

**IMPACT OF WORKPLACE OSTRACISM ON TURNOVER INTENTION: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MACHINE OPERATORS WORKING IN THE APPAREL SECTOR, RATHNAPURA DISTRICT IN SRI LANKA**

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**INTRODUCTION**

According to Welmilla, (2020), turnover and turnover intention have become challenging for the existing competitive business world, and it is a serious issue, especially in the field of human resources management. Employees' intention to leave the company is referred to as turnover intentions and according to Sewwandi and Perera, (2016), it is further described as a mental process (considering leaving), a decisional process (planning to leave), and a behavioral activity (looking for new jobs). According to MAS Fabric Park's (2018) report, the apparel sector employs up to 15% of Sri Lanka's workforce, and 85% of those workers are women. However, it has recently come to light that the apparel business is experiencing a dramatic rise in labour turnover, particularly among female employees. Madurawala (2017), highlighted that the female unemployment rate was 7.6 per cent in 2015, while the male unemployment rate was 3 per cent. Even though there are job opportunities in the sector, women refused to join the industry or leave within a very short period of time after joining the industry. According to Dheerasinghe (2003), the industry's overall average turnover is 60% annually. Net turnover is still quite high even after moving from one factory to another and is calculated at 25%. Ikram et al., (2021) stated that Workplace ostracism is a global phenomenon that affects all types of organizations and all cultures of the world. According to Xia et al. (2019), Workplace ostracism is the degree to which a person feels neglected or excluded by others at workplace (Ferris et.al., 2008).

Workplace ostracism and employee turnover in the apparel industry in the context of Sri Lanka is a new area for the researcher and notable research direction as per the empirical explanations found in the extant literature (Gunasekara & Naotunna, 2020). However, little research has been conducted on workplace ostracism and turnover intention in the Asian context (Ikram et al., 2021). According to Mobina et al. (2021), workplace ostracism can affect the psychological and physical well-being of employees. Banishment involves painful and unpleasant experiences; such experiences cause negative feelings and emotions such as anger, sadness and anxiety. Some outcomes that can be observed in work environments where disengagement is prevalent are higher turnover intentions (Ferris et al., 2008). Employee turnover refers to employees voluntarily leaving an organization (Shaw et al., 2005). An individual's choice to leave an organization is costly to both the organization and the individual (Lee et al., 2004). People who experience ostracism in the workplace usually do not want to reconnect with those who rejected them and tend to avoid the ostracizing situation (Maner et al., 2007). However, if their efforts to reestablish social relations with their colleagues fail, they may intend to leave the workplace (Mobina et al., 2021).

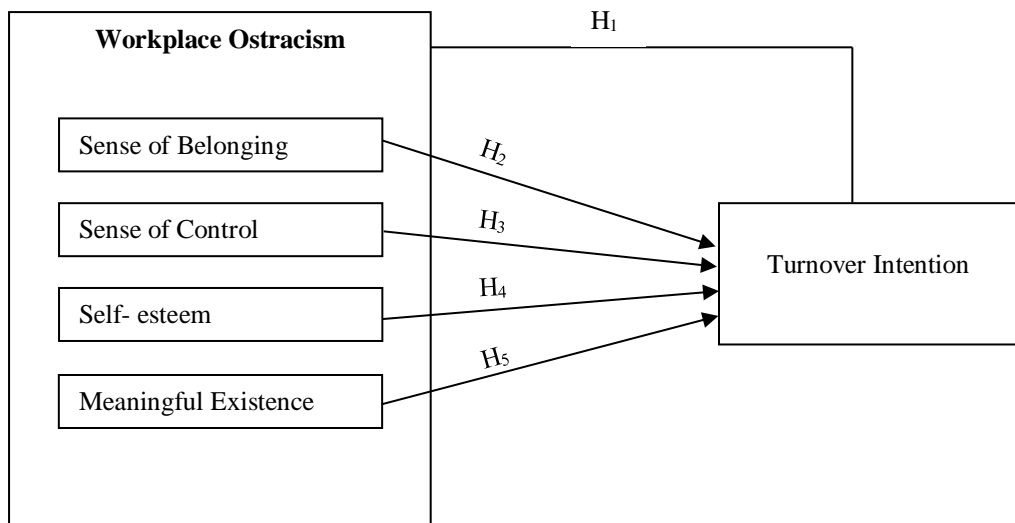
Most of the previous researchers conducted their research studies based on the resource conservation theory on workplace ostracism (Xia et al., 2019; Ashraf et.al., 2020; Kian, 2018). Zheng et al. (2016) explain the resource conservation theory (COR) suggests that people

associate themselves with different resources, such as physical things that are perceived as valuable, conditions (such as hierarchical work status and marital status), and their own internal resources that help them cope under stress (such as perceptual orientation, self-esteem, psychological capital eg. money, time). Employees who are subjected to workplace ostracism are motivated to cease this resource drain, and leaving the company is a logical option to stop future harm, according to COR. Therefore, having the intention to leave is a cognitive strategy that decreases the value of work for employees, leading to a natural desire on their part to allocate their remaining resources elsewhere (Zheng et al., 2016).

## METHODOLOGY

### Figure 1

#### Conceptual Framework



The following hypotheses were developed for the study.

*H<sub>1</sub>*: There is a significant impact of workplace ostracism on the turnover intention of machine operators in the apparel sector.

*H<sub>2</sub>*: There is an impact of a sense of belonging on the turnover intention of the machine operators in the apparel sector.

*H<sub>3</sub>*: There is an impact of a sense of control on the turnover intention of the machine operators in the apparel sector.

*H<sub>4</sub>*: There is an impact of self-esteem on the turnover intention of machine operators in the apparel sector.

*H<sub>5</sub>*: There is an impact of meaningful existence on the turnover intention of the machine operators in the apparel sector.

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The deductive approach is the approach that works best for this study. The data used in this study were gathered by taking a cross-section of the population at one time, making it a cross-sectional study in terms of time.

The unit of analysis of the research study is the machine operators of the apparel industry in Rathnapura district. The method of research used in this study is quantitative.

The population of this research is 2000 machine operators in selected garment factories in Rathnapura district. According to the Morgan table, the sample size of this research is 322 machine operators.

According to the Ferris et al. (2008) questionnaire workplace ostracism has four dimensions including the sense of belonging, sense of control, self-esteem, and meaningful existence included 10 questions. Section three included a questionnaire for measuring turnover intention included 12 questions. According to Weerathna et al. (2022), dimensions of turnover intention consist of perceived alternative employment opportunities and job hopping.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1**

*Reliability Analysis*

Variable	Number of sub - factors	Cronbach's Alpha
Sense of Belonging	2	0.889
Sense of Control	3	0.873
Self-Esteem	2	0.895
Meaningful Existence	3	0.883
Turnover Intention	12	0.897

Cronbach's Alpha values of each independent variable and the dependent variable as shown in Table 1. Independent variables Cronbach's Alpha values were the sense of belonging (0.889), sense of control (0.873), self-esteem (0.895), meaningful existence (0.883) and the dependent variable (turnover intention) Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.897. Cronbach's Alpha value of Sense of Belonging, Sense of Control, Self-Esteem, Meaningful Existence and turnover intention were greater than 0.7. That means variables are internally consistent.

**Table 2**

*Validity Analysis*

Variable	Dimensions	KMO Coefficient	Bartlett's Test [Chi-Square]	Sig.	Total Variance (%)
Turnover Intention		0.803	2312.700	0.000	
Workplace Ostracism	Sense of Belonging	0.500	92.042	0.000	75.255
	Sense of Control	0.687	219.769	0.000	66.731
	Self-Esteem	0.500	75.341	0.000	73.142
	Meaningful Existence	0.667	172.271	0.000	62.990

According to the statistical information of factor analysis, it can be concluded that the sample is adequate for two variables since it shows all dimensions KMO value (Table 2) which is greater than 0.5. Further, factor analysis can be taken as an appropriate measure since the significance value of Bartlett's measure is 0.000 (Table 2) and it is less than 0.05 in all dimensions. The total variance explained a Sense of Belonging (75.255%), Sense of Control

(66.731%), Self-Esteem (73.142%), Meaningful Existence (62.990%) and turnover intention (Table 2) which provides an adequate level of convergent validity.

**Table 3**  
*Normality Analysis*

Variable	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Sense of Belonging	-0.144	0.137	-0.861	0.274
Sense of Control	-0.110	0.137	-0.807	0.274
Self-Esteem	-0.287	0.137	-0.537	0.274
Meaningful Existence	-0.260	0.137	-0.310	0.274
Turnover Intention	-0.249	0.137	0.104	0.274

According to the data in Table 3, all of the independent variables and the dependent variable is within the  $-1/2 < \text{skewness} < 1/2$  ranges. That means the data are approximately normally distributed. The kurtosis values of all independent variables are negative sign and also and dependent variable is positive and all kurtosis values are  $-3 \leq \text{Kurtosis} \leq +3$  range. That means the data are platykurtic.

**Table 4**  
*Model Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
	0.731 <sup>a</sup>	0.534	0.533	0.370

According to the results depicted in Table 4, 53.4% (R Square = 0.534) of the variation of turnover intention could be significant (Sig. = 0.000 which is less than 0.05) explained by the independent construct in the research model, the workplace ostracism.

**Table 5**  
*Coefficients of the Regression Model*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$		
	1 (Constant)	1.219	0.147		
WOS	0.684	0.036	0.731	18.943	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: TI

**Table 6**  
*Coefficients of the Regression Model*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$		
	(Constant)	1.162	0.139		
SOB	-0.071	0.052	-0.090	-1.376	0.170
SOC	0.263	0.060	0.313	4.404	0.000
SE	0.166	0.044	0.143	2.657	0.008
ME	0.393	0.046	0.472	8.533	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: TI

According to the regression results, H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>5</sub> are accepted but H<sub>2</sub> was rejected as the sig value is greater than 0.05.

**Table 7**  
ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	53.867	4	13.467	109.72	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	38.046	310	0.123		
	Total	91.912	314			

a. Dependent Variable: TI

b. Predictors: (Constant), ME, SOB, SE, SOC

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) table for predicted linear regression line is significant at ninety-five percent of confidence interval. The resultant model has three components with one constant value and four variables (sense of belonging, sense of control, self-esteem, and meaningful existence).

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study aimed to investigate how workplace ostracism impacts turnover intention. A structured questionnaire was employed to collect information from the intended respondents for the above mentioned goal. The findings suggest that an expected sense of belonging, other dimensions of sense of control, self-esteem, and meaningful existence impact turnover intention. According to the regression results, H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>5</sub> were accepted but H<sub>2</sub> was rejected as the sig value is greater than 0.05. The study findings, which support the findings in the literature, demonstrate that there is a significant impact of workplace ostracism on turnover intention (Ikram et al., 2021; Mobina et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2018; Mahfooz et al., 2017).

The findings of this study will be important theoretically and practically for the parties who are directly involved with the research area. As concluded by the results, it is having identified the impact of workplace ostracism on turnover intention. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher can provide some implications which will be important for relevant parties in the apparel sector. Since workplace ostracism leads to employee counterproductive activities, the management can use this research and use ways to control employee behaviors for reducing employee turnover intention which is a challenging problem that they are facing. Then they can enhance the performance and efficiency and effectiveness of the organizational processes. The employee also can control their behaviors and improve their relationship with their peers. It will be led to the development of a good working culture and develop the employee's career ladder.

There are many variables that influence both workplace ostracism and turnover intention. But research study considers several variables to avoid unnecessary complexities. Furthermore, the sample size of the study for the research work is 322 machine operators. This segment represents only 16% of the total number of machine operators in considered four organizations. So, it may not represent 100% accurate results. The study is only focused on, machine operators under the categories of operational-level employees of the organization. Top-level employees and other operational-level employees did not consider in the study. Furthermore, lack of literature available regarding this research area within Sri Lankan context. Because researcher wasn't finding sufficient studies done on this topic relating to

workplace ostracism and turnover intention. Finally, can be mentioned researcher had to do this study within a limited time period and with limited resources.

**Keywords:** Apparel sector, machine operators, turnover intention, workplace ostracism

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