

**THE ROLE OF JOB STRESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL  
ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERPERSONAL  
MISTREATMENT AND INDIVIDUAL JOB OUTCOMES**

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THE ROLE OF JOB STRESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERPERSONAL MISTREATMENT AND  
INDIVIDUAL JOB OUTCOMES

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## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to my beloved wife (Ayesha Inam) and my  
parents, whom without their love and support this research  
would have never been completed

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Thanks to Allah SWT for everything I was able to achieve and for everything I tried but I was not able to achieve.

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## ABSTRACT

Detrimental effects of interpersonal mistreatments at workplace have drawn unprecedented attention of researchers over the last couple of decades. This research is an attempt to fulfill the gap by examining western theories of interpersonal mistreatments in non-western settings. This research examined major (sexual harassment and workplace ostracism) and minor (workplace incivility) interpersonal mistreatments categories together with the underlying mechanism and consequences. Besides that, the mediated role of job stress with interpersonal mistreatments and their job outcomes (job burnout and turnover intention) was also studied. In addition, this research studied the coping mechanism of job stress by examining psychological capital as a moderator in relationship between job stress and job outcomes. A three wave study design was employed in the research. Multistage sampling technique was applied whereby the respondents were 1850 employees from the telecom sector in Pakistan. In the final wave, 523 responses from the same respondents were used in the analysis. Correlation, regression and structural equation modeling were used for data analysis. Findings suggested that interpersonal mistreatments were positively related to job stress, job burnout and turnover intentions. Job stress has been shown to partially mediate between interpersonal mistreatments and job outcomes. Moreover, results suggested that the relationship between job stress and job burnout was weakened when psychological capital was high. Similarly, the relationship between job stress and employee turnover intention weakened when psychological capital was high. This research generalizes the findings of western theories on interpersonal mistreatments in the non-western culture (Pakistan) and suggests that psychological capital be applied as a strong personal resource to cope with workplace stressors and stress related job outcomes.

## ABSTRAK

Kesan mudarat daripada layanan buruk antara perorangan di tempat kerja telah menarik perhatian yang tidak pernah dahulu berlaku di kalangan penyelidik sejak dua dekad kebelakangan ini. Kajian ini merupakan cubaan untuk memenuhi jurang dengan mengkaji teori-teori barat tentang layanan buruk antara perorangan dalam latar bukan barat. Kajian ini mengkaji faktor utama (gangguan seksual dan pemulauan tempat kerja) dan faktor minor (ketidaksopanan tempat kerja) kategori layanan buruk antara perorangan bersama-sama dengan mekanisme dan sebab akibat asas. Selain itu, peranan pengantara tekanan kerja dengan layanan buruk antara perorangan dan hasil kerja mereka (lesu upaya kerja dan niat berhenti kerja) juga dikaji. Di samping itu, kajian ini mengkaji mekanisme dalam menghadapi tekanan kerja dengan meneliti modal psikologi sebagai moderator dalam hubungan antara tekanan kerja dan hasil kerja. Reka bentuk kajian tiga gelombang digunakan dalam kajian ini. Teknik persampelan multistahap telah digunakan dan 1850 responden merupakan pekerja daripada sektor telekom di Pakistan. Dalam gelombang akhir, 523 jawapan daripada responden yang sama telah digunakan dalam analisis kajian. Korelasi, regresi dan pemodelan persamaan berstruktur telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil dapatan menunjukkan bahawa layanan buruk antara perorangan adalah berkaitan secara positif dengan tekanan kerja, lesu upaya kerja dan niat berhenti kerja. Tekanan kerja telah terbukti mengantara secara separa layanan buruk antara perorangan dan hasil kerja. Selain itu, keputusan menunjukkan bahawa hubungan antara tekanan kerja dan lesu upaya kerja telah menjadi lemah apabila modal psikologi adalah tinggi. Begitu juga, hubungan antara tekanan kerja dan niat berhenti kerja adalah lemah apabila modal psikologi adalah tinggi. Kajian ini mengeneralisasikan penemuan teori barat tentang layanan buruk antara perorangan dalam budaya bukan barat (Pakistan) dan mencadangkan bahawa modal psikologi digunakan sebagai sumber peribadi yang kukuh untuk menghadapi tekanan di tempat kerja dan tekanan yang berkaitan dengan hasil kerja.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

Over the last two decades, interpersonal mistreatment amongst employees in the organization is most commonly found overwhelming phenomenon at workplace. Researchers have documented the harmful effects of interpersonal mistreatment at workplace (Caza and Cortina, 2007; Cortina *et al.*, 2001; Gelfand *et al.*, 1995; Leskinen *et al.*, 2011; Porath and Pearson, 2012; Lim and Cortina, 2005; Stark *et al.*, 2002; Willness, *et al.*, 2007). Interpersonal mistreatment is a broad construct which refers to engagement in negative counter normative action towards employees (Cortina and Magley, 2003). Researchers exhibit more interest on milder form of mistreatments at workplace and give different names such as bullying (Einarsen, 1999), emotional abuse (Keashly, 1997), incivility (Lim and Cortina, 2005), workplace abuse (Rospenda *et al.*, 2000) disrespect (interruption, public humiliation) and verbal aggression.

Mostly researchers have built their consensus on antisocial actions as elements of interpersonal mistreatment (Cullen *et al.*, 2014; Lim and Cortina, 2005). Researchers have tried to study each construct separately. Due to this, sexual mistreatment and general mistreatments are usually studied separately in the literature. Bennett and Robinson (2003) emphasized that the construct of interpersonal mistreatments require a systemic research. The current piece of work is aimed to study the constructs of sexual harassment, workplace ostracism and workplace incivility altogether.

Sexual harassment at workplace has received fame in the media, law, proceedings and academic literature (Lim and Cortina, 2005). Research has found three theoretical categories of sexual harassment based on similar constructs of behavior (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1995). First, gender harassment which is described as hostile and offensive behavior specifically towards females at workplace. Second, by contrast unwanted sexual attention is provided to recipient as sexually inappropriate behaviors and attitudes resulting in harassment of females. This unwanted behavior includes verbal sexual comments, touching the body part and efforts to develop sexual relationships forcibly. Third class of sexual harassment is sexual coercion defined in parallel relation to “quid pro quo”, making the job conditions (bribes or threat) reliant on sexual behaviors. Literature has shown negative results of sexual harassment, studied in the form of organizational and individual outcomes. (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1997; Gettman and Gelfand, 2007; Hitlan *et al.*, 2006; Willness *et al.*, 2007).

Workplace ostracism, being ignored by the people, is the most despairing experience of employees at workplace (Williams, 2001). There is a variety in the responses towards ostracism, irrespective of most commonly occurred phenomenon. Extreme examples of ostracism can be found in many notorious criminal cases. For instance, the postal shooting in California in 2006 was conducted by an employee who had experienced severe exclusion and rejection from the workplace, and she killed 6 colleagues and committed suicide (Foxnews.com, 2006). A negative relationship was found between ostracism and “cognitive regulation ability” (Baumeister *et al.*, 2005), “empathy” (Twenge, *et al.*, 2007), “pro-social conduct” (Twenge *et al.*, 2007) and “self-awareness” (Twenge *et al.*, 2003).

Workplace incivility is defined as “low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect” (Andersson and Pearson, 1999: p. 457). Examples of uncivil behavior include sending a nasty or demanding note, being treated like child, being expelled from group tasks and damaging one’s integrity in a group. According to the research of Cortina and Magley (2003), people experiencing long period of uncivil behaviors and mistreatments have shown increased level of anxiety at workplace.



Different forms of interpersonal mistreatment are found as a source of stress at work. Interpersonal mistreatments including its forms fall under the category of social stressors. These stressors are found within persons at working environment (Harris *et al.*, 2009). (Chang *et al.*, 2009; Harris *et al.*, 2009; Kern and Grandey, 2009; Penney and Spector, 2005; Lim and Cortina, 2005). Social stressors (sexual harassment, workplace incivility and workplace ostracism) negatively effects on employee's physical and psychological health resulting negative influence on job related productivity (Harris *et al.*, 2009).

Interpersonal mistreatment is found in association with stress at work (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2003; Penney and Spector, 2005; Lim and Cortina, 2005; Willness *et al.*, 2007). Interpersonal mistreatment has been studied in relation to job satisfaction (Penney and Spector, 2005), employee's mental state (Lim and Lee, 2011) and employee's commitment with the organization (Taylor *et al.*, 2012). Social stressors result in increased stress level on psychological state of an individual resultantly generating high level of anxiety which decreases their self-esteem. This can further results in the different negative work behaviors in the organization.

Burnout is a phenomenon associated (or caused by) working conditions in all occupations. Issues of job burnout with one's employment are not a new phenomenon in today's workforce. Job burnout is an increasingly common phenomenon in today's stressful workplace (Canaff, 2007). Burnout is prevalent in people of service sectors such as Telecom sector (Jamal and Baba, 2000; Hauptfleisch and Uys, 2006, Pines, 2003). The phenomenon of burnout is important, where staff members experience psychological, emotional, and physical stress (Piko, 2006; Ozyurt, *et al.*, 2006). It is very important to analysis the factors causing burnout at workplace (Healy and Bramble, 2003; Tian *et al.*, 2015; Bakker *et al.*, (2014). Present study is attempt to examine the major antecedent effect job burnout.

According to the work of Lee and Ashforth (1996), correlation has been most widely studied in the relationship of job stress and job burnout (Lee and Ashforth, 1996). Burnout is an experience of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, *et al.*, 1996). Emotional exhaustion is

“the central quality of burnout and the most obvious manifestation of the burnout syndrome” (Maslach, *et al.*, 2001, p. 402). Depersonalization is “an attempt to put distance between oneself and service recipients by actively ignoring the qualities that make them unique and engaging people” (Maslach, *et al.*, 2001, p. 403). Reduced personal accomplishment is “a decline in one's feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people” (Leiter and Maslach, 1988, p. 298). There is a positive effect of stress on job burnout (Lee and Ashforth, 1996; Beavis, 2015; Ravalier *et al.*, 2014). In this study, relationship of stress and all three component of job burnout is been studied as an aftermath of interpersonal mistreatment.

The major causes of employee turnover intentions are related to unsatisfying issues at workplace (Hayes *et al.*, 2006; Kruzich *et al.*, 2014). Literature suggested that mistreatment has been associated with a range of negative outcomes. Research has shown that employees reported high withdrawal and turnover intentions when they experience mistreatments at workplace (Cortina *et al.*, 2001; Hershcovis and Barling, 2010; Lim *et al.*, 2008; Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010; Spence *et al.*, 2009; Houshmand *et al.*, 2012). Although research on consequences of interpersonal mistreatment are documented, further research need to examines underlying mediated mechanism through which interpersonal mistreatments effects turnover intention (Miner-Rubino and Reed, 2010). They also mentioned that its is important to examine unfold mediating mechanism of mistreatment over the time frame. In other word, they called to analyze mediating mechanism with time lag research design rather that traditional cross sectional approach. Similarly, Houshmand *et al.* (2012) examined interpersonal mistreatment with employee turnover intention and call for further research on which different mediating variables exists and how the mechanism of mistreatment leads to employee turnover intentions. Based on the calls, current research examined job stress as mediator between interpersonal mistreatments and turnover intention.

Researchers argued that detrimental effects of stressors at work can be moderated by psychological phenomenon's, which had been found acting as “buffer” for stressors at workplace (Abbas *et al.*, 2012; Lehner *et al.*, 2014). Personality traits

of an individual has great significance in coping with the stress related situations at workplace (Flett and Hewitt, 2002; Stoeber and Otto, 2006). Harvey *et al.* (2007) suggested that individual characteristic may reduce the harmful effects of mistreatments on employee turnover intention. Similarly, Abbas *et al.* (2012) examined individual psychological resources (e.g hope, self efficacy) in perception of politics-turnover intention relationship and call for further research with different stressors at workplace.

Employee turnover intention is largely influenced by stressors and feelings of stress at workplace (Firth *et al.*, 2004). Organizations paying high cost against turnover intention (Waldman *et al.*, 2010; Ma *et al.*, 2009) and job burnout (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001). It is important to cope with high employee turnover intention (Heponiemi *et al.*, 2014) and job burnout (Shoji *et al.*, 2015; Bakker and Costa, 2014). Individual Psychological resources could help employees at workplace to reduced the negative effects of stressor. This research is aimed at buffering the stress-burnout and stress-turnover intention linkages with positive psychological capital. In other words, employee's psychological resource may work as moderator between stress- turnover intentions and stress-burnout relationship.

Psychological Capital is an individual's positive psychological condition of development which include four components i.e. (1) self-efficacy (being confident to perform challenging task); (2) Optimism (to develop a positive urge or feeling of being successful in present and future); (3) Hope (provides willingness and energy to attain a specific task or goal) and; (4) Resilience (sustaining and bouncing back after an adverse or problematic situation to attain success) (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). When employees at workplace face social stressor such as politics or ostracism, in order to make balance, he/she make effort to successfully cope with such stressful condition (Abbas *et al.*, 2012; Hobfoll, 2011). These efforts of coping with stress depends on employee psychological resource (Treadway *et al.*, 2005). In this research, researcher proposed that psychological capital work as psychological resource which helps in coping stress-burnout and stress-turnover relationships.

Previous studies evaluated the comparison of sexual and non-sexual aggression on employee's satisfaction and suggested further research on other job outcomes (Lapierre *et al.*, 2005). Lapierre *et al.*, (2005) specifically emphasized on employee's physical and emotional symptoms. Furthermore, research on sexual harassment suggests that there is a great need to study sexual harassment in cross national perspectives (McDonald, 2012). Present study addresses this call for further research on sexual harassment in Pakistani culture and investigates the possible consequence of interpersonal mistreatment at work which includes job stress, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion and turnover intention.

Literature suggests that number of studies discussed the occurrence and significance of workplace ostracism. Wu *et al.* (2011) examined workplace ostracism and emphasize for further research on missing mediated underlying mechanism of workplace ostracism and job outcomes. Similarly, a recent research by Gkorezis and Bellou, (2016) examined workplace ostracism and call for further research for alternative mediating variable between workplace ostracism and job outcomes. Moreover, it is also important to include other variables related to behavioral strategies that can report for psychological distress results. On the other hand, (Taylor *et al.*, 2012) repeatedly suggests the underlying mechanism through which workplace incivility negatively affecting employee attitudes and behaviors is yet to be explored. Based on above mentioned literature, present study is aimed at investigating the underlying mechanism of interpersonal mistreatment with the possible with possible consequences.

Interpersonal mistreatment has captivated the workplaces globally. Literature on interpersonal mistreatment explores various forms of mistreatment and their effects in isolation, workplace ostracism (Hawkley *et al.*, 2011; Robinson *et al.*, 2013; Stout and Dasgupta, 2011; Williams and Zadro, 2001; Wu *et al.*, 2012), sexual harassment (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1995; McDonald, 2012; Willness *et al.*, 2007), workplace incivility (Cortina and Magley, 2003; Taylor *et al.*, 2012). However, Bennet and Robinson (2003) emphasize that the construct of interpersonal mistreatments require a systemic research. Given the importance of individual

mistreatment effects on work stress and job related outcomes, this research is aimed at addressing the call and investigates three different forms of interpersonal mistreatment: (1) sexual harassment, (2) workplace incivility and (3) workplace ostracism altogether in a single study. Bowling and Beehr (2006) also called for the further research on interpersonal mistreatment. The objective lying behind this research is to find the cushion against interpersonal mistreatment. Abbas *et al.* (2012) suggested a possible buffering role of psychological capital in the relationship of job stressors and job results, on the basis of these calls, Researcher used the merged control of psychological capital and stress on turnover intention in the organization.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Mistreatment at workplace has been extensively studied over the period of last fifteen years (Cortina and Magley, 2003; Willness *et al.*, 2007; McDonald, 2012; Farris *et al.*, 2015). Literature review on the constructs of interpersonal mistreatment has also discussed important organizational stressors and outcomes such as workplace incivility (Andersson and Pearson, 1999), bullying (Rayner, 1999), social discouragement (Duffy *et al.*, 2002), crowding as a phenomena of mobbing (Leymann, 1990), aggression at work (Neuman and Baron, 1998), emotional mistreatment (Keashly *et al.*, 1997), and rude administration by the supervisor (Tepper, 2000). Interpersonal mistreatment is a broad construct which refers to engagement in negative counter normative action towards employees at workplace (Cortina and Magley, 2003). A research has suggested that different forms of mistreatment either milder (incivility) or major (sexual harassment) shows detrimental effect to organization. These mistreatments and its destructive effects needs to further studies in different contextual and cultural (Willness *et al.*, 2007; Appelbaum *et al.*, 2007; Einarsen *et al.*, 2011; Schilpzand *et al.*, 2014 ; Li *et al.*, 2016).

In last few decades, different researches demonstrated that sexual harassment and other mistreatments had a vital negative effect on job attitudes of employees (Willness *et al.*, 2007). Evidence suggests around 40 to 75 % females and 13 to 30 %

males experience sexual harassment in both public and private American organizations (McDonald, 2012). Beside this, according to a classic research on 74 national European studies in 11 states, about 17% to 81% female workers are victims of sexual harassment (Timmerman and Bajema, 1999), 2 % in Sweden, 11% in Denmark, 17% in Luxembourg, 80% in Austria, the reported cases about sexual harassment increased to 19% from 1992 to 2005 (Elkins *et al.*, 2008). This position is even more threatening in Nepal, study reported that almost 54% of the females faced one or other type of harassment at their workplaces, 58% of males and 23% of female's employee/workers were of the view that they were aware of sexual harassment at workplace (Law and Development, 2004). A study conducted in Japan by Ministry of Labor revealed that out of 2254 respondents, two third were subject to sexually harassed, 11% had experienced quid pro quo and 45% has experienced hostile working environment.

Studies in Pakistan also revealed some threatening insights. A study by Zaidi (1998) on employees at workplace reported by (Ahmad 2012) revealed that 42% employees are unaware of the term sexual harassment, 23% claimed the world as overwhelmed by the co-workers and 73% felt sexually insecure from the wrongful gestures and remarks in work environment. Employees suffering with sexual harassment in Pakistan are facing serious consequences. A recent study by Working Women's Support Center exposed that out of 200 employee respondents 90% respondents felt insecure at their work places. 20% females reported depression and 5% females reported suicide attempts (Sadruddin, 2013; Perveen, 2010). A study by Merkin and Shah, (2014) revealed an interesting insight that females remain silent because of societal environment and collectivist culture and the only option they are left with in order to survive in this environment is to remain quiet and resulting females are reluctant fem to report such incidents. Future research on sexual harassment should examined collective culture like Pakistan (Sigal *et al .*, 2005; Haider, 2014).

Research shows that victims of sexual harassment at workplace experience variety of negative psychological, physical and job reactions (Fitzgerald et al., 1997). Mental and physical health issues include frustration, unease, incapacity, disgrace

and stress related disorders (Bergman et al., 2002; Magley *et al.*, 1999; Willness et al., 2007). Personal and job-related outcomes associated with sexual harassment places higher costs on organizations. Direct costs linked with sexual harassment at workplace include costs associated with termination, re-recruitment, human resource development, legal proceedings against employee complaints (McDonald, 2012). While indirect costs associated with sexual harassment cases at workplace include decline in employee morale, productivity, motivation and other job related outcomes such as increase in employee absenteeism or damage to organization's image (Makowicz and Schlupp 2013; Arnqvist et al., 2013).

Workplace incivility is another form of interpersonal mistreatment. 71% of employee's experience incivility (Cortina *et al.*, 2001), whereas just 12 % employees reported it (Reio and Ghosh, 2009). Critiques have pointed lethal effects of workplace incivility (e.g., Yeung and Griffin, 2008; Moyer, 2008). A focus grouped interview of 700 individuals suggested that incivility is the most significant prevalent problem at workplace (Porath and Pearson, 2012), around 20% employees face workplace incivility (Pearson and Porath, 2005). Consequently, 53% of them are found wasting their work time in discussing future, 22% has reduced their work efforts intentionally, 37% of them have decreased their commitment to the organization and 46% ended with change in their jobs to avoid future problems (Pearson *et al.*, 2000). According to Reio and Ghosh's (2009) a sample of 402 working employees revealed that more than 54 percent of employees were involved in workplace incivility. Out of which 46 percent employee admitted that they are intentionally did workplace incivility.

Moreover, ostracism is another type of mistreatment, according to Faulkner *et al.*, (1997) an American sample of 2000 employees suggested that 67 percent used to exhibit silent treatment, whereas 75 percent suffered with silent treatment by others. Another sample of 262 full-time employees suggested that 66 percent of employee at workplace get silent treatment, out of which while speaking, 76 percent had been interrupted by their peers and supervisor. 58 % of employees perceived that they were intentionally excluded from very important information. 45 percent had been left out from meeting due to no reasons. A total number of 29 percent respondents

stated that other employees at workplace left the room when they entered in the room; around 18 percent respondents stated that they had placed in physically isolated areas at workplace (Fox and Stallworth, 2005).

The high prevalence of sexual harassment, workplace incivility and workplace ostracism call for further research in the area of interpersonal mistreatment. Similarly, organizations are paying high financial and psychological cost against interpersonal mistreatment at workplace. Based of effective event theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), this research proposed that occurrence of unexpected events of interpersonal mistreatment at workplace effect employee cognition and emotional process. The emotional reactions are depends on intensity of the event of mistreatment, the stronger intensity (e.g. sexual harassment) of event the more would be the negative effects on job outcomes. The events of mistreatment may increase the job stress of victim which ultimately increase employee job burnout and employee may start thinking to leave organization.

Bennet and Robinson (2003) suggested that construct of interpersonal mistreatment needs systematic research. According to Lim and Cortina (2005) sexual harassment should be measured along with other types of mistreatments, they argued that only 1 to 3 percent employees reported sexual harassment when asked in isolation. Whereas, when both non-sexual mistreatment (e.g. incivility) and sexual harassment were asked together the reported percentage increased to 22 percent. In order to increase response rate of sexual harassment, present research investigate two other mistreatments along with sexual harassment. Based on the call of Lim and Cortina (2005) these two mistreatments (workplace ostracism and incivility) would help to increase the response rate of employees suffering with sexual harassment at workplace. A recent study on investigating workplace sexual harassment in Pakistan revealed that victims of such incidents are reluctant to respond (Sadruddin, 2013). This accounts for the male dominance and cultural issues of the society (Hofstede, 1983). However, Lim and Cortina, (2005) used sexual harassment and workplace incivility together and found high response rate than sexual harassment in isolation. Azeem *et al.* (2015) examined workplace ostracism and conflict together. Similarly, Cullen *et al.* (2014) also examined two mistreatments (interpersonal conflict and ostracism) together and call for further research in the area of interpersonal



mistreatment. Following the same tenet, current research adds one more mistreatment (e.g ostracism) along with proposed research (Lim and Cortina, 2005), and expects high and actual response rate of mistreatment in private and public telecom sector of Pakistan.

Present research aiming to explore the actual problem of mistreatments, that what possible reactions and aftermath of victim of mistreatments are facing at workplace, how the victims of sexual harassment react and what are the effects of mistreatments on employee's job outcomes. According to Lim and Cortina (2005) the victim of interpersonal mistreatments facing stress related issues at workplace. Stress has covered the human psychological condition with most of its distressing effects, making it a most common and universal factor causing the job burnout. A total number of 77% employees have been found as experiencing physical health problems due to presence of stressors (e.g. mistreatment) in their surroundings (American Psychological Association, 2007). Psychological problems are found as a consequences of experiencing stress at workplace. These psychological problems include anxiety and irritability in the behavior. According to the above mentioned survey, half of the respondents reported disturbed sleep, 40% people faced disturbed eating habits like over or under eating. 66% people claimed more smoking due to stress. The stress on job ultimately caused serious psychological issues such as emotional exhaustion and job burnout (Beehr, 2014).

Burnout has been recognized as a social problem of the modern era (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Burnout is becoming more prevalent for those who work in the services sectors (e.g., counselors, call centers) frequently resulting in extreme fatigue and the inability to maintain compassion for one's job (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Burnout is more pervasive in service sectors (e.g. call centers) due to the emotional requirements of assisting customers (Maslach and Florian, 1988). Burnout at workplace is both a national and global topic of interest (Maslach and Leiter, 2013). Organizations today not only lose talented employees due to burnout but they are losing large monetary surplus in the rehiring phases of new employees (Phillips, 2007). The cost to replace an employee is estimated by the Saratoga Group to be anywhere from one to three times an employee's annual salary (Phillips, 2007). The

effects of burnout with the employee of telecom sector in the workplace has been examined in many studies in the United States and globally (Furnell, 2008; Mphuthi, 2008; Visser and Rothmann 2009; Werner, 2006; Hauptfleisch, and Uys, 2006; Healy and Bramble, 2003).

Like burnout, employee turnover is another important problem for organizations, because of the expenses associated with recruiting, employee training, work interruptions, and possible legal battles (Sims, *et al.*, 2005). Organizations suffered high financial cost against employee turnover (Abbasi and Hollman, 2000; Buchbinder *et al.*, 2001; Waldman *et al.*, 2004). The financial implications of employee turnover on service sector organizations can also be costly (Abbasi and Hollman, 2000; Buchbinder *et al.*, 2001; Waldman *et al.*, 2004; Warren *et al.*, 1998). A study in service sector suggested that turnover costing approximately \$11 billion annually (Abbasi and Hollman, 2000). Another research suggested that organization estimated replacement costs of up to \$26,000 and revenue losses of up to \$500,000 (Scott, 1998). For reducing cost of turnover, researchers should examine the possible causes of high turnover intention.

This research examines two important job outcomes, job burnout and turnover intention. The risk of burnout is high in the human-service professions, often resulting in decreased quality of services provided to clients (Das, and Chatterjee, 2014; Green *et al.*, 2014). The antecedents include different workplace stressors that creates stress and ultimately effects job burnout. A two waves study of employee working in telecom sector of Netherlands suggested that increase in job demands and decrease in job resources increase job stress (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009). They strongly recommend three waves study design for further research of exploring mediating mechanism for job burnout. Similarly, employee turnover is the global problem for organizations. A study of telecom sector (Vodafone) of Ghana suggested the employee turnover intention is the major issue of telecom sector (Kwenin *et al.*, 2013). Replacing a lost valuable employee can be more expensive than employing a new one (Cappelli, 2008). Research suggested that recruiting and training new employees cost more than 50 percent of the worker's salary (Johnson *et al.*, 2000). A Study of call center have shown different factors are associated with burnout, more

research need to require in the telecom sector of non-western cultures (Furnell, 2008). A recent study in telecom sector of Pakistan called for future research for predicting employee turnover intentions (Haider *et al.*, 2015; Khan, 2014), with clearer understanding of why employees leave the organizations need to be addressed (Waldman *et al.* 2004; Kim, 2012).

This researcher selected telecom sector, sexual harassment mostly occurs with female (Willness, et al., 2007; Powell, and Henry, 2016) and call centers have good number of female workers (Shome, 2006). A recent study in telecom sector found that female participation is almost 43% (Rafiq *et al.*, 2012). Another research of 200 employees working in telecom sector found high occurrences of gender discrimination (Abbas et al., 2011). Interpersonal mistreatment is high in service sectors (Wang et al., 2006; Grandey *et al.*, 2004; Sliter *et al.*, 2010; Li *et al.*, 2016). Research also suggested that interpersonal mistreatment is an important antecedent of employee turnover intention (Nazir and Ahmad, 2016).

This study investigates mistreatment and their impacts in telecom sector of Pakistan because, interpersonal mistreatment and their effects on employees are high in collectivism (Akkawanitcha *et al.*, 2015; Wright *et al.*, 2015), and high power distance countries (Wu *et al.*, 2014). Telecom employee engage in multi-tasking activities which may effect their own psychological process such as stress and burnout (Johnson et al., 2013). The direct contact with clients and colleagues is an important factor which increase job burnout (Surana and Singh, 2012; Leiter *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, logic would indicate that the aforementioned alterations within high interaction with client and colleagues in call center and front end complaint center of telecom sector in collective culture (Pakistan). A Study of call center have shown different factors are associated with burnout, more research need to require in the telecom sector of non-western cultures (Furnell, 2008). So, present research examined predictors of job burnout and employee turnover intention in the telecom sector of Pakistan

Social stressors at workplace (e.g workplace ostracism) effects interpersonal and organizational outcomes. This research aims to examine the issues that how

underlying mechanism of interpersonal mistreatment effects to different job outcomes. Leiter *et al.* (2001) suggested that interpersonal mistreatment leads to turnover intention. This research argued that employees at workplace, after victimization of mistreatments not directly start thinking to turnover intentions or directly moved to job burnout. There could be some underlying things happened after mistreatment at workplace which mediates and then it increases employee turnover intention and job burnout. According to Herscovis, (2011) interpersonal mistreatments at workplace increase employee job stress. Research also suggested that job stress increase job burnout (Gold and Roth 2013) and turnover intention (Suteeraroj, and Ussahawanitchakit 2008; Avey *et al.*, 2009). Based on the call of researchers (Gkorezis and Bellou, 2016) present research examine the underlying mediating mechanism that different mistreatment at workplace increase job stress of which ultimately effect employee turnover intention and job stress.

Present research highlights above mentioned problems of interpersonal mistreatment and further investigates the aftermath and underlying mechanism based on the calls proposed by previous researchers. This research investigates the mediating mechanism of psychological effect (job stress) with ostracism and negative outcomes (job burnout). Robinson *et al.*, (2013) proposed that “Prop 14: The relationship between ostracism and negative behavioral outcomes is mediated, in part by ostracism’s psychological effect” (Robinson *et al.*, 2013: page 224). Present research is an attempt to respond this call and fulfill the gap by empirically investigating the proposed mechanism. Furthermore, according to Taylor, *et al.*, (2012) the underlying mechanisms through which workplace incivility negatively affects employee attitudes and behaviors are still largely unexplored. Previous studies examined job stress as mediator between different predictors and job outcomes. Chang *et al.* (2000) explored job stress as mediator between optimism and job burnout and found that job stress does mediates this relationship. Earlier researchers also argued that job stress mediates between work stressor (role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload) and turnover intention (Chen *et al.*, 2008), and job satisfaction (Quaratulain *et al.*, 2013).

Retaining employee at workplace is challenging for the managers and organizations. Literature suggested that social stressors at workplace increase employee's turnover intention (Podsakoff, *et al.*, 2007; Igarria and Guimaraes, 1999; Hang-Yue *et al.*, 2005; Qureshi *et al.*, 2013). A meta analysis on turnover intention suggested that psychological mechanism can help in reducing employee turnover intention (Jiang *et al.*, 2012). They suggested multiple moderators for further research to decrease employee's turnover intention. Similarly, Mostert *et al.* (2015) suggested that we can cope up and reduced job burnout with the combine effects of coping strategies. A meta analysis on job burnout and self efficacy (Shoji *et al.*, 2015) suggested that chronic burnout can be reduced with further moderating variable. Research suggested that we can minimize employee turnover intention (Avey *et al.*, 2009) and job burnout (Peng *et al.*, 2013) with positive psychological capital. Employee positive psychological state helps employee to cope up with difficult situation at reduce the harmful effect of workplace stressors and their effect of employee turnover intentions and job burnout (Avey *et al.*, 2010; Hobfoll, 2001; Yavas *et al.*, 2013; Shoji *et al.*, 2015).

Managing stress and their effect on job outcomes is an important issue (Seaward, 2013; Beehr, 2014). This research also aiming to reduce the negative effects of interpersonal mistreatment on turnover intention and job burnout. This research proposed that employee can manage their stress by oneself. Stress experiences and their reaction vary individuals to individuals, employee can manage their issues with their own personal abilities and strengths (Toegel *et al.*, 2013). Individual psychological resources could work as significant player to manage the effects of stressor at workplace (Luthens *et al.*, 2008). Employee positive state of mind can help to reduce the harmful effect of stress on employee turnover intention and job burnout (Luthans *et al.*, 2008; Peng *et al.*, 2013; Bouckennooghe *et al.*, 2013). After the effects of stressor, employee feel stress at workplace, if employees build confident and adopt self efficacy, build optimistic approach for the future, exhibit willingness and energy to hoping good things for the future and trying to bouncing back after an adverse or problematic situation. This research is an attempt to investigates that how these psychological capital helps employee and reduced the detrimental effect of job stress on turnover intention and job burnout.

Based on conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 2001), present research use psychological capital as moderator in stress–burnout and stress–turnover intention relationship. Previous studies used psychological capital as moderator in perception of politics and job outcomes such as job performance and turnover intention and called for further research in psychological capital as moderator (Abbas *et al.*, 2012). Another research suggested that psychological capital moderate between emotional labor - job burnout and emotional labor-job satisfaction (Francis *et al.*, 2011). Yavas *et al.* (2013) examined hope which weakens the relationship between stress-exhaustion and stress- turnover intention relationship. Yavas *et al.* (2013) examined single dimension of psychological capital (Hope) with only one dimension of job burnout (emotional exhaustion).

Important cultural insights are evident in previous studies conducted in western countries. Majority of the research on interpersonal mistreatment at workplace has been conducted on Americans (Willness *et al.*, 2007) and then to United Kingdom, Australia and European countries (DeSouza and Cerqueira, 2009). However, it is suggested in literature that more research on different countries, historical and social, with different cultural features across national context are required (McDonald, 2012). Tsui *et al.* (2007) argued that, since most of the theories and researches are being conducted and developed in Western countries especially in US, practitioners and researcher have low confidence regarding its generalizability in non-western settings.

As a conclusion, based on previous literature this research addressing the problems and aftermath of mistreatments and proposed that mistreatment at workplace increase job stress and in turn job stress increase job burnout and turnover intention. As discussed above, organizational facing problems of sexual harassment, ostracism and incivility at workplace and paying high cost against issues of mistreatment. Similarly, job stress, job burnout and turnover intention are major problem of organizations. Organizations are paying high psychological and finance cost against job stress, job burnout and employee turnover. This research proposed that when employee has been victimized with mistreatments, the event of mistreatment effect psychologically process of victim, which increase employee job

stress. The continuous job stress influences employee emotions, increase emotional feeling of fatigue or frustration, depersonalized employee from work and employee feel lack of accomplishment. Similarly, different mistreatments increase job stress of victim and the victim start thinking to leave the organization. The research examined job stress as mediator between interpersonal mistreatment and job outcomes. This research also provides the coping mechanism to better cope with the problems, challenges and stressor associated with job stress, thereby reducing the influence of job stress arisen by mistreatment on outcome of the study. This study argued that employee with higher psychological capital will cope-up with the stress and restrict themselves of being burnout and turnover intention at workplace. So, psychological capital acts as a moderator in the relationship between job stress and job outcomes. The mediating mechanism of job stress and coping mechanism of psychological capital has been called by many previous researchers to investigate and current study is contributing in literature by responding to those calls.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The current research will investigate the consequences of interpersonal mistreatment (sexual harassment, incivility, workplace ostracism) through job stress. Present research will also seek to examine psychological capital which used as coping mechanism against workplace stressor. This study is an attempt to investigate the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship of sexual harassment on job stress, job burnout and employee turnover intention at workplace?
- ii. What is the relationship of workplace incivility on job stress, job burnout and employee turnover intention at workplace?
- iii. What is the relationship of workplace Ostracism on job stress, job burnout and employee turnover intention at workplace?
- iv. What is the relationship of job stress on job burnout and employee turnover intention?

- v. Does job stress mediate the relationship between sexual harassment and job burnout and turnover intention?
- vi. Does job stress mediate the relationship between workplace incivility and job burnout and turnover intention?
- vii. Does job stress mediate the relationship between workplace ostracism and job burnout and turnover intention?
- viii. Does psychological capital moderate the relationship between job stress and job burnout and turnover intention?

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

This study is an attempt to explain the interpersonal mistreatment-outcomes relationship which is mediated by job stress. Moreover, coping mechanism through psychological capital as a moderator will be investigated. Main objectives of the study are:

- i. To identify the relationship between sexual harassment on job stress, job burnout and turnover intention.
- ii. To identify the relationship between workplace incivility on job stress, job burnout and turnover intention.
- iii. To identify the relationship between workplace ostracism on job stress, job burnout and turnover intention.
- iv. To examine the relationship between job stress on job burnout and turnover intention.
- v. To investigate whether job stress mediates the relationship between sexual harassment and job burnout and turnover intention.
- vi. To investigate whether job stress mediates the relationship between workplace incivility job burnout and turnover intention.
- vii. To investigate whether job stress mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism job burnout and turnover intention.
- viii. To examine the moderating role of psychological capital in relationship between job stress and job burnout and turnover intention.



## 1.5 Scope of Study

This research discusses three forms of interpersonal mistreatment and their aftermaths. Research has also discussed that these mistreatment work as social stressor and creates stress at workplace, and this mechanism leads to negative job outcomes (job burnout and turnover intention). This research also provides the moderating effect of psychological capital in stress-burnout relationship.

For this purpose, researcher collected data from all telecom companies operating in Pakistan. According to Pakistan Telecom Communication Limited (PTCL) there are total six telecom companies (Mobilink, Telenor, Ufone, Warid, Zong and PTCL) working in four major cities (Lahore, Karachi, Faisalabad and Islamabad) of Pakistan. Moreover, data collected from employees working in these telecom companies. The finding of this research helps us to identify the possible relationship between proposed frameworks of interpersonal mistreatment.

Employees in telecom sector or call centers face challenges such as physical assault, and sexual harassment (Paul and Huws, 2002). The tendency is increasing in developing countries (Rafiq *et al.*, 2012; Abbas *et al.*, 2011), because there is a rapid increase in female workers in Pakistan (Ramana, 2012). In call centers, employee's especially female workers are more frequently victimized with sexual harassment (Guard, 2006). Mostly harassment occurs in night shifts or dusk hours in early hours of the morning (Paul and Huws, 2002). A study on telecom sector of Pakistan reveals that around 13 percent of employee suffering with mistreatments at workplace (Uddin, 2015). A study by Haq, (2014) on workplace ostracism by collecting data on variety of organizations including call centers employee suggested further research on workplace ostracism along with different mediating and moderating variables. Similarly, a study by Bibi *et al.*, (2013) on workplace incivility and counter-workplace behavior in public and private universities and suggest further research with larger sample in other sectors of Pakistan. Similarly, a study examined job stress on 134 employee working in telecom sector of Pakistan call for large sample size for further research (Mansoor *et al.*, 2011). A study of employee retention in telecom

sector of Pakistan suggested further research to examine and cope the issues associated with employee employee retention (Shoaib *et al.*, 2009).

Second, call center cover the gender mix, both male and females are working in call center. The victims of ostracism and workplace incivility exist in every workplace (Williams 2001; Lim and Cortina, 2005). So the data for telecom cover all independents variable. Similarly, this research also examines job stress, components of burnout and turnover intention. According to Lin *et al.*, (2009) stress mostly occurs in service sector especially in call centers. The Telecom is the one of the major service sector provide high revenue to the economy of Pakistan (state bank of Pakistan). A study in telecom sector of Pakistan suggested those job stressor causes job stress which ultimately increase turnover intentions (Malik *et al.*, (2013). According to (Furnell, 2008) burnout affects employees of telecom and call centers of the world.

Tsui et al. (2007) identify examination of the constructs developed in western context into the non-western culture as a promising area for future research. Present study is an attempt to examines interpersonal mistreatment with their mediation mechanism of job stress along with moderating role of psychological capital on job burnout and turnover intention telecom sector of non western culture. Researcher who collected data from different organizations of Pakistan shows that the organizations in Pakistan have high male dominance, less than 10 percent women's are working in organizations (Raja *et al.*, 2004). Additionally, a large number of women working in call centers of Pakistan and call centers are considered so called female dominant areas of telecom sector in Pakistan. So the telecom sector covers gender dominant organizations at both ends (Male/ Female).

The study design of present research is three wave in nature. Three waves research helps in minimizing the common method variance and concern for causality in research exploring mediation processes (Podsakoff, *et al.*, 2003; Cohen, *et al.*, 2013). Previous research on interpersonal mistreatment with underlying mediating mechanism also used three waves research design. Olson and Boswell, (2008) examined mistreatments with mediating mechanism of individual reactions on time

lag research. A meta analysis on harassment suggest that “studies also used cross sectional and non experimental data makes it impossible to draw strong conclusions concerning the causal relationships between harassment and the other variables” (Bowling and Bheer, 2006 p:1008). Hogh *et al.*, (2011) examined bullying with turnover intention in three waves study design. Similarly, Wu *et al.*, (2011) examined self esteem as mediator between workplace ostracism and job performance. They collected data on time 1 for (Independent), time 2 for mediator an in time 3 for dependents. They mentioned that three waves study as strength of the model for reducing the issue of common method variance (Padsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Moreover, data collection in three waves justify causal nature of mediation model. Ahn and Shin (2013) examined workplace isolation as mediator in cross sectional research and accepted that they ae unable to examined causal relationship and call for further research in three wave research design. Taylor *et al.* (2012) examined affective commitment as mediator between workplace incivility and performance. In order to reduce common method variance, they data in two waves with the gap of one month.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The major contribution of present research is to examine the antecedents and possible consequences of job stress. The antecedent includes three major and minor forms of mistreatment which causes job stress whereas present research examines possible consequences of job stress such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment and turnover intention, this research also examines the buffer effect of psychological capital which helps in reducing the harmful effects of stress to job burnout and employee turnover intentions.

This study will help managers and corporates in several ways. This study enhance knowledge to managers with the detrimental effects of sexual harassment at workplace and how harassment at workplace causes stress which ultimately leads to job burnout and increase turnover intention. So managers would take immediate action in order to save the employee from burnout conditions and can reduce high turnover from organization.

Present research will explore the intervening mechanisms which explain workplace incivility's adverse effects. Few studies have explored how incivility and ostracism influences employees through its impact on individual stress levels and cognitive processing (Porath and Erez, 2007; Lim *et al.*, 2008). Although workplace incivility has been conceptualized as a dynamic social interaction involving the exchange of negative behaviors (Andersson and Pearson, 1999; Osatuke, *et al.*, 2009). The detrimental aftermath of ostracism and incivility will help managers to understand the importance of mistreatments at workplace, and managers will get message to educate their employees and treat them with equity, dignity and respect. This research also helps the managers and employees to better understand the causes of job stress, job burnout and turnover intention.

The proposed psychological resource or the coping mechanism of psychological capital will help the employees for better utilization of their psychological resource for reducing their stress, and decrease burnout and turnover intentions. The buffering effect will motivate the managers to increase the psychological capital of their workers in stressful environment. Organization can arrange the training interventions to enhance psychological resource such as self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism of employees, so they are better able to cope up with stress related consequences.

## **1.7 Theoretical Contribution**

Researcher believes that this research will contribute in the literature of interpersonal mistreatments, job burnout and psychological capital. This research will contribute in growing body of research that, how three different types of mistreatment effects organizational behavior. It will also contribute in literature to examine moderating effect of psychological capital in relationship between stress burnout and stress turnover intention. This research will also contribute in literature to examine mediating role of job stress between mistreatment and outcomes (burnout and turnover intention). Up till now, no study examined the model of major and minor interpersonal mistreatment altogether with underlying mediated mechanism of

job stress and moderation mechanism of psychological capital along with component of job burnout and turnover intentions.

This study will contribute to enrich the existing knowledge in the field of organizational behavior in several ways. First, the comprehensive framework of current study will instigate a better understanding about the nature of relationship between these constructs. Second, this study investigates three workplace mistreatment (sexual harassment, incivility and ostracism) and its impact on job outcomes. Third, this research investigates the mediating effect of job stress in relationship between three types of mistreatment and job outcomes (job burnout and turnover intention). Fourth, this study is an attempt to cope the detrimental effects of mistreatment mechanism by buffering stress- burnout relationship with positive organizational behavior. Fifth, this study is to investigate job burnout and turnover intention as consequence of all major social stressor such as sexual harassment, workplace incivility, workplace ostracism and lastly it will help managers to better understand and cope with the behaviors of the employees.

There are many practical implementations of this model in organizations as it covers most important variables in the study. There are many strategies which can be applied in organizations to minimize the deleterious effects of mistreatment and other stressors in the organizations. Study of these variables made it helpful for management to device relevant strategies in order to minimize their impacts. Interpersonal mistreatment cannot be completely diminished from an organization but still strategies can be adopted to reduce its impacts (Penhaligon, *et al.*, 2013). Mistreatment in organizations can be psychologically treated at employee's level through counseling sessions and educational workshops aiming at treatment of mistreatment (e.g., Brown *et al.*, 2006). With strategies aimed at reducing the impacts of mistreatment on employees, its harms can be minimized to an effective level (Penhaligon, *et al.*, 2013). In order to devise proper strategies and to practically implement the research studies on these variables, management should analyze its culture, organizational structures and policies (O'Leary-Kelly *et al.*, 1996).

The individual psychological resources (psychological capital) will help managers to enhance the psychological capacities of their employee by giving them training for building psychological capital. Employee with high psychological capital (i.e. self-efficacy, hope) will be able to better cope up with stressors (sexual harassment). These psychological resources ultimately help managers and employee in reducing the harmful effect stressors on emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment, depersonalization and turnover intentions.

Organizations have to pay different costs associated with turnover (Dalton *et al.*, 1982) and job burnout (Maslach, 2003). High turnover and employee burnout in an organization are also a cause of reducing morale of other employees along with social capital (Des and Shaw 2001; Maslach, Westman, *et al.*, 2001). This research framework suggested to managers and organization that strict policies against mistreatments (e.g: ostracism) can save employee from emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment, depersonalization and employee turnover intentions.

The finding of this research will help employee and organizations, managers can control sexual harassment by providing environment with equity, zero tolerance policies, workgroup composition, and proportion of women in occupation. Similarly, this study helps managers for taking awareness against workplace incivility. As suggested by Pearson and Porath, (2005) that organizational policies are not sufficient to control workplace incivility, they should emphasize on employee and organization development. Managers also need to take serious steps for reduce interpersonal mistreatment at workplace. According to William's (2001) working environment, social issues, and individual difference facilitates ostracism, this social death decrease self-esteem of employee which causes job stress. Therefore, the managers need to create friendly environment at workplace and provide a culture which discourages isolation of anyone.

## **1.8 Conceptual and Operational Definitions**

Research process; in general, deals with the relationship among different variables in order to make the inferential conclusions, which provide guidelines to solve the pragmatic world (Creswell, 2012). A variable confers some concepts or design (Ary *et al.*, 1996) depending upon the study, takes different values and meanings, but in the results groups and individuals always vary from each other. Primarily, independent variables and moderating variables are highlighted in empirical research. They are considered “cause” of the action dependent variables would be the result of independent variables. They are “effect” of the action. In the light of above discussion, each variable plays a positive role of the representative of a concept and design, every researcher must define each variable carefully for the research purposes. In the current study, the brief conceptual definitions of the variables in the following segment would be provided.

### **1.8.1 Interpersonal Mistreatment**

According Cortina and Magley, (2003) Interpersonal mistreatment is a specific, antisocial variety of organizational deviance, involving a situation in which at least one organizational member takes counter normative negative actions—or terminates normative positive actions—against another member (e.g., Anderson and Pearson, 1999; Giacalone and Greenberg, 1997; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Interpersonal mistreatment can thus range from subtle social slights to general incivility to blatant harassment and violence. Theory and research are emerging on the larger processes in which this form of deviance is embedded, addressing events that precede and follow mistreatment (e.g., Barling, *et al.*, 2001; Cortina, *et al.*, 2002; Cortina *et al.*, 2001; Glomb, *et al.*, 2002; Griffin, *et al.*, 1998). This research focuses on the latter specifically, three mistreatments sexual harassment, workplace incivility and workplace ostracism.

## 1.8.2 Sexual Harassment

Literature suggests that sexual harassment can be defined in both psychological and legal terms. As far as legal definition is concerned, past research on sexual harassment (Canadian and American court cases) followed by Equal Employment Opportunity Commission” (E.E.O.C., 1980) defines sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, (b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

In psychological terms, sexual harassment can be defined as unwanted sex-related behavior at work that is appraised by the recipient as offensive, exceeding his/her resources, or threatening their well-being (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1997).

### 1.8.2.1 Operational Definition

Present research used psychological definition because of two reasons. First, legal term of sexual harassment comprises of two categories: hostile environment harassment and *quid pro quo*. Whereas the psychological term of sexual harassment comprises of three categories: (a) gender harassment, which is defined as verbal, physical, or symbolic behaviors that convey hostile, offensive, and misogynist attitudes (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1997); (b) Unwanted sexual attention, is defined as that both verbal and nonverbal incidents such as sexual imposition, touching, or repeated requests for dates (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1997); (c) Sexual Coercion, where the target’s job or rewards are contingent on sexual cooperation (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1997). The term gender harassment is missing in legal definition of sexual harassment (Leskinen *et al.*, 2011). Gelfand *et al.*, (1995: 167) argue that three categories “are necessary



and sufficient to classify any particular incident of sexual harassment, they constitute the irreducible minimum of the construct as it is currently understood”.

Second, current study focuses on behaviors rather than legal aspect of sexual Harassment. Leskinen *et al.* (2011) argued that gender harassment, sexual coercion and unwanted sexual attentions are behavior not legal constructs.

### **1.8.3 Workplace Ostracism**

According to Anderson (2009), organizational shunning is defined as The deliberate systematic exclusion of a person who was once included in the rites and everyday rituals that signify organizational membership, while Dotan-Eliaz, *et al.*, (2009) have represented ostracism as Linguistic Ostracism, defined as any situation in which two or more people converse in a language that others around them cannot understand. Ostracism is treated as “Social exclusion” by Dotan-Eliaz, *et al.* (2009), defined as person placed alone at workplace without any type of social contact (Dotan-Eliaz *et al.*, 2009). While, ostracism is extreme level of feeling when individual feels left alone in the workplace or society by other people (Ferris *et al.*, 2008).

#### **1.8.3.1 Operational Definition**

According to Sommer *et al.* (2001), ostracism is an intentional behavior or approach by others. In this piece of research, workplace ostracism is defined as an individual or group omits to take actions that engage another organizational member when it is socially appropriate to do so (Robinson *et al.*, 2013). According to this definition, ostracism is comprised of behaviors such as social rejection, intentional ignorance, shunning etc. This definition not only includes definition but also the core elements.

#### **1.8.4 Workplace Incivility**

According to Andersson and Pearson (1999: 457) workplace incivility is defined as “low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others”. Present study follows the same definition of workplace incivility as it is the most widely used definition of workplace incivility.

#### **1.8.5 Job Stress**

Job stress is defined by as “the experience by a person of unpleasant emotion such as tension, frustration, anxiety, anger and depression resulting from aspects of his work” (Kyriacou, 1987: 146). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define stress as particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being. The psychological reaction to the demands caused by a stressor results in tension or anxiety because the person does not feel capable of coping (McGrath, 1970).

##### **1.8.5.1 Operational Definition**

In Present research, job stress refers as “an individual’s reactions to characteristics of the work environment (stressor) that seem emotionally and physically threatening” (Jamal, 2007). Present study used job stress as mediator. We argued that workplace stressor such as interpersonal mistreatments causes job stress, that may further lead to (turnover intention) and emotional threatening (job burnout).

#### **1.8.6 Psychological Capital**

Research in organizational behavior suggested a number of positive constructs (Cameron and Caza, 2003; Nelson and Cooper, 2007) whereas four constructs (self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience) meet the best criteria of

positive organizational behavior (Luthans, 2002; Luthans *et al.*, 2007; Luthans and Youssef, 2007). First, hope is defined as “positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (1) agency (goal-directed energy) and (2) pathways (planning to meet goals)” (Snyder *et al.*, 1991: 287). Second, Self-efficacy that drives from the theory and research of Bandura, (1997) defined by (Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998b: 66) as “the employee’s conviction or confidence about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, or courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context”. Third, optimism is defined as people who expect good things to happen to them; pessimists are people who expect bad things to happen to them (Brissette *et al.*, 2002). Fourth is resilience, which is defined as positive psychological capacity to rebound, to ‘bounce back’ from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure, or even positive change, progress and increased responsibility (Luthans, 2002).

Literature conceptually combines these four positive construct and represents a core factor which is renowned as psychological capital (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). Psychological contract has been widely considered as higher order core capacity construct related with job outcomes (e.g. job performance, turnover intention and job satisfaction). Research suggests that it is better to measure overall psychological capital than individuals constructs (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). A large number of studies used Psychological capital as overall construct (Abbas *et al.*, 2012; Ary *et al.*, 1996; Avey *et al.*, 2010).

#### **1.8.6.1 Operational Definition**

On the basis of these literature supports, present research use psychological capital as single construct and defined as an individual’s positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive expectation (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and

bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success (Luthans and Youssef, 2007).

### **1.8.7 Job Burnout**

Burnout was defined as “Failing, wearing out, or becoming exhausted through excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources” (Freudenberger, 1975: 73). Maslach and Leiter (2008) defined job burnout as prolonged response to chronic interpersonal job conditions indicative of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy at work. Burnout is an unpleasant and dysfunctional condition that both individuals and organizations would want to change (Freudenberger, 1975; Maslach and Goldberg, 1999; Maslach and Leiter, 2008). Burnout is commonly recognized as exhaustion from and reduced interest in tasks or activities (Maslach, 1993). Job burnout is a feeling of tiredness and frustration related to one’s job (Chang *et al.*, 2000).

#### **1.8.7.1 Operational definition**

This study refers job burnout as Burnout is a psychological condition that occurs in response to chronic, work stress. According to Maslach, (1993) burnout have three dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment) emotional exhaustion, which is a feeling of deficit of energy or feeling of being emotionally overstretched and used up of one’s own emotional resources. The second component is depersonalization, which refers to callous, negative treatment of others (e.g. clients) to be an object regardless of a person. The third component of job burnout is personal accomplishment, which refers to reduction in one’s feelings of its own competency and accomplishment of work.

### **1.8.8 Turnover Intention**

Turnover was defined as “the degree of individual movement across the membership boundary of a social system” (Price, 1977: 4). Vandenberg and Nelson, (1999: p.1315) Turnover intention is “an individual’s own estimated (subjective)

probability that they are permanently leaving the organization at some point in the near future”.

In fact, turnover can be divided into voluntary and involuntary (Price, 1977). Voluntary cessation membership of an organization by the employee of that organization (Morrell *et al.*, 2001). Whereas, involuntary turnover is defined as “movement across the membership boundary of an organization, which is not initiated by the employee” (Price, 1977: p. 9).

According to Tett and Meyer, (1993) turnover intention is a conscious and deliberate willingness to leave the organization. Turnover intention is a psychological variable of the tendency to leave that is closely related to turnover (Janssen *et al.*, 1999).

#### **1.8.8.1 Operational Definition**

This research refers turnover intention as predecessor of real turnover, which is defined as mental decisions intervening between an individual’s attitudes regarding a job and the stay or leave decisions (Sager, *et al.*, 1998). Current study used turnover intention as an outcome of predictors such as interpersonal mistreatments and job stress.

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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire

#### Time-1



Dear Participant,

ID: \_\_\_\_\_

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I am a PhD student at Faculty of Management Universiti of Teknologi Malaysia. My research interest is in interpersonal mistreatment at workplace in influencing employees' attitudes and behaviors at work. You can help me in my current research project by completing the attached questionnaire, which I think you will find quite interesting. I appreciate your participation in my study.

The Questionnaire contains questions on your individual characteristics, your job, and your feelings and perceptions about your job. In the end I have asked you to provide some personal information such as age, gender, profession and your name. Although I am not asking you for any sensitive personal information, I assure you that ***your responses will be held in strictest anonymity.*** Please keep in mind that the resulting data will be summarized on a general basis and **not** on an individual basis. If for any reason you do not want to participate in my study, please feel free to decline. If you wish to be informed of the findings of this study, the findings will be shared with you as a report discussing aggregated results only and will **not** disclose any raw data as this contravenes Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

Please read the instructions carefully and answer all the questions. There are no "trick" questions, so please answer each item as frankly and as honesty as possible. It is important that **all** the questions be answered. The Questionnaire contains three part, Time 1,