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Impact of Workplace Status on Employee Expediency and Intention to Sabotage: Mediating Role of Unethical Pro-Supervisor Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Humans have an innate desire to attain high status as it provides the individual with greater resources and benefits. This study particularly focuses on the workplace where status is quite evident. The positive aspect of workplace status dominates existing literature by linking it with desirable outcomes, but less attention has been placed on examining its dark side. Utilizing the social influence theory, this study empirically investigates the link between workplace status and employee expediency and intention to sabotage in presence of unethical pro-supervisor behavior as a mediator.

Design/methodology/approach: This study is based on a quantitative research design. A time lag primary data has been collected (N=250) through self-administrated questionnaires, using a convenient sampling technique, across three waves (time 1, time2, time 3) from employees of service sector organizations in Pakistan. This study employs the Hayes PROCESS technique in SPSS, to measure all the hypotheses related to direct and indirect/mediation effect

Findings: Overall, this study finds considerable support for all the hypotheses about direct and indirect effects. The results demonstrate that workplace status triggers employee expediency and intention to sabotage through the underlying mechanism of unethical-pro supervisor behavior.

Originality/value: This research extends the literature on the dark side of workplace status and unethical behaviors and advances social influence theory by providing support and offering insightful theoretical and practical implications for inhibiting unethical behaviors in the workplace. Limitations and future research directions have also been discussed.

Keywords: Workplace status; Unethical pro-supervisor behavior; Employee expediency; Intention to sabotage; Social influence theory

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of unethical behaviors within organizations is a worthwhile topic because of its prevalence and cost to organizations. Researchers have reported various forms of unethical behaviors within the organization while investigating high-profile corporate scandals (Veetikazhi, Kamalanabhan, Malhotra, Arora, & Mueller, 2022). Workplace

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unethical behavior is driven by self-interest such as in the cases of cheating, stealing, or sabotage. Recent literature suggests that employees engage in unethical behavior for the interest of their company, for instance providing false information to clients or keeping facts secret from the public. Such acts would be considered unethical pro-supervisor behaviors (UPSB), which is formally referred to as employees' activities that advance the interests of their supervisors while transgressing ethical norms, principles, or values of appropriate employee behavior (Xiong, Huang, Ma, Liang, & Wang, 2021). UPSB conducted by the employee is harmful to the sustainable development of the corporate eventually. Knowing the prevalence and detrimental effects of this UPSB, it is important to understand why people are willing to engage in such kind of acts.

At the workplace, one of the most influential interactions is between the immediate supervisor and subordinate. Supervisors are crucial and important members of organizations, knowing the significance of the supervisor-subordinate connection, employees may perform unethical acts to facilitate and support their immediate supervisor (Li, Jain, & Tzini, 2021). In the current study, we assert that supervisors; because of their formal position and access to resources have high workplace status than their subordinates and are likely to influence employees' behavior, attitudes, and perceptions either positively or negatively depending on their held position and authority in the organization. As they possess formal power over subordinates and thus can promote unethical acts among employees for their self-interest (Babalola, Mawritz, Greenbaum, Ren, & Garba, 2021). This study exclusively focuses on supervisor workplace status. Status remained a subject of interest across ethnicities, cultures, races, and ages. Our study focuses on the workplace, where status is highly noticeable (Kakkar, Sivanathan, & Gobel, 2020). Workplace status is defined as "an employee's relative standing in an organization, as characterized by the respect, prominence, and prestige he or she possesses in the eyes of other organizational members" (Djurdjevic et al., 2017, pp. 1,114). The existing status literature has focused primarily on the mechanisms by which status is attained and maintained. The concept of status has not received as much attention as it deserved in management journals, despite its pervasiveness and popularity in different domains and its importance in human, organizational, and market dynamics

(Kakkar et al., 2020).

1.1. Research Questions

The dual path theory of status achievement asserts that due to different human needs status can have positive as well as negative consequences. Even though it's positive aspects, there is a need to uncover its negative side too. The empirical support on the gloomy side of workplace status is scant in previous literature and studies should address the potential dark side of workplace status (Djurdjevic et al., 2017; Yang, Ye, & Guo, 2019). Our study endeavors to fill this gap in the workplace status area by proposing an important mediating mechanism i.e., UPSB between workplace status and outcomes (employee expediency, intention to sabotage) link. The present study extends the literature on the dark side of workplace status by using social influence theory as an overarching theory to justify how high workplace (supervisor) status leads to negative consequences. Summarizing the above discussion, this research aims to investigate the link between workplace status and employee outcomes in presence of UPSB as a mediator by using a quantitative approach. More specifically, the study strives to answer the following research questions;

- i. Does high workplace status determine employees' outcomes (employee expediency, intention to sabotage,)?
- ii. Does high workplace status predict UPSB?
- iii. Does UPSB impact employees' outcomes (employee expediency, intention to sabotage)?
- iv. Does UPSB mediate the relationship between work status and employees' outcomes (employee expediency, intention to sabotage)?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

At the workplace employee's status is often seen as a socially constructed subjective evaluation that is, it is developed, sustained, or altered over time. In organizational settings, people care about status hierarchies. Individuals with higher status are associated with a large number of benefits for instance increased positive social attention, greater access to resources, influence, and control over lower-status counterparts (De Clercq,

Fatima, & Jahanzeb, 2021). Existing literature describes a positive picture of the workplace status by linking it with desirable outcomes (Djurdjevic et al., 2017; Yuanyuan Liu, Zhao, Liu, & Yang, 2022), but little is known about its gloomy side and its negative consequences i.e., how high (workplace) status supervisors trigger employee expediency and intention to sabotage through UPSB.

We adopted the social influence theory (Kelman, 1958) to explain how high (workplace) status supervisors trigger employee expediency and intention to sabotage through UPSB. Social influence emerges when someone's behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, or emotions are persuaded by other people and contributing circumstances. It takes place through three different stages, namely compliance, identification, and internalization. People comply when they accept the rules and conventions of others although they do not personally agree with them or when they perform as expected to either receive rewards or avoid punishment. People get identified when they are inspired by a respected, socially influential person. Internalization, on the other hand, is the process where individuals accept ideas and actions into their personal value systems and concur with them both inwardly and outwardly. Drawing upon social influence theory (Kelman, 1958) this study contends that supervisors in superior positions are more respected and influencing, having access to organizational resources and their suspicious behaviors are likely to be interpreted less negatively and they get their subordinates involved in immoral acts, for instance, UPSB, to promote their self-interests without publicly discrediting themselves.

2.1. Workplace Status, Employee Expediency, and Intention to Sabotage

Prior literature reveals the bright side of workplace status by linking it to positive outcomes for instance; performance appraisal, promotion opportunities performance, and job satisfaction (Djurdjevic et al., 2017). Due to conflicting viewpoints, status can also stimulate unfavorable behaviors (Yan Liu, Zhu, & Lam, 2020). So, it is not surprising that supervisors who are delegated with high workplace status in terms of respected position, prominence, and prestige can use their status to enhance their selfish motives, which end up with negative consequences both for the organization as well for themselves also. Based on this notion, this research uses the social influence theory to demonstrate the effect of high-status supervisor on behavioral outcomes of followers. In

workplace settings, high-status supervisors are perceived as credible role models by their subordinates, and being influential and clear standing position above their subordinates (Briker, Hohmann, Walter, Lam, & Zhang, 2021) they may demand unquestionable compliance from them. As low-status subordinates under the influence of high-status of supervisors are more likely to expedite their behavior in which they use shortcuts to pursue goals.

According to a recent study, expediency is the use of unethical tactics and shortcuts to fulfill self-serving interests (Greenbaum, Mawritz, Bonner, Webster, & Kim, 2018). Employees who expedite their behaviors consider the conventional practices of organizations to be flexible and that it is quite convenient to increase performance at neglecting ethical standards (Greenbaum et al., 2018; Ren, Wang, & Collins, 2021). In current modern organizations, low-status employees are constantly under the spell of their superiors and feel pressurized, if leaving is not feasible, they may simply lower their additional efforts (Mishra, Ghosh, & Sharma, 2021) and are likely to act in an unethical manner, or they may begin embracing sabotage intentions towards their direct supervisors or organizations, By the recent narrative (Farasat, Azam, Imam, & Hassan, 2022) individuals, who are dissatisfied with their jobs develop negative intentions towards their jobs, for instance, intention to sabotage, instead of having positive job intentions. These observations lead us to develop the following hypotheses;

Hypothesis 1(a): *Workplace status is positively related to employee expediency*

Hypothesis 1(b): *Workplace status is positively related to the intention to sabotage*

2.2. Workplace Status and Unethical Pro-Supervisor Behavior

Status-seeking is rapidly becoming a core human drive to sustain personal as well as professional goals (WANG, GAO, & SHU, 2020). People who possess high status are more likely to receive numerous rewards, including positive social attention, enhanced rights and perquisites, influence and control over joint decisions, and better access to scarce resources (Yan Liu et al., 2020). The construct of workplace status proposed by Djurdjevic et al. (2017) is based on three themes respect, prominence, and prestige. Respect is defined as a person's social value based on the accomplishments and presence of certain traits. The visible and formal relative standing of an employee in the

organization above the other organizational members is called a prominence. The third most important component of status is prestige which is described as attributes most likely to support organizational success, for instance, competence, dedication, and leadership. It is not surprising that people who are delegated with high workplace status are generally assertive, decisive, and controlled in their behavior towards others (Kakkar et al., 2020), which ultimately end up with negative consequences both for the organization as well for themselves.

In the light of social influence theory, this study infers that supervisors based on their power and high status exert influence over subordinates to fulfill their self-interests, thus can promote UPSB in subordinates (Mesdaghinia, Rawat, & Nadavulakere, 2019). UPSB solely focuses on unethical acts conducted by followers to benefit their supervisors and the neglect of ethical norms (Veetikazhi et al., 2022). Social influence theory (Kelman, 1958) suggests that employees get involved in such kind of unethical acts to facilitate their immediate supervisor for instance employees can lie to protect themselves, and overstate their performance to make them appear good (Johnson & Umphress, 2019) because they are under the influence of their high-status supervisors or; they can have personal tendency toward unethical behaviors; or they are strongly identified with their supervisors (Zhang, He, Huang, & Xie, 2020).

Hypothesis2: *Workplace status is positively related to unethical pro-supervisor behavior.*

2.3. Unethical Pro-Supervisor Behavior, Employee Expediency, and Intention to Sabotage

The demoralizing effects of unethical behaviors in the workplace might include ample monetary losses, legal prosecutions, and corporate scandals. Even less intense unethical behaviors can also damage corporate reputation (Veetikazhi et al., 2022). Such acts would be considered unethical pro-supervisor behaviors (UPSB), which are formally referred to as employees' activities that advance the interests of their leaders while transgressing ethical norms, principles, or values of appropriate employees (Bryant & Merritt, 2021). In line with social influence theory (Kelman, 1958) employees can get involved in UPSB because subordinates working under the influence of high-status supervisors are conscious that their performance is connected to important repercussions

or they may have a personal tendency towards unethical behaviors or they may be strongly identified with their immediate supervisors or organization.

To complete tasks more quickly, and look more effective and efficient, UPSB may encourage employees to engage in ethically dubious actions such as taking liberties, breaking regulations, and taking shortcuts (Greenbaum et al., 2018). Employee expediency focuses on the ends while ignoring how goals are being completed (Cheng, Guo, & Luo, 2021). Expedient behaviors tend to have negative consequences for employees and their organizations as a whole (Eissa, 2020; Ren et al., 2021). Past studies have described the negative consequences associated with expediency for instance safety breaches decreased profitability and reduced firm performance (Eissa, 2020; Greenbaum et al., 2018), and so on. However, on the other hand, the result of UPSB can be quite opposite to supervisors' expectations as employees can involve in dishonest/cheating behavior rather than favor them. When subordinates feel compelled to attain unethical goals and quitting is not a viable option, they develop negative intentions of sabotage, due to which internal and external stakeholders can suffer (Park & Kim, 2019). In the light of above theoretical justifications we formulate the following hypotheses;

Hypothesis 3(a): Unethical pro-supervisor behavior is positively related to employee expediency.

Hypothesis 3(b): Unethical pro-supervisor behavior is positively related to the intention to sabotage.

2.4. Mediating Role of Unethical Pro-Supervisor Behavior

Supervisors contribute to the development of the perception of what their organization is obligated to do for them, subsequently affecting employee work attitudes and behaviors (Kong, Xin, Xu, Li, & Xu, 2020). To achieve desired outcomes supervisors can coerce subordinates to work harder and longer. The potential of supervisors to exercise such control compels subordinates to pay close attention to their superiors' attitudes and behaviors and to become aware of their expectations. Social influence theory (Kelman, 1958) suggests that high-status supervisors because of their respected, prestigious, and prominent position in the organization exert greater influence on their subordinates. As subordinates (low-status parties) are under the influence of their

supervisor and dependent on them for securing rewards and evading punishment, they are more likely to respond in a way that prevents or reduces damage because they pay close attention to cues of potential risks.

We believe that subordinates can get involved in unethical acts by having a personal tendency or liking toward their supervisors. By social influence process, high-status supervisors can encourage employee expediency and intention to sabotage through UPSB. Employee expediency: a behavioral phenomenon that is quite common in the workplace (Eissa, 2020) and can be detrimental to organizational objectives eventually (Greenbaum et al., 2018). Employee skepticism seems to be growing in the new century, especially in workplaces where there is a culture of distrust, scandals, and opportunistic conduct (Abubakar & Arasli, 2016; Giacalone, Riordan, & Rosenfeld, 2019). More quietly, if employees feel helpless, upset, and dissatisfied, they may have intentions to harm the company or the people they hold accountable. Employees may engage in sabotage with malevolent intents because of UPSB. Employees may therefore be influenced to respond negatively with their intents if they receive unfavorable offerings from their supervisors in the form of indifference or self-serving support.

Hypothesis 4(a): *Unethical pro-supervisor mediates the relationship between workplace status and employee expediency*

Hypothesis 4(b): *Unethical pro-supervisor behavior mediates the relationship between workplace status and intention to sabotage.*

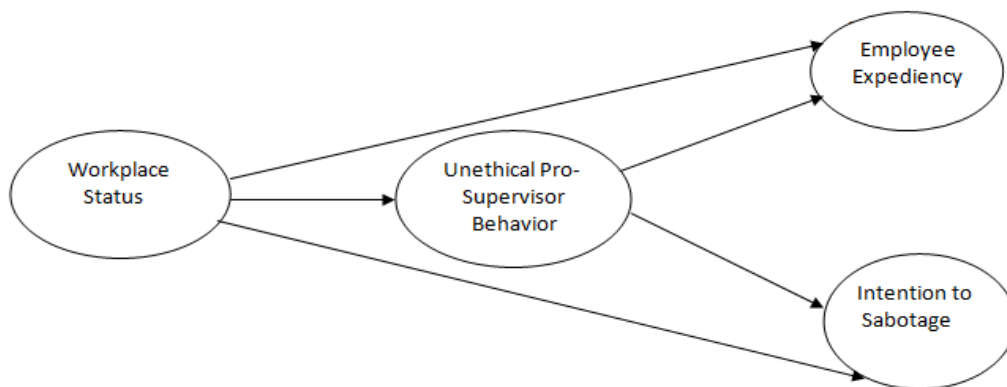


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

Figure 1 depicts (i) the direct effects of workplace status on unethical pro-supervisor behavior, employee expediency, and intention to sabotage, the direct effect of unethical pro-supervisor behavior on employee expediency and intention to sabotage (ii) the mediating effects of unethical pro-supervisor behavior between workplace status and employee expediency, and between workplace status and intention to sabotage.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section covers details regarding the research methods including research design, sampling technique, study measures, and data collection procedure. Sample characteristics of study participants are also discussed

3.1. Participants and Procedures

Data has been collected through self-administrated questionnaires from the service sector organizations located in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan. To collect data, organizations were contacted through personal and professional links. English is the official language of all official work in Pakistan and past studies revealed the effectiveness of English language measures in Pakistan (Raja, Azeem, Haq, & Naseer, 2020). We, therefore, distributed our questionnaires in the English language to the sampled employees. The choice of the location is motivated by the observation that most of the sampled organizations have headquarters in these two twin cities. Data collection

through questionnaires is due to being a reliable and good tool for data collection in many previous studies (Naseer et al., 2020). To collect the primary data, organizations were contacted through personal and professional links. Convenient sampling (non-probability) has been used to get a maximum response rate because it was difficult to estimate the entire population of employees working in the service sector of the twin cities of Pakistan. Respondents have assured the confidentiality of the results. A time-lag primary data was collected in three waves with a gap of 2 weeks between any two waves to avoid response bias.

The workplace status was tapped at time 1, and UPSB was measured at time 2 with a gap of 2 weeks from time 1. Employee expediency and intention to sabotage were measured at time 3 with the same gap of 2 weeks from time 2. For correct employee identification across the three waves, a unique employee id/primary key was created for each employee at time 1 to match later time responses and to sustain confidentiality. A total of 410 employees were asked to rate the workplace status of their supervisor (at time 1), two weeks later questionnaires for measuring supervisor BLM (employee rated) were distributed to those employees who completed the first survey. Overall, 340 responses were received and matched with time 1 responses with the help of the already generated employee id/primary key. After 2 weeks (at time 2), again questionnaires for measuring employee expediency and UPSB were distributed to those respondents who respond at time 2. Finally, 250 complete responses were available for analysis after excluding incomplete/unengaged responses.

3.2. Sample Demographics

Table 1 reports the demographics of our sample, which shows that there are 64.4(35.6) %male (female) participants in our sample. The frequency distribution reveals that 73.2% of the total participants had a master's degree while 22.8% were holding a bachelor's degree. The table also shows that 34.8% of employees were working in government organizations, 48.8% of employees were part of private organizations whereas the remaining respondents belonged to semi-government organizations. Most of the respondents were working as entry-level managers (55.6%). The mean age of respondents was 33.25 (SD=7.35) years and they worked in different departments

including finance& audit (22.4%), sales & marketing (26.8%), HR &Administration (13.6%) IT (20.0%), and average working experience with the current supervisor was 2.86(SD=2.32) years and average working experience in the current organization was 5.25(SD=4.35) years and total working experience is 8.98, (SD=6.75) years.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participants

Gender	Male	Female			
%age	64.4%	35.6%			
Education	Below Graduates	Graduates	Master &Above		
%	4%	22.8%	73.2%		
Organization type	Govt.	Semi-govt.	Private		
%	34.8%	16.4%	48.8%		
Designation	Front Level Management	Entry Level Management	Middle Level Management	Top Level Management	
%	27.2%	55.6%	24.8%	2.4%	
Department	HR & Admin	Sales & Marketing	Finance &Audit	Information Technology	Other
%age	13.6%	26.8%	22.4%	20.0%	17.2%
Area of specialization	HR &Management	Finance &Accounting	Marketing	Computer science	Other
%age	19.6%	20.4%	30.0%	11.2%	18.8%

Notes: N=250, Average Respondent's Age is 33.25 (SD=7.35) years, Total Working Experience is 8.98, (SD=6.75) years and, Average working experience in the current organization is 5.25 (SD=4.35) years and Average Tenure with the current supervisor is 2.86 (SD=2.32) years, SD=Standard Deviation

3.3. Measures

We measured all variables using self-report instruments and responses of all study variables were obtained on a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 7(strongly agree).

Workplace Status

The employee-reported supervisor's workplace status was measured by 5 item scale developed by (Djurdjevic et al., 2017). A sample item is, "My supervisor has a great deal of prestige in my organization", ($\alpha=0.87$).

Unethical Pro-Supervisor Behavior

This construct was assessed by 6 item scale (Umphress, Bingham, & Mitchell, 2010). Sample items include "because my supervisor needed me to, I have not revealed to others

a mistake he/she made that would damage his/her reputation”, ($\alpha=0.89$).

Employee Expediency

We measured employee expediency by a 4-item scale created by (Greenbaum et al., 2018). Sample item includes “I cut corners to complete work assignments more quickly”, ($\alpha=0.88$).

Intention to Sabotage

This construct was measured by using 8 item scale developed by (Abubakar & Arasli, 2016). Sample item includes “I often think about withdrawing my effort, energy and enacting flexible service rules due to rude supervisor”, ($\alpha=0.90$).

3.4. Methodology

We employed the Hayes PROCESS approach in SPSS to test the mediation effect, which is a widely used technique to evaluate the direct, indirect, and conditional indirect effects with bootstrap CIs (confidence intervals). PROCESS Model 4 was utilized to test the indirect path. We used the bootstrapping method (5,000 samples) that provides 95% bias-corrected CI for indirect effects.

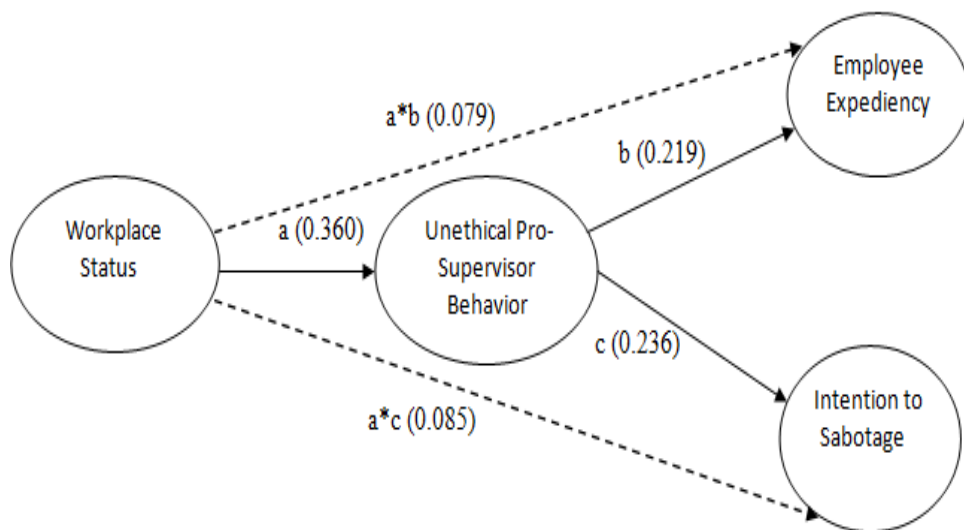


Figure 2. Path Mediation Model

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides details about our results of statistical analysis pertaining to the research question and hypotheses, a discussion of the results, and a connection of the findings with the hypotheses and theory.

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

We run the descriptive analysis on our data and report the results in table 2, which shows that the reliability values for all the variables are above the cut-off level (0.7). The table also shows that all the correlations between the variables of our interest are significantly positive. The workplace status shows a significant positive association with the mediator and outcome variables such as with UPSB ($r=0.26^{**}$), employee expediency ($r=0.32^{**}$), and intention to sabotage ($r=0.34^{**}$). Our one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test to identify control variables shows significant differences at a 5% level of significance across our dependent variables and control variables for instance organization type and education.

Table 2. Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlations, and Reliabilities							
Sr.no.	Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1	Workplace Status	5.79	1.07	(0.87)			
2	Unethical Pro-Supervisor Behavior	4.47	1.52	0.262**	(0.89)		
3	Intention to Sabotage	4.51	1.48	0.372**	0.342**	(0.90)	
4	Employee Expediency	4.63	1.50	0.205**	0.271**	0.329**	(0.88)

Notes: N=250, Workplace Status (Independent variable), Unethical pro-supervisor behavior (Mediator); Intention to sabotage, and Employee Expediency are (Dependent Variables). Alpha reliabilities are presented in parenthesis. Organization type and Education were control variables; **Correlation significance at 1% level of significance (2-tailed)

4.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We perform CFA to assess the convergent and discriminate validity of all the variables under study and used AMOS to measure the factor loadings of each item. The standardized factor loadings of all items were above 0.50. To assess convergent validity, we calculated the average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) and the values of each of the sampled variables. The CR of all the sampled variables is above the threshold value of 0.70. The AVE of all sampled variables is also above the threshold value of 0.50, thus establishing convergent validity in Table 3.

Table 3. Factor Loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability & Average Variance Extracted

Variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Workplace status (WS)	WS1	0.79	0.87	0.87	0.58
	WS2	0.74			
	WS3	0.75			
	WS4	0.79			
	WS5	0.74			
Unethical pro-supervisor behavior (UPSB)	UPSB1	0.82	0.89	0.86	0.6
	UPSB2	0.72			
	UPSB3	0.72			
	UPSB4	0.83			
	UPSB5	0.76			
	UPSB6	0.79			
Employee expediency	EE1	0.81	0.88	0.88	0.65
	EE2	0.90			
	EE3	0.82			
	EE4	0.81			
Intention to sabotage (ITS)	ITS1	0.75	0.91	0.90	0.55
	ITS2	0.76			
	ITS3	0.74			
	ITS4	0.84			
	ITS5	0.77			
	ITS6	0.57			
	ITS7	0.76			
	ITS8	0.74			

*N=250

To ascertain discriminate validity, we conducted a series of CFAs by measuring CFAs for possible pairs of variables tapped at the same time from the same source. For each situation, a two-factor model was measured and evaluated with a one-factor model. The two-factor model demonstrated better results when evaluated against a one-factor model. Results are given in Table 4. CFA results were assessed using multiple fit indices e.g., chi-square χ^2 root means a square error of approximation (RMSEA), χ^2/df , the goodness of fit index (GFI), and comparative fit index (CFI). Finally, a full measurement (CFA) model was run containing all four study variables which were in contrast with one factor combined. A four-factor model indicated good fit with $\chi^2=436.14$, $DF=224$, $\chi^2/df=1.94$, $GFI=0.87$, $CFI=0.93$, $TLI=0.92$, $NFI=0.87$, and $RMSEA=0.06$ which is

<0.08 and in acceptable range. While one-factor model produced poor results with $\chi^2=1972.6$, $DF=230$, $\chi^2/df=8.57$, $GFI=0.50$, $CFI=0.46$, $TLI=0.41$, $NFI=0.43$, $RMSEA=0.17$ which is >than cut off level 0.08.

Table 4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Measurement Models	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	GFI	TLI	NFI	RMSEA
EE-ITS (2-Factor Model)	96.36	52	1.85	0.97	0.94	0.96	0.94	0.05
EE-ITS (1Factor Model)	589.11	54	10.91	0.68	0.67	0.61	0.66	0.19
WS-UPSB-EE-ITS(4-Factor)	436.14	224	1.94	0.93	0.87	0.92	0.87	0.06
WS-UPSB-EE-ITS (1 Factor)	1972.6	230	8.57	0.46	0.50	0.41	0.43	0.17

Notes: $N=250$, WS=Workplace Status, EE=Employee Expediency, UPSB=Unethical Pro-Supervisor Behavior, ITS=Intention to sabotage, χ^2 =Chi-square, DF =degree of freedom, CFI=Comparative Fit Index, GFI=Goodness of Fit, TLI=Tucker Lewis Index, NFI=Normmed Fit Index, REMSA=Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

We used the Hayes (2013) PROCESS technique to evaluate our proposed relationships among study variables. A bootstrapping technique using a 95%confidence interval further validates the results of the indirect effect. According to the results the direct effect of workplace status on UPSB ($\beta=0.36^{***}$) is positive and highly significant at 1%level of significance indicating that workplace status plays a significant role in increasing UPSB. This finding provides significant support to our Hypothesis 1 which states that workplace status positively affects UPSB. Our results in Table 5 disclose significantly positive direct effects of UPSB on employee expediency ($\beta=0.22^{**}$) and intention to sabotage ($\beta=0.24^{***}$) at a 1% level of significance suggesting that UPSB increases employee expediency and intention to sabotage in employees. The finding endorses our 2nd Hypothesis (H2a, H2b), which states that UPSB increases employee expediency and intention to sabotage. Table 5 also shows that in the absence of a mediator (UPSB) the direct effect of workplace status on dependent variables i.e., employee expediency (0.19*) is significant and positive at a 5% level of significance and intention to sabotage is significantly positive ($\beta=0.39^{***}$) at 1% level of significance.

The finding suggests that even in the absence of a mediator the workplace status positively impacts (a) employee expediency and (b) intention to sabotage; and thus,

provides support to our 3rd hypothesis (H3a, H3b) which states that workplace status has a positive effect on employee expediency and intention to sabotage. To analyze the presence of an indirect effect, we applied bootstrapping method (bootstrap sample size=5,000). This method provides confidence intervals for the indirect effect of workplace status on employee expediency and intention to sabotage to evade the statistical problems occurring due to asymmetric sampling distribution. The bootstrapped results indicate that the indirect effects of workplace status on employee expediency (Effect=0.079, SE=0.03) and intention to sabotage (Effect=0.085, SE=0.03) in presence of a mediator are positive and significant with a bias-corrected 95% confidence interval of LL=0.02 to UL=0.16 of employee expediency and LL=0.03, UL=0.15, of intention to sabotage which do not include zero. The findings provide aid to our 4th hypothesis (H4a, H4b), which states that UPSB mediates the relationship between (a) workplace status and employee expediency and (b) workplace status and intention to sabotage (see Table 5).

Table 5. Unethical Pro-Supervisor Behavior as a Mediator between Workplace Status and (a) Employee Expediency (b) Intention to sabotage; Direct, Indirect & Total Effects

Direct Effect of X on Y						
		Coefficient	SE	p	LLCI	ULCI
H1a	Workplace status → Employee expediency	0.1877	0.0880	0.0339	0.0144	0.3611
H1b	Workplace status → Intention to sabotage	0.3865	0.0793	0.0000	0.2303	0.5427
H2	Workplace status → UPSB	0.3601	0.0872	0.0001	0.1883	0.5319
H3a	UPSB → Employee expediency	0.2194	0.0622	0.0005	0.0968	0.3419
H3b	UPSB → Intention to sabotage	0.2366	0.0561	0.0000	0.1261	0.3470
Bootstraps Results for Indirect Effect of X on Y						
		Effect	SE	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI	
H4a	Workplace status → UPSB → Employee expediency	0.0790	0.0354	0.0200	0.1595	
H4b	Workplace status → UPSB → Intention to sabotage	0.0852	0.0323	0.0290	0.1562	
Total Effect of X on Y						
		Effect	SE	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI	
Employee Expediency (Y)		0.2667	0.0871	0.0953	0.4382	
Intention to Sabotage (Y)		0.4717	0.0793	0.3155	0.6278	

Notes: N=250, UPSB=Unethical Pro-Supervisor Behavior, CI=Confidence Interval, LL=Lower Limit, SE=Standard Error, UL=Upper Limit, Bootstrap Sample Size=5,000, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Overall, the findings of our current study provide good empirical support to our hypotheses about the direct effects and indirect effects of workplace status on employee expediency and intention to sabotage. The finding related to the presence of the significant and positive direct effect of workplace status on UPSB (Hypothesis 1) is consistent with social influence theory, which suggests that supervisors having more status at the workplace, have greater influence over their subordinates and get engaged in unethical acts for the sake of their self-interests. Our results also suggest that UPSB triggers (Hypothesis 2a & 2b) employee expediency and intention to sabotage, which provides support to social influence theory by arguing that employees can get involved in unethical acts because of supervisor's influence they can have personal likings towards them, or they have a strong identification with them, or they have a personal tendency towards unethical behaviors. We find that workplace status can trigger expediency and intention to sabotage (Hypothesis 3a & 3b) in employees in the absence of any mediator. This finding also provides support to social influence theory by documenting that when employees feel pressurized under the influence of their supervisor they get involved in unethical behaviors. The finding that UPSB mediates the positive relationship between workplace status and employee expediency, and intention to sabotage (Hypothesis 4a&4b) is also in line with social influence theory, which suggests that supervisors use their workplace status as an influence tactic over their subordinates to attain their personal goal by engaging them in UPSB which in turn can drive their subordinates to engage in unethical behaviors i.e., employee expediency and intention to sabotage.

4.4. Theoretical Contributions

The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature in the following ways. First, the present investigation extends to the literature on workplace status with emphasis on its dark side, how it works in an organization, and manifests into unethical behaviors, which are still scarce in past literature. Second, this study extends the literature on UPSB by recognizing more antecedent factors of it. Third, our study empirically demonstrates a link between supervisor workplace status and negative behaviors in the presence of a novel mediating mechanism i.e., UPSB. Fourth, our study provides

additional insight into social influence theory i.e., how supervisors based on their power and status exert influence on their lower-status subordinates and trigger negative behaviors. Providing empirical support to our results shows that when employees perceive their supervisor as having more respected, prominent, and prestigious positions and influential, they get involved in UPSB, either due to reciprocity beliefs, personal likings towards their supervisor, or personal tendencies to involve in such kind of behaviors, which in turn engage them in negative behaviors. Finally, this study also contributes to the literature on employees' unethical and negative behaviors specifically, employee expediency and intention to sabotage.

4.5. Practical Implications

Overall this study has several implications for organizations seeking to decrease the employee UPSB, as an organization may have the risk of significant damage and emerging scandals (Li et al., 2021). Our findings demonstrated that the dark side of supervisor workplace status can engage subordinates in unethical acts. Organizations should make effort and spend more time cultivating an ethical climate, strong interpersonal relationships, and correct processes. As direct supervisors often function as an important driver of employee ethics, we encourage organizations to promote moral education at work so that when supervisors communicate with employees, they also remind employees of the importance of upholding ethics. Organizations should incorporate ethics training programs for supervisors to boost moral judgment and ethical behavior. On the other hand, organizations should evaluate the moral identity of their employees through the regulation of self-control, and reinforce the moral awareness of followers to develop an ethical corporate standard, because followers' morality can inhibit their UPSB.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study extends the existing literature on the dark side of workplace status by empirically investigating the influence of workplace status on employee expediency and intention to sabotage in the presence of a novel mediating mechanism of UPSB and provides support to social influence theory. This study utilizes Hayes (2013) PROCESS

technique on the data collected through a three-wave temporally segregated quantitative design to find that workplace status plays a significant role to increase UPSB. Contrary to the view that workplace status is associated with positive outcomes (Djurdjevic et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2019), our findings suggest that the dark side of workplace status has negative consequences. This finding is consistent with social influence theory suggesting that supervisors use their status and power as influencing tactics over their subordinates for their selfish motives. Consistent with previous researchers (Mishra et al., 2021), our findings show that UPSB results in negative outcomes i.e. employee expediency and intention to sabotage. The finding that UPSB mediates the positive between workplace status and (a) employee expediency, (b) intention to sabotage, is consistent with social influence theory in suggesting that supervisors having respected, prominent and prestigious positions in the organization, use their status as influencing tactic and getting ahead through their subordinates by engaging them in UPSB which in turn cultivate negative behaviors in employees.

5.1. Limitations & Future Research Directions

Following the limitations, important directions for future research are discussed below. As our study is temporally segregated into three waves, and therefore cannot be categorized as a pure longitudinal design. Future research could examine the longitudinal designs as pure longitudinal studies create strong causal inferences. Our study utilized all the self-report measures which may raise the issue of common method bias; future research could examine peer reporting measures. In addition, this study is specifically conducted in a developing country like Pakistan, which can limit its generalizability to another context. For future research, the findings of our study can be the source to extend the context to the international or inter-industry level.

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