resources in order to manage the threatening conditions and prevent themselves from negative consequences and further attempt to protect their remaining resources by depersonalization, decreasing their work engagement, and reducing their performance efforts (Leung, Wu, Chen, & Young, 2011). When an individual is ostracized, it will be likely that one's resources are reduced which then negatively affects one's performance. In addition, according to conservation of resources theory, ostracized individuals will attempt to further conserve their resources which then can further result in lower levels of performance; hence, hypothesizing that workplace ostracism will negatively affect in-role behavior.

Hypothesis 3: Workplace ostracism will be negatively related to in-role behavior.

Perceptions of justice or fairness is an important motivator as it has been found to result in numerous attitudinal and behavioral outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and workplace deviant behavior (Aquino, Lewis, & Bradfield, 1999; Greenberg & Scott, 1996). Based on equity theory and social exchange theory, fairness perceptions refer to the treatment an individual perceives within an organization and when an individual perceives one's fairness perceptions to be threatened, it will be likely that one experiences discomfort and consequently engage in some form of defensive behavior. For instance, Hafer and Olson (1989) found that individuals with stronger feelings of just perceived negative

outcomes to be less unfair and reported less resentment compared to those with weaker feelings of just. In this aspect, when individuals perceive fairness, they are likely to have less hostile and angry thoughts and lower aggressive urges to engage in detrimental behaviors.

A key implication of justice is that fairness addresses the basic concerns that individuals have about feelings of belongingness (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001). Similarly, Lind (2001) suggested that justice can relate to the messages of inclusion; thereby, studies on belongingness suggest that people are motivated to achieve feelings of belongingness as it shapes how people process and react to social information and that the satisfaction of belonging is a fundamental to positive psychological adjustment (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Williams, 2001). In this notion, workplace ostracism can be affected by justice perceptions as it affects an individual's satisfaction with justice (van Prooijen, van den Bos, & Wilke, 2004). When ostracized individuals perceive fairness, it can lessen the negative effects of ostracism as it can address stressful events to be challenges while unfair perceptions relate stressful events to be threatening to the individual (Tomaka & Blascovich, 1994). Consequently, fairness perceptions can help individuals cope with negative and stressful events such as workplace ostracism; therefore, hypothesizing the following:

Hypothesis 4: Fairness will moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and OCB where high levels of fairness will weaken the relationship.

Hypothesis 5: Fairness will moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and deviant behavior where high levels of fairness will weaken the relationship.

Hypothesis 6: Fairness will moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and in-role behavior where high levels of fairness will weaken the relationship.

### III. Methodology

#### 1. Sample

Data was collected using a two wave self-reported survey. The questionnaires were conducted as they were given in person in a sealed envelope to each respondent and later returned into a box to the person of contact. Before distributing the questionnaires, we received a list of the names of each respondent from the human resources department or directly from the person of contact and numbered each questionnaire and envelope to a specific respondent. The first wave (T1) was conducted in March and April 2013 and the questionnaires were given to 434 full time employees and 366 questionnaires were returned (84% response rate). Out of the 366 questionnaires, 343 were usable as cases with missing data were discarded. The T1 questionnaires provided demographic information and measured workplace ostracism. A two month interval was

used between the first and second wave. The second wave (T2) was conducted in May and June 2013 and the questionnaires were sent to 343 employees and 281 were returned (82% response rate). Out of the 281 questionnaires, 250 were usable due to missing data. The T2 questionnaires reported fairness, organizational citizenship behavior, and deviant behavior. The average respondent was 35.2 years old (S.D. = 7.65), average tenure was 6.6 years (S.D. = 6.79), and the average team tenure was 4.1 years (S.D. = 4.61). 72.5% of the respondents were male and 86.3% had a college degree or higher. In terms of organizational position, the three largest groups were the first three organizational positions: entry level (29.4%), deputy section chief (17.3%), and deputy department head (19.2%)

## 2. Measures

Since the study was conducted in Korea, the measures were translated into Korean and were later back-translated into English by two fluent bilingual persons to validate the quality of the translations. All the measure items used a 7-point Likert scale from 1, "strongly disagree," to 7, "strongly agree."

### 2.1 Workplace ostracism

Workplace ostracism was measured with Ferris et al.'s (2008) ten-item scale. Sample items included: "Others at work treated you as if you weren't there," "Others avoided you at work," and "Others ignored you at work. The reliability of this scale was .97.

### 2.2 Fairness

Fairness was measured with Tsui, Pearce, Porter, and Tripoli's (1997) eight-item scale. Sample items included: "The process used to determine my salary was fair," "The process used to make decisions about my promotions or job changes within this organization is fair," and "The rating or evaluation I received on my last performance was fair." The reliability of this scale was .93.

### 2.3 Organizational citizenship behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior was measured with Williams and Anderson's (1991) 14-item measure. Seven items measured organizational citizenship behavior toward individuals (OCBI): "Help others who have been absent," "Goes out of the way to help new employees," and "Takes a personal interest in other employees." The reliability of this scale was .87. Seven items measured organizational citizenship behavior that benefited the organization as a whole (OCBO): "Gives advance notice when unable to come to work," "Attendance at work is above the norm," and "Takes undeserved work breaks." The reliability of this scale was .75.

### 2.4 In-role behavior

In-role behavior was measured with Williams and Anderson's (1991) seven-item measure. Sample items included: "I adequately complete my assigned duties," "I fulfill the responsibilities specified in my job description," "I meet the formal performance requirements of my job," "I engage in activities

that will directly affect my performance evaluation.”  
The reliability of this scale was .95.

### 2.5 Deviant behavior

Deviant behavior was measured with Bennett and Robinson’s (2000) 19-item measure. Sample items for interpersonal deviant behavior included: “said something hurtful to someone at work,” “Acted rudely toward someone at work,” Publically embarrassed someone at work.” The reliability of this scale was .90. Sample items for organizational deviant behavior included: “Taken property from work without permission,” “Neglected to follow your boss’s instructions,” and “Falsified a receipt to get reimbursed for more money than you spent on business expenses.” The reliability of this scale was .80.

## IV. Results

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliability estimates for the study variables are shown in Table 1. Hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted to test the hypotheses. For the analyses, the control variables were first entered followed by the predictor and moderating variables. For testing moderation, the predictor and moderating variables were mean-centered before the data analysis.

Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were conducted to examine the discriminant validity of the study’s constructs using AMOS 18.0. As shown in Table 2, the results show that the 7-factor model had a better fit (GFI = .90, CFI = .90, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .06) compared to the other models; thereby, suggesting support for

〈Table 1〉 Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Gender	.28	.45	1												
2. Age	35.19	7.75	-.45**	1											
3. Education	2.86	.75	-.03	.25**	1										
4. Position	3.01	1.87	-.23**	.65**	.22**	1									
5. Tenure	6.60	6.79	-.29**	.80**	.21**	.54**	1								
6. Team tenure	4.13	4.61	-.21**	.57**	.13*	.45**	.66**	1							
7. Workplace ostracism	1.57	.87	-.18**	.31**	.16*	.12	.28**	.20**	1						
8. Fairness	4.49	1.10	-.25**	.22**	-.01	.12	.12*	.09	-.11	1					
9. OCBI	5.09	.86	-.14*	.06	-.04	.04	.04	-.02	-.25**	.43**	1				
10. OCBO	5.87	.89	.04	-.01	.05	-.02	-.06	-.03	-.27**	.18**	.44**	1			
11. In-role behavior	5.41	.81	-.19**	.30**	.12	.22**	.23**	.15*	-.22**	.30**	.55**	.50**	1		
12. Interpersonal deviance	2.28	1.15	.03	-.05	-.03	-.03	-.04	-.04	.23**	-.21**	-.15*	-.27**	-.18**	1	
13. Organizational deviance	2.30	.97	.00	-.03	-.01	-.01	.05	.06	.17**	.25**	-.25**	-.34**	-.33**	.51*	1

Note: N = 250, \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01



<Table 2> Confirmatory factor analysis

Models	$\chi^2$ (df)	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
1-Factor model	5943.5(702)	.29	.34	.38	.17
3-Factor model	3338.7(699)	.61	.67	.69	.12
4-Factor model	2208.1(696)	.74	.81	.82	.09
5-Factor model	2006.6(692)	.77	.83	.84	.09
6-Factor model	1623.5(687)	.85	.88	.89	.07
7-Factor model	1507.0(681)	.90	.90	.90	.06

Note: 3-factor model (OCBI, OCBO, & IRB; DBI & DBO; workplace ostracism & fairness); 4-factor model (OCBI, OCBO, & IRB; DBI & DBO; workplace ostracism; fairness); 5-factor model (OCBI, OCBO, & IRB; DBI; DBO; workplace ostracism; fairness); 6-factor model (OCBI & OCBO; IRB; DBI; DBO; workplace ostracism; fairness)

the distinctiveness of the study’s constructs and demonstrating an acceptable level of validity.

Hypothesis 1 proposed that workplace ostracism will be negatively related to citizenship behavior. As shown in Table 3, workplace ostracism was found to be negatively related to OCBI ( $\beta = -.31, p < .001$ ) and OCBO ( $\beta = -.31, p < .001$ ). Workplace ostracism was found to lower both

forms of citizenship behaviors; thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported. Hypothesis 2 posited that workplace ostracism will be positively related to deviant behavior. Table 4 shows that workplace ostracism was positively related to interpersonal deviant behavior ( $\beta = .29, p < .001$ ) and organizational deviant behavior ( $\beta = .19, p < .01$ ). Workplace ostracism was found to increase

<Table 3> Regression results for organizational citizenship behavior

Variable	OCBI			OCBO		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Gender	-.15*	-.08	-.09	.04	.06	.07
Age	.10	-.02	-.02	.21	.16	.16
Education	-.02	-.01	-.02	.09	.09	.10
Position	-.02	.01	.01	-.07	-.07	-.07
Tenure	.05	.09	.07	-.13	-.11	-.09
Team tenure	-.08	-.08	-.07	.03	-.28***	.02
Workplace ostracism	-.31***	-.23***	-.20**	-.31***	.16*	-.30***
Fairness		.38***	.38***			.16*
Workplace ostracism x Fairness			.11*			-.09
R2	.11	.24	.26	.10	.12	.13
F	4.20***	9.58***	9.02***	3.66**	3.99***	3.79***
$\Delta R2$		.13	.02		.02	.01

Note: N = 250, \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001

〈Table 4〉 Regression results for deviant behavior

Variable	Interpersonal deviant behavior			Organizational deviant behavior		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Gender	.03	-.01	.00	-.02	-.07	-.06
Age	-.13	-.07	-.08	-.30*	-.23	-.23
Education	-.05	-.05	-.04	-.02	-.03	-.02
Position	.05	.04	.03	.04	.03	.02
Tenure	.00	-.02	.02	.18	.16	.17
Team tenure	-.03	-.03	-.04	.06	.06	.06
Workplace ostracism	.29***	.25***	.21**	.19**	.14*	.13
Fairness		-.17*	-.16*		-.23***	-.23**
Workplace ostracism x Fairness			-.14*			-.05
R2	.08	.10	.12	.07	.10	.11
F	2.80**	3.36**	3.61***	2.11*	3.45**	3.13*
ΔR2		.02	.02		.03	.01

Note: N = 250, \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001

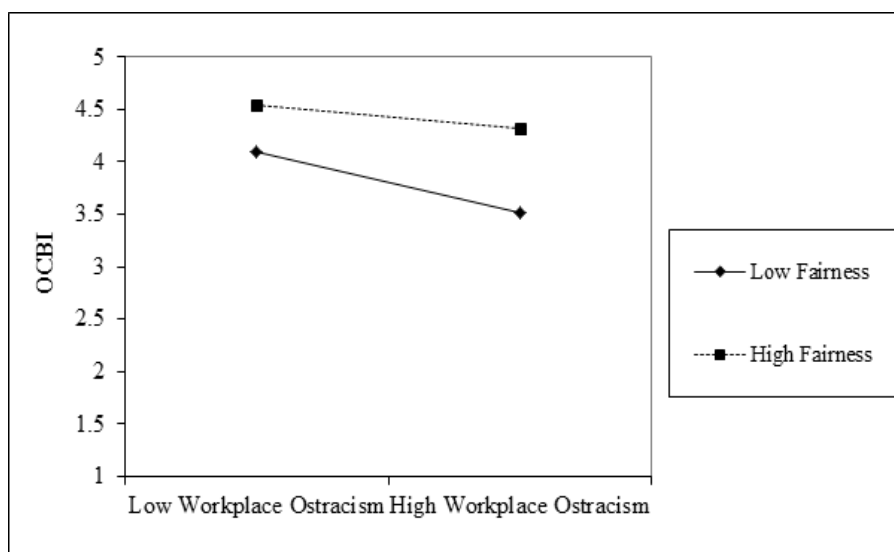
both forms of deviant behavior; hence, Hypothesis 2 was supported. Hypothesis 3 proposed that workplace ostracism will be negatively related

to in-role behavior. As Table 5 shows, workplace ostracism was negatively related to in-role behavior ( $\beta = -.36, p < .001$ ). Workplace ostracism was

〈Table 5〉 Regression results for in-role behavior

Variable	In-role behavior		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Gender	-.10	-.06	-.07
Age	.36**	.29*	.29*
Education	.08	.09	.09
Position	-.01	.01	.01
Tenure	.01	.02	.02
Team tenure	-.02	-.02	-.01
Workplace ostracism	-.36***	-.32***	-.32***
Fairness		.19**	.19**
Workplace ostracism x Fairness			.02
R2	.21	.24	.24
F	9.29***	9.64***	8.55***
ΔR2		.03	.00

Note: N = 250, \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001



(Figure 1) The moderating effects of fairness for the relationship between workplace ostracism and OCBI

found to reduce in-role behavior; therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

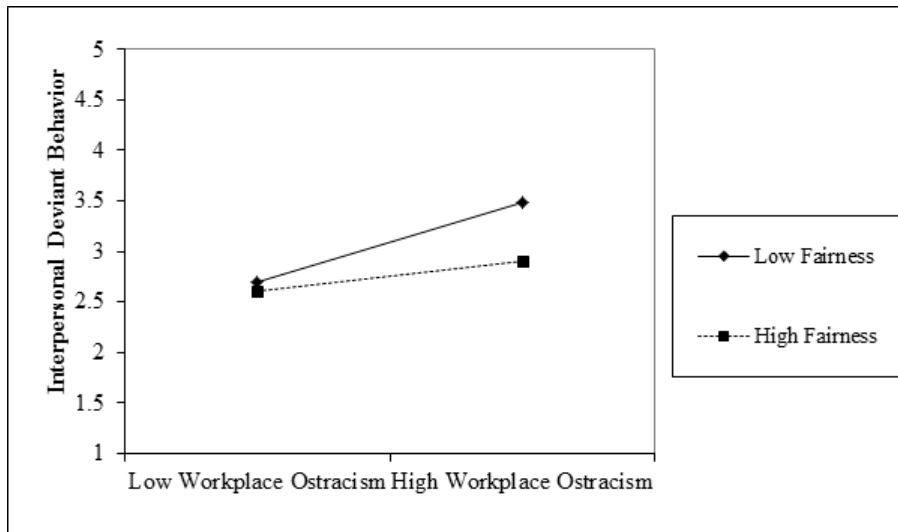
Hypothesis 4 posited that fairness perceptions will moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and citizenship behavior. Shown in Table 3, fairness significantly moderated the relationship between workplace ostracism and OCBI ( $\beta = .11, p < .05$ ) while not significantly moderating the relationship between workplace ostracism and OCBO ( $\beta = -.09, ns$ ); thus partially supporting Hypothesis 4.

Figure 1 shows that there were differences between fairness perceptions as low levels of fairness were significantly lower than high levels of fairness in terms of individuals engaging in individual oriented citizenship behavior.

Hypothesis 5 posited that perceptions of fairness will moderate the relationship between

workplace ostracism and deviant behavior. As seen in Table 4, fairness significantly moderated the relationship between workplace ostracism and interpersonal deviant behavior ( $\beta = -.14, p < .05$ ) while not significantly moderating the relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational deviant behavior ( $\beta = -.05, ns$ ); thus, partially supporting Hypothesis 5. Figure 2 illustrates that low fairness perceptions increased interpersonal deviant behavior in comparison to high levels of fairness perceptions.

Hypothesis 6 posited that fairness will moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and in-role behavior. Table 5 displays that perceptions of fairness did not significantly moderate the relationship ( $\beta = .02, ns$ ); therefore, not supporting Hypothesis 6.



(Figure 2) The moderating effects of fairness for the relationship between workplace ostracism and interpersonal deviant behavior

## V. Discussion

Previous research resulted in mixed findings as ostracized individuals engaged in maladaptive and antisocial behaviors as well as prosocial behaviors following ostracism (Ferris et al., 2008; Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001). However, this study found workplace ostracism to have negative effects on both types of workplace behaviors. The study found ostracized individuals to be less likely to help other organizational members with job-related tasks as well as be less willing to engage in prosocial behaviors that benefit the organization. Similar to Zhao, Peng, and Sheard's (2012) findings, this study found workplace ostracism to be positively related to workplace deviant behavior which reveals that ostracized individuals are more likely to engage

in detrimental behaviors toward the organization such as theft, absenteeism, and shirking. Also, workplace ostracism was found to be negatively related to in-role behavior. Ostracism is argued to decrease one's cognitive performance (Baumeister et al., 2002) and result in self-defeating behaviors (Twenge, Catanese, & Baumeister, 2002); thus, explaining ostracism's negative impact on individuals from accomplishing their job-related tasks, duties, and responsibilities.

Ferris et al. (2008) argued that the mixed findings between workplace ostracism and organizational citizenship behavior suggest that there can be potential moderating variables. By investigating fairness perceptions, this study found fairness to significantly moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational citizenship behavior. However, the study only found fairness perceptions to moderate the relationship for OCBI

not OCBO. Similarly, perceptions of fairness moderated the relationship between workplace ostracism and workplace deviant behavior but also only for interpersonal deviant behavior not organizational deviant behavior. These findings can suggest that fairness perceptions are more likely to affect interpersonal behaviors rather than behaviors toward the organization because fairness perceptions are influenced by appraisals, promotions, and other organizational decisions that are conducted by organizational members such as managers. In this aspect, the multi-foci social exchange perspective (Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002) can support these findings as the multi-foci perspective argues that behaviors are specific toward the specific foci.

## 1. Implications

Suggested by Ferris et al. (2008), the study was conducted in a two wave approach which can provide stronger support for workplace ostracism's causal relationships with its behavioral outcomes. Further, this study extends workplace ostracism research as it included boundary conditions for workplace ostracism's behavioral outcomes. The study results indicated that situational factors can enhance the effects of workplace ostracism on its workplace behaviors. Especially, as relational models of justice such as the group value model addresses the concern an individual has about belongingness (Cropanzano et al., 2001), perceptions of fairness can influence an individual's needs related to belongingness. In this notion, workplace ostracism can affect how an individual processes and reacts to social information such as organizational

fairness perceptions which then can influence the effects of workplace ostracism's on an individual's workplace behaviors.

Organizations must realize the importance of workplace ostracism regardless of its intentions. Intentional or unintentional, feeling ostracized from other organizational members can greatly affect workplace attitudes and behaviors. Organizations should cultivate environments that can enable organizational members to conserve and protect their resources and be able to deal more effectively with work demands which then will help prevent negative outcomes (Wright & Hobfoll, 2004). Also, as teamwork is ubiquitous within organizations, organizations and managers have to emphasize the importance of managing high quality interpersonal relationships among organizational members. Organizations and managers should create cultures and practices that can promote cohesiveness, effective communication, and trust among organizational members. In addition, managers should heed carefully about how they manage their relationships with their subordinates because even the slightest biases can significantly affect an individual's perception of the relationship quality. For instance, according to leader-member exchange theory, it is natural for managers to form in-groups and out-groups with their subordinates. In-group members will be more likely to be perceive themselves to be within the loop while out-group members will believe they are "out of the loop" and feel ostracized. Therefore, it is necessary that leaders manage their subordinate relationships with caution in order to refrain from forming biases and unequal perceptions.

## 2. Limitations and future directions

Our study has several limitations to mention. The study was conducted in Korea and Korean society is collectivistic in nature as it focuses on solidarity, concern for others, and maintenance of close interpersonal relationships; therefore, the study's findings may not be generalizable to Western societies. The study should also be replicated in western societies where individualism is more prevalent. Although data was obtained using a two wave approach, the questionnaires were self-rated; thereby, common method variance can be of concern. Hence, the use of multi-raters such as supervisors and peers should be considered for outcome variables such as in-role behavior and citizenship behavior. Although a two month interval was given between the questionnaires, the interval may not have been adequate to address common method variance and causal inference and studies should consider conducting questionnaires with longer time intervals.

workplace ostracism was not differentiated in terms of the source of ostracism and the type of ostracism. For instance, the source of ostracism can be a relevant factor as the multi-foci perspective is argued to result in foci-specific attitudes and behaviors. Last, workplace ostracism can be more relative to group level phenomenon and the current study examined the effects of workplace ostracism on individual behaviors rather than group level outcomes such as team performance. Although research has argued that group characteristics can also influence individual attitudes and behaviors (Erez & Somech, 1996), further studies should consider group level outcomes for

workplace ostracism such as team performance.

Since teamwork is frequently implemented in organizations and is a vital aspect for individual and organizational performance, interpersonal relationships are crucial factors for workplace attitudes and behaviors. Workplace ostracism's occurrence and impact within organizations is pertinent to organizational effectiveness and should not be avoided. As workplace ostracism is not well developed (Ferris et al., 2008), future studies should further examine the mechanisms to understand the effects of ostracism. In this aspect, studies should investigate why ostracized individuals tend to retaliate to all people rather than to those who are only involved (Twenge et al., 2001). Further, ostracism behaviors can come in various forms such as the silent treatment and exile and these behaviors can also have different levels of severity such as partial ostracism, acts that are done by one person or a few persons or full ostracism, acts that are by a larger number of individuals (Banki, 2012); thereby, these distinctions may result in different consequences. Currently, research has generally focused on the direct outcomes of ostracism and studies should investigate potential mediating variables such as job attitudes, feelings of belonging, and working relationships. Robinson et al. (2013) suggested that there can be several psychological and pragmatic aspects that can mediate workplace ostracism with its behavioral outcomes. Also, studies should consider organizational antecedents such as diversity and the quality of employee relationships. For instance, diversity within organizations should be cautiously approached because although it is argued to create many organizational advantages, diversity may also

be a cause of workplace ostracism as individual differences such as different values and beliefs may result in increased interpersonal conflict and cause feelings of ostracism. Williams and O'Reilly (1998) found that increased diversity has negative effects on social integration, communication, and conflict; hence, when individuals perceive themselves to be different from others, they may feel they are excluded or left out of the loop within the organization.

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<Abstract>

## Can Perceptions of Fairness Buffer the Negative Effects of Workplace Ostracism?

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This study focuses on the importance of the social context within organizations and investigated workplace ostracism, perceptions of fairness, organizational citizenship behavior, deviant behavior, and in-role behavior. Although there are a few studies on the consequences of workplace ostracism, research has yet to include boundary conditions for the effects of workplace ostracism with its behavioral outcomes. The study sampled 246 employees in two waves and the study found workplace ostracism to be negatively related with organizational citizenship behavior and in-role behavior while being positively related with workplace deviant behavior. Moreover, perceptions of fairness was found to significantly moderate the relationships between workplace ostracism with organizational citizenship behavior and workplace deviant behavior. Therefore, this study suggests that workplace ostracism leads to unfavorable workplace behaviors and that fairness perceptions can mitigate the negative effects of workplace ostracism on its behavioral outcomes.

**Keywords** : workplace ostracism, fairness, organizational citizenship behavior, deviant behavior, in-role behavior