

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

## Employee Ethical Silence and Turnover Intention: Investigating the Role of Workplace Boredom and Exhaustion with Moral Disengagement

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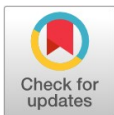
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**Abstract**— Employee ethical silence refers to employees' intention to leave a company and their refusal to speak out about moral aspects of their duties or concerns about the organization. To control moral disengagement, the corporate ethics literature does not yet adequately explain how and why it happens. In this study, we look into the ways and times that supervisor phubbing is linked to boredom and exhaustion at work, as well as ethical silence and turnover intention. This study proposes a dual-process model to investigate how moral disengagement lowers ethical silence and turnover intention, drawing on the dual system theory for ethical behaviors. Three waves of data were gathered from 314 employees of a major Indian manufacturing company. At time 1, demographic and IV data was collected; at time 2, moderator and mediator data was collected; and at Time 3, DV data was collected. 1 month gap in each time interval started data collection on November 1, 2024, and completed on February 15, 2025. In particular, supervisor's phubbing significantly impacts workplace boredom and exhaustion. Also, the moderating impact of moral disengagement on supervisor's phubbing and workplace boredom and exhaustion. Lastly, mediating the impact of workplace boredom and exhaustion between supervisors' phubbing with ethical silence and turnover intention.

**Index Terms**— Supervisor's phubbing, Workplace boredom, Workplace exhaustion, Ethical silence, Turnover intention, Moral disengagement

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### Introduction

More than 85% of the managers and professionals surveyed in a recent study acknowledged keeping quiet about at least part of their work-related worries (Ohana, Murtaza, Haq, Al-Shatti, & Chi, 2024). It is common for workers to decide to keep quiet about significant workplace difficulties. They remain silent on a variety of topics, including disputes with coworkers, problems with organizational decisions, personal awareness of possible flaws in work procedures, worries about unlawful activity, and personal complaints (Ming, Bai, Fu, & Yang, 2024). According to Wang, Ren, Chadee, and Chen (2024), employee silence can be advantageous since it can lessen interpersonal disputes, promote coworkers' informational privacy, and reduce managerial information overload. However, it is more frequently viewed as a negative phenomenon (Hao et al., 2022). According to Yasin, Bashir, Abeele, and Bartels (2023), supervising Phubbing has had a number of beneficial effects, but it has also been linked to serious negative ones. For example, research indicates that supervisor

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Phubbing gives employees more flexible work schedules and more accessible work time (Bracht, Hernandez Bark, She, Van Dick, & Junker, 2024). However, supervisor Phubbing also frequently interrupts people's vacation time, which can lead to negative consequences like ethical silence Khan, Shahzad, Ahmad, and Bartels (2023) and increased turnover intentions Tandon, Dhir, Talwar, Kaur, and Mäntymäki (2022) and Yasin (2021) as well as increased stress and strain Lievaart (2020).

According to Yousaf, Rasheed, Kaur, Islam, and Dhir (2022), Supervisor phubbing is the practice of a supervisor using or becoming preoccupied with their cell phone while they are around their subordinate.

According to Saxena and Srivastava (2023), phubbing is the practice of ignoring people in social situations by feigning to be occupied with a phone instead of paying close attention to them. Phubbing is a combination of "phone" and "snubbing." Phubbing is when someone ignores you while in your presence by using their cell phone. When someone is using their cell phone when you are around and they are using their phone instead of speaking to you, this could be considered "phubb" and disrupt your discussion. This type of behavior occurs when you are with your spouse or significant other, and it is known as partner phubbing (Tandon et al., 2022; van Bommel, 2020). Because cell phones are so common, phubbing in general or more especially. According to other research, romantic partners also frequently engage in phubbing (Khan et al., 2023; Lievaart, 2020; Roberts & David, 2016).

Organizational research has recognized workplace boredom as a significant but underappreciated problem over the past forty years (Ohana et al., 2024; Sánchez-Cardona, Vera, Martínez-Lugo, Rodríguez-Montalbán, & Marrero-Centeno, 2020). Teachers and healthcare professionals are the least bored (Sousa & Neves, 2021), while administrative and manufacturing workers are the most bored. Toscanelli, Udayar, Urbanaviciute, and Massoudi (2022) claim that academicians have a profession linked to reduced occupational stress, less work, and flexible work schedules. Overqualified people frequently report under-stimulation at work, which leads to boredom (Lekkas, Price, & Jacobson, 2022). Strong emotions are evoked by an organisation, and each person's unique feeling triggers particular action tendencies and behaviours (Ohana et al., 2024). Given that workers in a variety of industries commonly suffer job boredom, boredom has drawn more attention in the study of job behaviors (Anjum, Liang, Durrani, & Parvez, 2022; Yasin, 2021). Boredom causes coping mechanisms that lessen the boredom and inclinations to leave the situation (Ming et al., 2024). Employees that are bored often engage in unproductive behaviors and perform poorly in extra-role behaviors as a coping technique (García, Desrumaux, Ayala Calvo, & Naouële, 2022). Because the process is unpredictable and there is always a risk of the unknown, employees undergoing organizational transformation are like a ship navigating stormy waters (Pindek, Krajcevska, & Spector, 2018). High levels of emotional and physical commitment are required of individuals during organisational transformation, which can lead to burnout, which Anasori, Bayighomog, and Tanova (2020) and Yousaf et al. (2022) claims might show up as fatigue at work.

In order to explain the relationship between supervisor Phubbing with workplace boredom and workplace exhaustion (Anjum et al., 2022; Cheng, Bao, & Zarifis, 2020). García et al. (2022), clarifies that employers that show low levels of workplace boredom and workplace exhaustion towards their staff may lead to employee disengagement, which in turn may encourage ethical silence and turnover intention. For three reasons, we employ occupational fatigue and ennui as the mediators. First, according to Ohana et al. (2024), boredom and exhaustion are significant emotions associated with the workplace. Second, exhaustion and boredom at work have increased despite the seeming decrease in boring duties (Raza, Imran, Rosak-Szyrocka, Vasa, & Hadi, 2023). Third, unhappiness may arise from employees' expectations that their work is engaging and logical, which may be connected to Phubbing (Yasin, 2021). When combined, occupational boredom may provide a special explanation for supervisors' Phubbing.

Lastly, even while Phubbing by supervisors may be significantly linked to moral disengagement through exhaustion and boredom at work, not everyone who believes that their company regularly engages in Phubbing feels this way (Gini, Thornberg, & Pozzoli, 2020). Thus, we present moral disengagement as a border condition that could either strengthen or weaken (i.e., mitigate) the correlation between supervisor Phubbing and boredom and exhaustion during work. According to Leviston and Walker (2021) and Ohana et al. (2024), people form their own moral standards as a means of self-regulation that aids in either positive or negative behavior (Schaefer & Bouwmeester, 2021). By changing the circumstances to allow people to justify and justify certain actions that are inconsistent with moral principles, morally disengaged workers deactivate the moral self-regulatory process (Black, Burton, & Cieslewicz, 2022; Leviston & Walker, 2021; Wang et al., 2024). Particularly, when there is ethical silence and a desire to leave, morally disengaged workers may feel less bored at work. To put it briefly, morally disengaged workers are less likely to feel bored at work when a company fails to fulfill its social responsibilities to its workers (Gini et al., 2020).

This study contributes to the body of literature in certain respects. First, there is currently a dearth of research on the subject of phubbing at work or by supervisors (Bracht et al., 2024; Yasin, 2021; Yasin et al., 2023; Yousaf et al., 2022). However, the results of these earlier studies have compellingly demonstrated that supervisor phubbing is a significant and detrimental manager activity that warrants more research. In particular, we demonstrate how exhaustion brought on by increased phubbing might decrease turnover intention and promote ethical silence. To explore how supervisor Phubbing has a direct influence on workplace boredom, explore how supervisor Phubbing has a direct influence on workplace exhaustion, To observe that moral disengagement has moderating influences on supervisor phubbing and workplace boredom. To observe that moral disengagement has moderating influences on supervisor phubbing and workplace exhaustion. To explore workplace boredom, we must determine whether it has a mediating influence on supervisor phub-

bing and ethical silence. To explore workplace boredom, we must determine whether it has a mediating influence on supervisor phubbing and turnover intention. To explore workplace exhaustion, we must examine whether it has a mediating influence on supervisor phubbing and ethical silence. To explore workplace exhaustion, we must determine whether it has a mediating influence on supervisor phubbing and turnover intention. In fact, when supervisors participate in phubbing, those who exhibit a low degree of moral disengagement are more likely to experience adverse effects such as boredom and exhaustion at work.

## Literature Review

### Supervisor phubbing and workplace boredom

According to Alagarsamy, Mehrolia, and Vinod (2024), phubbing has a detrimental impact on interpersonal emotional ties. According to Lievaart (2020), phubbing, or phone snubbing, diminishes the emotional bond between the persons involved by reducing eye contact. Roberts and David (2017), that supervisor phubbing is an ineffective managerial practice that not only damages the emotional bond between a supervisor and their subordinates but may also have a number of other detrimental effects on workers by conveying to the subordinate that the supervisor does not value them; as a result, phubbing causes stress for workers. Boredom at work is one of these feelings. According to Saxena and Srivastava (2023), this is the tendency to make workers feel unchallenged and devoid of purpose at work. As a fundamental human emotion, workplace boredom can result in negative consequences for both individuals and organizations, including counterproductive work behavior (Khan et al., 2023; Lievaart, 2020; Roberts & David, 2016). Therefore, it is unexpected that so little research has been done on this particular emotion up to this point. Although workplace boredom is commonly thought of as a result of unvarying work conditions (Bracht et al., 2024), it is also acknowledged as employee ill-being, which can appear in various work contexts. The quantity of work that must be completed in a certain length of time is known as the workload. Higher workload and underload are the two ways that people perceive workload in relation to boredom. First, a greater workload has a negative correlation with boredom (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2020). Employees having a heavier workload are trusted by the organisation to complete more tasks in a given amount of time. They might discover that their jobs are "passive jobs" in such an engaging setting, preventing monotony. Second, Sousa and Neves (2021) made the case that boredom and job overload are positively correlated. According to Toscanelli et al. (2022), work underload is when employees are given limited tasks to complete in a given amount of time that do not correspond with their competence, abilities, and knowledge. Employees may become bored as a result of finding their jobs uninteresting. Such results are in line with the control value hypothesis, which holds that boredom, as an achievement emotion, results from unpleasant and deactivating activities when control and the worth of the task are lost (Lekkas et al., 2022). Employees are, therefore, stimulated rather than bored as their tasks increase.

Thus, we offer the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1:** Supervisor Phubbing has direct influences on workplace boredom.

### Supervisor phubbing and workplace exhaustion

A person who is mistreated by their manager's counterproductive attitude is likely to be less motivated and engaged in their work, according to (Lievaart, 2020). According to Roberts and David (2017), supervisor phubbing is a counterproductive managerial conduct in which supervisors mistreat their colleagues by giving the impression that they are occupied with their phones. Employees may lose the psychological resources necessary to be fully interested in and perform effectively at their jobs as a result of this unproductive manager behavior. According to van Bommel (2020), workers who experience negative treatment from their managers due to their counterproductive actions are less engaged at work (Yasin, 2021) and perform worse (Yasin et al., 2023). According to Yousaf et al. (2022), supervisor phubbing can contribute to job fatigue by undermining ethical silence. Bracht et al. (2024) assume that supervisor phubbing may reduce workplace tiredness based on the same line of study. According to Lievaart (2020), supervisor phubbing is a sort of workplace weariness that lowers the availability of resources workers need to function effectively. For example, research has found that supervisors' phubbing is one of the antecedents of employee workplace exhaustion (Anasori et al., 2020; Lekkas et al., 2022; Pindek et al., 2018). This aspect of the notion is important since it is the catalyst for the process of fatigue, which is seen to be a process that begins with emotional tiredness and progresses to depersonalization and a decline in personal success. Theoretically, the impacts of work-related loneliness and alienation variables on emotional exhaustion and turnover intention (Ogunfowora, Nguyen, Steel, & Hwang, 2022). This implies that employees who experience loneliness, isolation, or alienation at the workplace are exhausted and may even think about quitting their jobs as a result of this mediated sense of exhaustion. Consequently, we make the following assumptions:

**Hypothesis 2:** Supervisor Phubbing has direct influences on workplace exhaustion.

### The moderating role of moral disengagement

According to Black et al. (2022), there are four categories of moral disengagement techniques in which people employ one or more strategies to separate their moral principles from their behavior, allowing them to act immorally without feeling guilty or condemned (Gini et al., 2020), moral disengagement describes as "a collection of cognitive processes that enable an individual to disassociate with his or her internal moral standards and act unethically without experiencing distress" (Leviston & Walker, 2021). An expansion of social cognitive theory, moral disengagement explains how people rationalize their actions and engage in unethical behavior (Ogunfowora et al., 2022). To put it another way, moral disengagement emphasizes how people choose to commit acts of human atrocity without feeling the agony of self-condemnation, such as business transgression and dishonesty (Schaefer & Bouwmeester, 2021) or political and military aggression (Wang et al., 2024). According to Black et al. (2022), the first kind of disengagement involves justifying actions so they are not viewed as immoral. In the second kind, people minimize their own involvement in immoral behavior in order to place the blame on others. The third category involves downplaying or disregarding the adverse effects of their behavior. The fourth kind entails absolving the victims of accountability by placing the blame on them. People defend their actions by utilizing one or more of these moral disengagement strategies (Black et al., 2022). According to Ohana et al. (2024) and Schaefer and Bouwmeester (2021), workers may become bored and exhausted at work as a result of their capacity to ethically detach using various justifications. In fact, a number of detrimental and unfavourable workplace behaviours, including boredom and exhaustion Anasori et al. (2020), bullying Islam and Chaudhary (2024), workplace deviance Ming et al. (2024), and ethical silence Raza et al. (2023), are thought to be significantly predicted by moral disengagement. Therefore, we contend that compared to employees with low levels of moral disengagement, those with high levels are more likely to act in a manner that is inconsistent with moral principles (Toscanelli et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2024). Particularly, during working hours, employees who are morally disengaged are more prone to utilize email and the internet for non-work-related objectives. The strong correlation between supervisor phubbing and workplace exhaustion and boredom is therefore predicted to be moderated by employee moral disengagement. Recent research has demonstrated the significance of moral disengagement in comprehending the phenomenon of boredom and exhaustion (Ohana et al., 2024; Saxena & Srivastava, 2023). Thus, we propose:

**Hypothesis 3:** Moral disengagement has moderating influences on supervisor phubbing and workplace boredom.

Gini et al. (2020) propose that morally disengaged employees will be less affected by the detrimental effects of strong supervisor phubbing on workplace boredom. Indeed, the value and impression of supervisor phubbing may be influenced by moral disengagement. First, there are a number of ways in which individuals with varying degrees of moral disengagement could interpret the company's supervisor's phubbing. As a result, they will feel varying degrees of boredom as well as dread and uncertainty regarding the activities of their firm. It is true that workers who exhibit high moral disengagement are less likely to be aware of and concerned about the unethical behaviour of those in positions of authority (Ogunfowora et al., 2022). They will find it more difficult to recognise others' ethical behaviour since ethical ideals are less important to them (Schaefer & Bouwmeester, 2021). Their work becomes tedious and boring since they don't perceive any greater significance or purpose in the supervisor's phubbing because they don't think it's morally relevant. Employees with low moral disengagement, on the other hand, are more aware of moral values and other people's welfare (Wang et al., 2024), making them more aware of how their company treats its workers. By phubbing, the organization's supervisor helps people comprehend the bigger picture and purpose of their work, which keeps them from becoming bored. Along with this variation in how the supervisor's phubbing is observed, the response may also vary based on the degree of moral disengagement. High moral disengagement people may more readily defend and downplay the harmful actions of authoritative figures Ogunfowora et al. (2022) and Alagarsamy et al. (2024), will respond less forcefully to the organization's workplace behaviour. In result, morally detached workers might react less emotionally because they are less worried about the possible repercussions of phubbing towards coworkers. As a result, people might be less likely to view a bad supervisor's phubbing as something that is negatively impacting them, which would lessen their level of workplace exhaustion.

Thus, we propose:

### Hypothesis 4:

Moral disengagement has moderating influences on supervisor phubbing and workplace exhaustion.

### The mediating role of workplace boredom

Given that workplace boredom is immoral, keeping quiet in this situation especially when it comes to ethics-related issues (i.e., employee ethical silence) is a practical coping mechanism for resource conservation (Anjum et al., 2022). Employees are less likely to confront exploitative executives who tolerate unethical behaviour when they choose to quietly distance themselves from corporate principles. Employees can concentrate on averting additional loss rather than risking further depletion of their limited resources (Islam & Chaudhary, 2024; Lekkas et al., 2022; Ming et al., 2024). Furthermore, in practice, ethics are frequently a secondary concern at work, with the main focus being on increasing profits (Ohana et al., 2024; Pindek et al., 2018). Employees are encouraged to save resources on projects

that are more directly related to their leader's demands rather than on things that workplace boredom do not support since exploitative behaviour is an unpleasant source of work-related stress (Wang et al., 2024; Yasin, 2021). Employees are motivated to behave silently in the ethical sphere by the combined drive to preserve resources and the fear of more loss. According to Yousaf et al. (2022), boredom at work is one of the most common and contagious diseases in contemporary society and is increasingly linked to both blue-collar and white-collar workers. It can be defined as the attitude that develops in workers towards their work and workplace when they are subjected to repetitive or boring tasks, especially in automated and technologically assisted environments (Saxena & Srivastava, 2023). Thus, we suggest:

**Hypothesis 5:** Workplace boredom has mediating influences between supervisor phubbing and ethical silence.

Ogunfowora et al. (2022), linked boredom to the lack of value in completing tasks, whereas Ohana et al. (2024), linked it to employees' experiences with under-stimulated (low activation) and under-challenged (unpleasant) activities. Conversely, Sánchez-Cardona et al. (2020), described ennui as the inability of an employee to focus on their work. When these definitions are combined, boredom is described as a person's "disconnection" from their thoughts, feelings, and physical capabilities. Because of a dull workplace where organizational results are readily impacted, this person also lacks interest, enthusiasm, and focus on their task. To get optimal performance, it's critical to assess an employee's abilities in connection to their job characteristics and working environment (To scanelli et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2024). According to Yasin (2021), boredom arises when workers' proficiency surpasses the organization's requirements and difficulties. The simplest explanation would be that they are too qualified for the company. Additionally, their normal work will be made easier by their knowledge and the help of technology. Employee productivity may rise significantly as a result of this, but they will get disinterested if the challenges in their field are unable to meet their abilities. Put differently, highly educated workers who hold lower-level positions at their companies are more likely to become bored (Ogunfowora et al., 2022; Poon et al., 2022). Thus, we suggest:

**Hypothesis 6:** Workplace boredom has mediating influences between supervisor phubbing and turnover intention.

### The mediating role of workplace exhaustion

For instance, research has shown that work tiredness may result from role ambiguity and overload, interpersonal problems, a lack of autonomy, and a lack of rewards (Ohana et al., 2024). Reduced job satisfaction, low self-esteem, increased burnout, and increased intention to leave are among the effects of work weariness that have been consistently supported by Poon et al. (2022). The feeling of being overworked and exhausted of one's physical and emotional resources is known as work exhaustion (Raza et al., 2023). According to Sánchez-Cardona et al. (2020), prolonged exposure to challenging settings may be the cause of work weariness. Some of the causes and effects of work-related fatigue have been studied in the literature. Previous research has also revealed some evidence that work weariness plays a mediation role in the links between employee work results and job demands (Ohana et al., 2024; Pindek et al., 2018; Saxena & Srivastava, 2023). Anjum et al. (2022) and García et al. (2022), for instance, discovered that job fatigue acted as a mediator in the connection between interpersonal deviance and workplace exclusion. According to Ogunfowora et al. (2022), role ambiguity and emotional weariness were positively correlated, which raised hotel managers' intentions to leave. According to Sánchez-Cardona et al. (2020), phubbing supervisors emotionally taxed daycare providers, lowered their intrinsic motivation, and affected their performance as a whole. Thus, we suggest:

**Hypothesis 7:** Workplace exhaustion has mediating influences between supervisor phubbing and ethical silence.

According to Guzeller and Celiker (2020), turnover intention is the state in which an employee consciously plans to leave their position permanently in the near future. According to Labrague et al. (2020), the intention to leave a work begins with a propensity for the notion, progresses through several job options, and concludes when a suitable substitute is discovered. It is possible to view workplace exhaustion as a factor that erodes social ties and has a detrimental impact on organisational dedication. In this situation, workers who feel that their emotional needs are not being satisfied at work may become exhausted and consider quitting to work somewhere else where they might be happier (Poon et al., 2022). The approach is supported by earlier research that found that workplace exhaustion both modifies the relationship between job exhaustion and the intention to leave employment and enhances the intention to do so (Smokrović et al., 2022). According to Anasori et al. (2020) and García et al. (2022), workplace exhaustion is a harmful process that starts when an employee's workplace resources run out and causes both bodily and mental injury. According to Anjum et al. (2022), people who are experiencing exhaustion typically use avoidance as a coping mechanism to prevent more harm. According to García et al. (2022) and Islam and Chaudhary (2024), circumstances that lead to workers feeling worn out and depressed may set the stage for them to think negatively about their jobs and consider leaving them on account of this. This perspective is supported by the findings of numerous researchers, including Anasori et al. (2020), Black et al. (2022), García et al. (2022) and Hao et al. (2022), who studied workers at various companies and found a positive correlation between workplace exhaustion and intention to leave the job. Thus, we suggest:

**Hypothesis 8:** Workplace exhaustion has mediating influences between supervisor phubbing and turnover intention.

## Method

### Participants and procedures

The study sample was drawn from longitudinal data gathered from 314 workers at a major Indian manufacturing company. We let everyone know that we thought they could help us with a study when we conducted this survey. We asked respondents to fill out our survey and urged them to forward the link to their peers. In exchange, they may anticipate seeing a thorough synopsis of the last session's evidence-based management procedure. Additionally, we made it clear that taking part in this study was completely voluntary. The survey was finished on 1 month gap in each time interval and started data collection on February 15, 2025, after being distributed in three waves by November 1, 2024. We requested that participants list the coworkers they had given the surveys to when we distributed the initial round of surveys, as we would need to follow up with them for a follow-up survey. However, we simply requested the last five digits of respondents' phone numbers in order to maintain their identity. These used as matching IDs for each of the survey's three rounds. This procedure allowed us to effectively follow up on our study while yet protecting the anonymity of our participants. Demographic and IV data, including supervisor phubbing and the last five digits of their phone number, were gathered at Time 1. Measures of moral disengagement, Workplace exhaustion, and workplace boredom were among the moderator and mediator data gathered at Time 2. They also once more supplied the last five digits of their phone number. Data on DVs, including turnover intention and ethical silence, was gathered at Time 3. Our final analyses comprise the 314 participants who took part in the three waves. The three categories of organizations from which these participants were selected were private businesses (55%), state-owned businesses (21%), and other organizations (24%). There were 104 girls (34.2%) and 210 males (66.8%) in the sample. Participants' average age was between 30 and 40 years old ( $SD = 5.12$ ), and their average tenure was 8 years ( $SD = 4.28$ ). Regarding education, 4 subjects (20%) had a senior high school degree or less, 35% had a bachelor's degree, 22% had an associate's degree, and 23% had a master's degree or above.

### Measures

The scales used in this study were either translated into English using a strict "translation back-translation" process or were previously translated and used by other researchers (Jones, Lee, Phillips, Zhang, & Jaceldo, 2001). In particular, the occupational boredom and exhaustion scores were taken from other researchers' translations. In the meantime, the "translation-back-translation" process was used to translate the supervisors' phubbing, moral disengagement, ethical silence, and turnover intention assessments into English (Jones et al., 2001).

### Supervisor phubbing

Supervisor phubbing was measured using the 9 items adopted by Roberts and David (2016). A sample item is "my partner places his or her cell phone where they can see it when we are together". A 6-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "almost never" and 6 denoting "almost always," was used by participants to answer these questions. For this scale in this study, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.926.

### Workplace boredom

Workplace boredom was measured using the 6-items adopted by Pindek et al. (2018). A sample item is "during work time I daydream". A 6-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "almost never" and 6 denoting "almost always," was used by participants to answer these questions. For this scale in this study, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.849.

### Workplace exhaustion

Workplace exhaustion was measured using the 6-items adopted by Islam and Chaudhary (2024). A sample item is "I feel emotionally fatigued because of the demands of my job". A 6-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "almost never" and 6 denoting "almost always," was used by participants to answer these questions. For this scale in this study, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.863.

### Moral disengagement

Moral disengagement was measured using the 8-items adopted by Gini et al. (2020). A sample item is "taking something without the owner's permission is okay as long as you're just borrowing it". A 6-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "almost never" and 6 denoting "almost always," was used by participants to answer these questions. For this scale in this study, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.888.

### Ethical silence

Ethical silence was measured using the 5-items adopted by Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008). A sample item is "you kept quiet instead of asking questions when you wanted to get more information about patient safety in your". A 6-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "almost never" and 6 denoting "almost always," was used by participants to answer these questions. For this scale in this study, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.892.

### Turnover intention

Turnover intention was measured using the 5-items adopted by Guzeller and Celiker (2020)). A sample item is "In the last few months, I have thought seriously about looking for a job in the other sector/s." A 6-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "almost never" and 6 denoting "almost always," was used by participants to answer these questions. For this scale in this study, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.850.

### Analytic strategy

A moderated mediation model comprising one moderator and two mediators was developed as a result of the eight hypotheses put forth in this investigation. Compared to conventional stepwise measurement and structural analysis, SmartPLS has higher statistical power. More significantly, SmartPLS increases accuracy by calculating measurement error and all of the model's variable correlations at the same time. Therefore, in order to do analyses for this study, we used SmartPLS 3.0 software (Hair, Sharma, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Liengaard, 2024). Calculating the differences between the indirect effects at high and low moderator levels allowed for the computation of moderated mediation effects, as suggested by Hair et al. (2024). Furthermore, SPSS 26 software was used to perform all descriptive statistics in this investigation.

## Results

### Measurement model

The validity and reliability tests are part of the measurement model evaluation. We examined four important indicators in accordance with (Hair et al., 2024): discriminant validity, convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and indicator loadings. All indicator loadings are above the 0.708 criterion, indicating satisfactory item dependability. We retained the item loading just below the threshold for the ensuing analyses, as eliminating it did not significantly alter our findings. Furthermore, in order to evaluate internal consistency reliability, we investigated at Composite Reliability (CR) Hair et al. (2024), as the CR indicator assesses reliability more precisely and less loosely. All of the composite reliability values are over the 0.70 criterion, according to Table 1, showing that each construct has satisfactory to good composite reliability. Additionally, we estimated the convergent validity of each construct by analyzing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al. (2024), each construct has sufficient convergent validity because all AVE values are over the 0.5 cutoff.

Table I  
Estimation of the measurement model parameters

Construct/Items	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Ethical Silence	0.921	0.700
Moral Disengagement	0.911	0.564
Supervisor Phubbing	0.938	0.629
Turnover Intention	0.893	0.626
Workplace Boredom	0.890	0.578
Workplace Exhaustion	0.898	0.595

Lastly, we assessed discriminant validity using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio as the primary metric (Hair et al., 2024). All of the HTMT values are below the 0.85 cutoff, as shown in Table 2, indicating that each construct has sufficient discriminant validity.

Table II  
Discriminant validity coefficients (HTMT)

	ES	MD	SP	TI	WB	WE
Ethical Silence	0.837					
Moral Disengagement	0.797	0.751				
Supervisor Phubbing	0.792	0.719	0.793			
Turnover Intention	0.738	0.679	0.675	0.791		
Workplace Boredom	0.684	0.743	0.653	0.705	0.761	
Workplace Exhaustion	0.662	0.730	0.624	0.680	0.697	0.772

**Structural model evaluation**

Four indicators explanatory capacity, predictive power, and the statistical significance and relevance of the path coefficients were tested in order to evaluate our structural model. The explanatory and predictive capabilities of this model were assessed using the R<sup>2</sup> and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> values, respectively (Table 3).

Table III  
Quality of the structural model

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Ethical Silence	0.467	0.466
Turnover Intention	0.463	0.461
Workplace Boredom	0.597	0.595
Workplace Exhaustion	0.553	0.551

The standardised coefficients and *p*-values for each path were then determined using bootstrapping (subsamples 10,000). The results of the structural model testing are shown in Figure 1, which supports H1 by showing that supervisor phubbing towards employees has a significantly negative impact on workplace boredom ( $\beta=-0.225$ ;  $p=0.002$ ). This means that an increase of one standard deviation in internal supervisor phubbing reduces boredom by 0.206 standard deviation. Additionally, H2 by showing that supervisor phubbing towards employees has a significantly negative impact on workplace exhaustion ( $\beta=-0.206$ ;  $p=0.017$ ), hence H2 supported. Moderating effect of moral disengagement on supervisor phubbing and workplace boredom ( $\beta=-0.318$ ;  $p=0.000$ ), and workplace exhaustion ( $\beta=-0.140$ ;  $p=0.017$ ), hence H3, H4 are supported. Mediating effect of workplace boredom between supervisor phubbing and ethical silence ( $\beta=0.154$ ;  $p=0.003$ ), and turnover intention ( $\beta=0.407$ ;  $p=0.000$ ), hence H5, H6 are supported. Mediating effect of workplace exhaustion between supervisor phubbing and ethical silence ( $\beta=0.396$ ;  $p=0.003$ ), and turnover intention ( $\beta=-0.140$ ;  $p=0.013$ ), hence H7, H8 are supported.

Table IV  
Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Decision
H1: Supervisor Phubbing -> Workplace Boredom	-0.225	3.164	0.002	Supported
H2: Supervisor Phubbing -> Workplace Exhaustion	-0.206	2.399	0.017	Supported
H3: Moral Disengagement* Supervisor Phubbing -> Workplace Boredom	-0.318	8.956	0.000	Supported
H4: Moral Disengagement* Supervisor Phubbing -> Workplace Exhaustion	-0.140	2.382	0.018	Supported
H5: Supervisor Phubbing -> Workplace Boredom -> Ethical Silence	-0.154	2.963	0.003	Supported
H6: Supervisor Phubbing -> Workplace Exhaustion -> Turnover Intention	0.407	8.511	0.000	Supported
H7: Supervisor Phubbing -> Workplace Exhaustion -> Ethical Silence	0.396	5.781	0.000	Supported
H8: Supervisor Phubbing -> Workplace Exhaustion -> Turnover Intention	-0.140	2.493	0.013	Supported

**Discussion**

Expanding our knowledge of how, why, and when supervisor phubbing may encourage or impede ethical silence and turnover intention is the main objective of the current study. Through the mechanism of workplace boredom and exhaustion, we develop a theoretical model for determining how the absence of supervisor phubbing affects employee ethical silence and turnover intention. Consistent with our hypotheses, we discover an indirect relationship between supervisor phubbing through ethical silence and turnover intention and workplace boredom and exhaustion. Additionally, we discover that moral disengagement reduces the impact of supervisor phubbing on workplace boredom and exhaustion. For workers with significant moral disengagement, the impact of supervisor phubbing on ethical



silence and intention to leave is also less pronounced. Our findings also suggest that moral disengagement is a significant factor in both the intention to leave and the practice of ethical silence. There are theoretical and practical implications to our findings.

### Implications for theory

By identifying the content of silence in regard to business ethics, this study adds to the body of literature on employee silence. Our findings demonstrate that, even after adjusting for phubbing supervision with workplace exhaustion and boredom, moral disengagement can contribute to ethical silence above and beyond general quiet. Employees continue to use the common tactic of keeping quiet about ethical difficulties despite the abundance of data and anecdotes regarding the harm that company crises do to their brand and ability to survive (Mehrotra, 2020). Therefore, investigating the moral implications of employee silence is a worthwhile undertaking since understanding its cause's aids in determining the elements that lead to its occurrence. The evaluation of risks or harms to oneself is merely one aspect of employee ethical silence; this is also the behavioural inhabitation system that is now accepted in the broader employee silence literature (Toscanelli et al., 2022). It also entails assessing the job's or the organization's ethical aspects as well as the possible harm that could result from discussing such ethical issues. Therefore, researching ethical silence among employees contributes to the advancement of the silence literature by highlighting the behavioural inhabitation system, particularly when it comes to issues of ethics.

Second, we also add to the ethical silence dual-system theory. According to the dual-system hypothesis of ethical silence, either intuitive or reasoning processes drive immoral actions (Katz, Naftalovich, Matanky, & Yovel, 2021). For example, we consider it immoral to burn a national flag because it evokes moral feelings rather than because it is morally right. It is difficult to ascertain whether a specific immoral behaviour is caused by both moral disengagement and occupational tiredness at the same time because of the limits of our research approach. Nevertheless, over time, both elements are contributing to unethical behaviour in the workplace. Thus, rather than being influenced solely by one system, we can conclude that unethical behaviour may eventually be influenced by both logical and intuitive mechanisms. This study suggests that, over time, a variety of factors influence ethical silence (Wang et al., 2024). Lastly, our study adds to the body of knowledge on moral disengagement. By emphasising the moderating effect of moral disengagement in the relationship between supervisor conduct and workplace boredom, our study builds on previous research. By emphasising how the current methods rely on moral disengagement from the workplace, the current study enhances them. It implies that the key to comprehending the connection between managers' phubbing and workplace boredom is the perception of an unfavourable atmosphere created by their phubbing incorporated with moral disengagement.

### Implications for practice

Given that workplace boredom and exhaustion are major concerns for businesses and, thus, a top issue for supervisors worldwide, our findings also have a number of important implications for practice (Lievaart, 2020). Our findings help managers understand why and when workers are disinterested at work, how to intervene as a supervisor when they perceive that their company does not care about their well-being, and the circumstances in which people are more willing to work. First, this study presents a fresh viewpoint on ethical silent interventions. Previous approaches to ethical silence intervention have mostly used supervisors' phubbing reasoning perspective (Roberts & David, 2016; Saxena & Srivastava, 2023). These interventions have made the assumption that people participate in workplace ethical silence only after consciously disengaging from morality. However, our results show that boredom and exhaustion at work can effectively diminish moral disengagement, which in turn reduces ethical silence among supervisors who have lower turnover intentions. This finding highlights the possibility of implementing moral disengagement to reduce ethical silence in the workplace, especially for workers who show less than ideal levels of intention to leave. Managers should be aware of this possibility and concentrate on the actions of supervisors because supervisor phubbing results in a more productive, helpful, and devoted workforce (Yasin et al., 2023) as well as less employee boredom, which eventually leads to ethical silence and the intention to leave the company.

### Limitations and directions for future research

There are various restrictions on this study. First, even though we put up a dual-system model to explain the influence of ethical silence and turnover intention, our analysis was restricted to the mediation of workplace fatigue and boredom and the moderation mechanisms of moral disengagement. Both arguments, however, are supported by additional significant variables. By investigating the mediating effects of these variables on the relationship between mindfulness and ethical silence, future research can strengthen the validity of the dual-system model proposed in this study. Second, we are using data from a single Indian province for our hypothesis testing. We recognise that, because of the regional variations in India's economic, social, and cultural development, it may be possible to ignore institutional elements that are common in other areas and could have an impact on employee and supervisor behaviour.

As a result, future studies might increase the sample size in other institutional settings. Third, we warn against asserting causation even though the data were gathered at three distinct time cycles to minimize common technique bias in the investigations. Thus, in order

to test causal linkages in future research, cross-sectional or experimental designs would be advantageous. Finally, we focused solely on the moderating effect of moral disengagement when examining the border conditions of the relationships under study. Other environmental (like the competitive atmosphere) or individual (like self-evaluation) factors should be taken into account in future studies as moderators of the effect of supervisor phubbing on workplace exhaustion and boredom.

### **Conclusion**

Managers constantly face a major hurdle when it comes to turnover intention and ethical behavior at work. This study offers important managerial insights by identifying mindfulness as a potentially effective strategy for reducing workplace boredom and exhaustion. This study develops a dual-system model of how disengagement reduces turnover intention based on the dual-system theory for ethical initiatives. The findings demonstrate that supervisors phubbing significantly impacts workplace boredom and exhaustion. Also, moderating impact of moral disengagement on supervisor's phubbing and workplace boredom and exhaustion. Lastly, mediating the impact of workplace boredom and exhaustion between supervisors' phubbing with ethical silence and turnover intention.

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