A Systematic Literature Review of Workplace Ostracism, on Employee Outcomes

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Abstract

An Indian employee spends around 28.6 years at workplace in their life. Workplace ostracism may affect KPI's and consequences at workplace. It is a grave problem area and must be addressed effectively by all organizational employees. It is everyone's responsibility to make workplaces better day by day. Suffering workplace ostracism at any point of time or longer duration may affect all variables of research title negatively.

In the current scenario, workplaces are happening. Organizations are racing towards diversity, Inclusion, digitalization, new edge technologies and employee well-being for competitive advantage. Under such a situation knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or unconsciously may be because of biased perceptions of each other employee's welcome workplace ostracism, and it is affecting inclusivity. At workplaces all types of employees work to meet the organizational objective.

This pepar will assist to understand Despite of all personalities, communication styles, individual experiences of employees how management should address the workplace ostracism, based on landmark research what to focus to minimize workplace ostracism. At the end of the day what matters to employees and employers is the culture which supports inclusive and high performing individuals and teams with healthy employee physical and mental wellbeing.

Keywords: Workplace ostracism, Practical implications, Systematic literature review.

INTRODUCTION

Workplaces are often considered spaces for collaboration, growth, and shared aspirations. Yet, beneath the surface of bustling professional environments, some employees may face the feeling of being excluded or ignored— we can call this phenomenon as workplace ostracism. This subtle yet impactful behavior can leave individuals feeling invisible and disconnected, often with profound implications for their mental well-being and professional productivity. The feeling of being ignored or excluded at workplace by leader, manager, subordinate, other staff members to an individual employee or group of employees is generally called workplace ostracism.

Workplace ostracism manifests in various forms, including social exclusion, neglect, and dehumanization, significantly impacting employee well-being. Research indicates that individuals experiencing ostracism often face emotional exhaustion, leading to increased turnover intentions and counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) (Das & Ekka, 2024) (Sabir et al., 2024). The psychological toll includes heightened stress, anxiety, and feelings of revenge, which can further deteriorate workplace morale and individual mental health (Srivastava & Dhir, 2024). Additionally, ostracism can hinder organizational identification, particularly among marginalized groups such as refugees, exacerbating integration challenges ("Workplace Ostracism and Subjective Well-Being", 2023). The association between ostracism and well-being is mediated by emotional weariness, according to the Conservation of Resource Theory, although these negative consequences can be lessened by a supportive team environment (Wang et al., 2023).

Thus, addressing workplace ostracism is crucial for Making great workplaces, improving inclusiveness and creating high performing individuals, teams and organizations.

Workplace ostracism, unlike overt forms of mistreatment, is marked by its quiet nature. It is not about loud confrontations or visible disputes but rather the absence of acknowledgment, engagement, or inclusion. This silence, however, speaks volumes, often eroding trust, motivation, and a sense of belonging among employees.

As companies strive to create more empathetic and inclusive workplaces, the need to comprehend the intricacies of workplace ostracism has become increasingly relevant. The volume of research in this

area has grown over time, providing useful insight into its etiology, consequences, and potential interventions. Spanning from its performance and psychological well-being implications on the individual to its broader implications on organizational culture, workplace ostracism is complex in nature. In this paper, we make an attempt at a systematic review of literature on workplace ostracism in management research. The goal of the paper is to find trends, fill in the gaps, and suggest possible areas for further research based on qualitative and quantitative studies. Through this activity, we hope to better understand workplace ostracism and offer implementation model and hypothesis for further studies. This may help to create more welcoming and compassionate work environments.

These inquiries into research represent the primary objectives in this systematic review:
1. Is there empirical support for the link between ostracism at work and different employee outcomes?
2. What are the possible ways that ostracism at work impacts organizational results and employee well-being?

Research Objectives
- To understand and study Workplace study from Management or HR practice perspectives
- To make pepar useful for practical implication in corporate landscape.

Research Methodology
This systematic literature review comprised studies that fulfilled the following criteria: investigated empirically how workplace exclusion affects one or more of the employee outcomes mentioned, such as employee engagement, mental well-being, productivity, performance, motivation, organizational commitment, psychological safety, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Published in English between 2019 and 2024. Focused on organizational settings with implications for management and HR practices.

Exclusion Criteria: This research not considered pepars which are published before 2019 or after 2024, Not published in the English language, not peer-reviewed articles, opinion pieces, book reviews, or non-academic sources. Research studies about workplace ostracism fail to examine the association with dependent variables specified below.

Sources Electronic search using databases: ResearchGate, Google Scholar, Reference lists of relevant articles were reviewed manually for any further relevant study. The keywords applied in this research strategy included a combination of the following: "Workplace ostracism," "employee productivity," "employee engagement," "mental well-being," "job satisfaction," and other similar terms.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria
Screening: Titles and abstracts of all identified studies were independently screened by two reviewers for relevance.

Eligibility Assessment: Original texts of studies who could be considered have been obtained and assessed in accordance with inclusion and exclusion standards.
Disagreement Resolution: Discussion and consensus-building were used to settle any disputes amongst reviewers.

Data Collection Process Two reviewers independently extracted data using a standardized form that included the following information: Study characteristics (title, authors, year of publication, journal), Participant demographics (sample size, population, context), Research design and methodology, Dependent variables and employed measures, The primary conclusions, Evaluation of Risk of Bias, The Quality Assessment Tool for Quantitative Studies was employed to assess the potential for bias.
The study integrates qualitative and quantitative evidence to provide comprehensive insights into the impact of workplace ostracism in management and HR contexts.
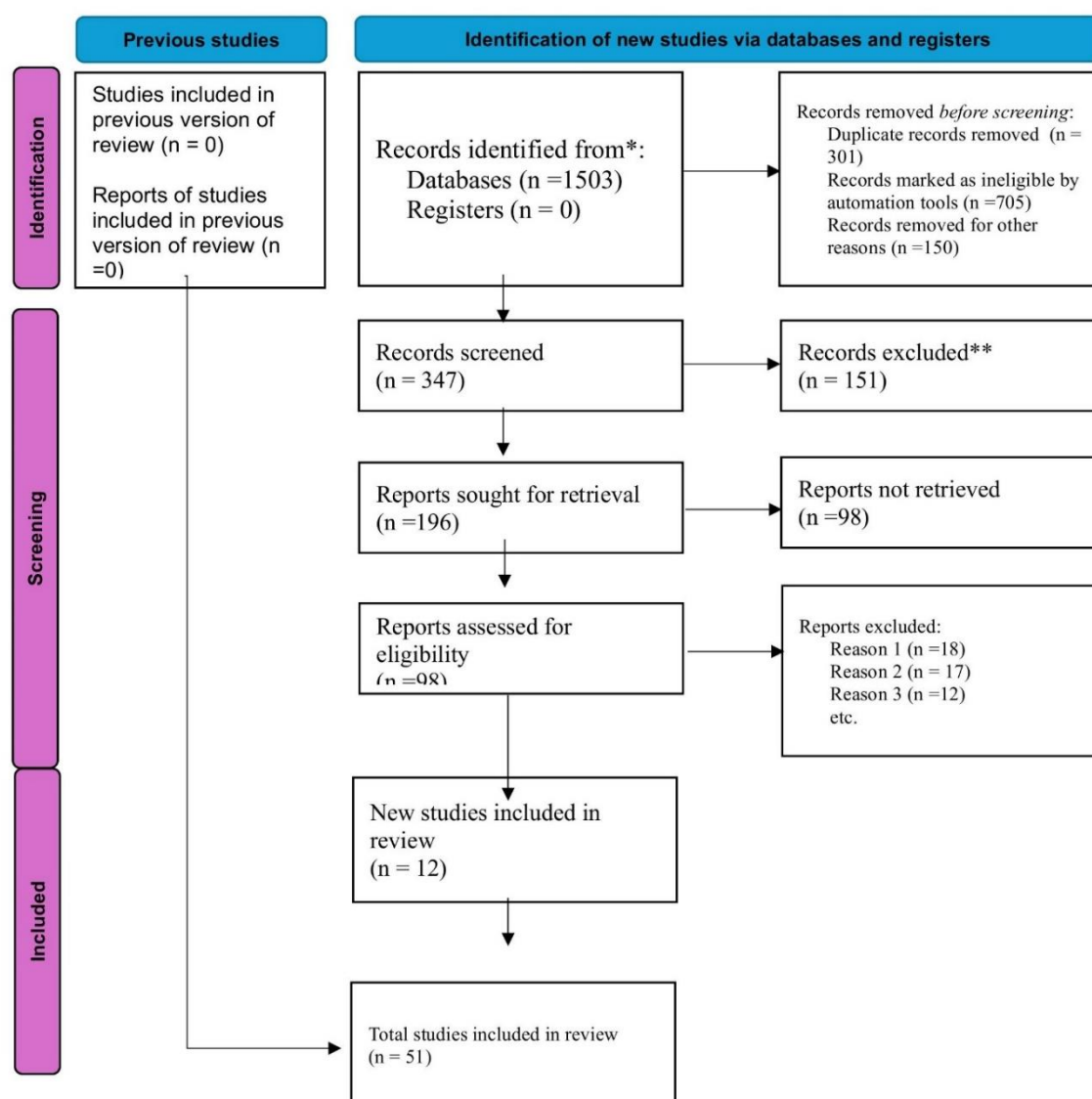
RESULTS

This literature review is a deep study of Workplace ostracism and its impact on 10 independent research variables.

1. Employee Productivity

A performance metric that includes both efficacy and efficiency is productivity. Workplace ostracism significantly impacts productivity, primarily through emotional exhaustion and decreased motivation. Employees who experience ostracism are more likely to be emotionally exhausted, which lowers their effectiveness at work, according to research. This resulted in diminishing the employee productivity. This relationship is mediated by a lack of motivation, suggesting that ostracism not only affects the ostracized individuals but also influences the overall workplace environment (Ibrahim & Olaleye, 2024). Additionally, observers of ostracism also suffer negative effects, such as increased turnover intention and reduced task performance, particularly if they possess a proactive personality (Wang & Lai, 2023). Hence an employee who are suffering from workplace ostracism become less productive employees at workplaces. There are many reasons to become unproductive, but this can be one of them.

2. Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is the behavior of giving full efforts to work. Workplace ostracism significantly undermines employee engagement through various psychological mechanisms. The cognitive appraisal theory suggests that daily experiences of ostracism lead to negative work reflections, which subsequently diminish next-day work engagement (Dong et al., 2024). Additionally, resource depletion and reduced psychological safety are critical factors; ostracism depletes psychological resources, leading to decreased affective commitment and engagement (Noor & Abbas, 2024). Furthermore, organizational dehumanization, stemming from both supervisor and coworker ostracism, negatively impacts employee well-being and engagement by fostering feelings of alienation and

reduced organizational loyalty (Brison et al., 2024) (Brison & Caesens, 2023).

3. Employee Mental Wellbeing

Employee mental well-being is significantly influenced by factors such as workplace ostracism, emotional exhaustion, and the presence of supportive leadership. Research indicates that workplace ostracism leads to increased stress, anxiety, and feelings of dehumanization, which adversely affect psychological well-being and can provoke retaliatory behaviors among employees (Srivastava & Dhir, 2024) (Wang et al., 2023). The connection between ostracism and well-being is mediated by emotional tiredness, indicating that the emotional impact of being excluded could negatively impact mental health in general (Wang et al., 2023). Furthermore, the perception of authentic leadership can mitigate these negative effects by enhancing employees' need satisfaction, thereby fostering a more supportive work environment(Jang & Chen, 2022). Additionally, systemic issues such as implicit biases and microaggressions exacerbate mental health disparities, particularly among diverse populations, highlighting the need for inclusive practices and resources to promote psychological safety and well-being ("Bridging the mental health gap: unveiling and mitigating the hidden toll of workplace behaviors on diverse populations", 2023). Overall, addressing these factors is crucial for improving employee mental health and reducing the detrimental impacts of ostracism in the workplace (Sarwar et al., 2024).

4. Employee Task Performance

Workplace ostracism is influenced by various factors, including organizational deviance and coworker envy, which can exacerbate feelings of exclusion and lead to negative outcomes for employees. The need to belong is a critical underlying mechanism, as its thwarting contributes to perceptions of organizational dehumanization, resulting in increased depression, decreased job satisfaction, and heightened turnover intentions (Brison & Caesens, 2023) (Soliman et al., 2023). Additionally, ostracism hampers knowledge sharing among employees, which is essential for effective task performance, thereby further diminishing overall productivity (Hassan & Lahbar, 2023). The interplay of these factors illustrates how workplace ostracism not only affects individual well-being but also disrupts organizational dynamics, leading to counterproductive work behaviors and a toxic work environment (Izhan et al., 2024). Addressing these issues through emotional intelligence and fostering positive coworker relationships may lessen the negative consequences of being ostracized (Izhan et al., 2024).

5. Employee Motivation

Workplace ostracism negatively impacts employee motivation through several psychological mechanisms, primarily involving cognitive appraisal, emotional responses, and social needs. Employees experiencing ostracism often engage in negative work reflection, which diminishes their work engagement the following day, particularly influenced by their attachment styles (Dong et al., 2024). This exclusion disrupts fundamental social needs, leading to feelings of rejection that impair self-esteem and a sense of feeling inclusive, ultimately affecting psychological well-being and job performance (Aldhuhoori & Shamsudin, 2022). Additionally, rumination—persistent negative thoughts about ostracism—mediates the relationship between ostracism and adverse job outcomes such as burnout and turnover intentions (He et al., 2020). Furthermore, emotional exhaustion serves as a mediator between ostracism and reduced work effort, highlighting the detrimental effects on motivation and performance (Anjum et al., 2021). Collectively, these mechanisms underscore the profound impact of social exclusion on workplace dynamics and employee well-being (Haldorai et al., 2020).

6. Psychological safety

Workplace ostracism significantly undermines psychological safety and employee well-being through various mechanisms. Research indicates that employees subjected to ostracism experience heightened stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion, which detrimentally affect their overall psychological health (Srivastava & Dhir, 2024) (Wang et al., 2023). Specifically, ostracism depletes psychological resources, leading to reduced affective commitment and increased feelings of dehumanization (Noor & Abbas, 2024) (Brison et al., 2024). Furthermore, the presence of a supportive team climate can mitigate some negative effects, suggesting that fostering a culture of forgiveness may enhance resilience against ostracism (Wang et al., 2023). Additionally, authentic leadership from supervisors can positively influence employees' satisfaction, thereby buffering the adverse impacts of ostracism on well-being (Jang & Chen, 2022). Collectively, these findings underscore the critical need for organizations to cultivate psychologically safe environments to promote employee well-being and mitigate the harmful effects of ostracism

7. Organizational Commitment & Citizenship Behavior

Workplace ostracism significantly undermines organizational commitment and citizenship behaviors, but targeted interventions can mitigate these effects. Strategies such as fostering self-compassion among employees have shown promise; self-compassion can enhance feelings of belonging and relatedness, thereby buffering against the negative impacts of ostracism (James, 2024). Additionally, promoting psychological empowerment can counteract the detrimental effects of co-worker envy, which often exacerbates ostracism experiences (Risgiyanti et al., 2023). Leadership plays a crucial role; leaders with prosocial orientations can enhance affective commitment, which in turn promotes organizational citizenship behaviors, although workplace ostracism can negatively moderate this relationship (Wang et al., 2021). Overall, interventions that enhance self-compassion, psychological empowerment, and supportive leadership can effectively reduce the adverse consequences of workplace

ostracism on employee behaviors and commitment (Sommer et al., 2021) (Zhou et al., 2021).

8. Job Satisfaction

Workplace ostracism significantly undermines job satisfaction and can lead to increased turnover intentions, but organizational interventions can mitigate these effects. Strategies such as fostering mindfulness among employees have been shown to enhance resilience against ostracism, thereby reducing turnover intentions (Sadia, 2024). Additionally, promoting emotional intelligence (EI) can help prevent counterproductive work behaviors that arise from ostracism, creating a more harmonious workplace environment (Izhan et al., 2024). Furthermore, views of organizational virtuousness and authentic leadership operate as moderators, mitigating the harmful effects of ostracism on employee turnover intentions (Singh et al., 2024). Implementing these treatments allows firms to foster a supportive culture that improves employee well-being and job satisfaction, resulting in higher retention rates (Sadia, 2024) (Singh et al., 2024).

9. Turnover Intensions

Workplace ostracism, encompassing forms such as social exclusion and gossiping, significantly influences employees' turnover intentions (TI). A meta-analysis reveals a significant positive relationship (r = 0.31) between workplace ostracism and turnover intention, indicating that employees who experience ostracism are more inclined to contemplate resigning from their positions (Das & Ekka, 2024). Additionally, two independent variables such as perceptions of organizational virtuousness & practice of authentic leadership can moderate this variable, highlighting the importance of supportive leadership in mitigating turnover intentions (Singh et al., 2024). Negative organizational gossip further exacerbates turnover intentions, particularly when coupled with organizational hypocrisy, which undermines trust and consistency in workplace practices (Doğan, 2024). Moreover, job insecurity mediates the relationship between ostracism and TI, with lower coaching leadership intensifying this effect (Zhang & Niu, 2023). Lastly, the experience of ostracism can lead to knowledge hiding, further reinforcing turnover intentions, especially under hindrance stressors ("Quitting a Job as Vengeance for Being Ostracized: The Role of Challenge-Hindrance Stressors", 2022). Collectively, these findings underscore the critical need for organizations to foster inclusive environments to reduce turnover risks.

10. Organization Culture

Workplace ostracism significantly impacts company culture by fostering a toxic environment that undermines employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. Research indicates that ostracism leads to counterproductive work behaviors (CWB), decreased job satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions, particularly in individualistic cultures where the effects are more pronounced (Izhan et al., 2024) (Li et al.,

2021). Employees experiencing ostracism often engage in rumination, which exacerbates feelings of burnout and negatively influences job-related outcomes (He et al., 2020). Furthermore, evaluations of organizational virtuousness and authentic leadership might regulate the association between ostracism and turnover intentions, indicating that supportive leadership can reduce these negative impacts (Singh et al., 2024). Overall, addressing workplace ostracism is crucial for fostering a positive organizational culture, enhancing employee engagement, and reducing turnover rates (Sommer et al., 2021).

DISCUSSION

The findings from our systematic literature review highlight the pervasive impact of workplace ostracism across multiple employee outcomes, reinforcing its significance as a pressing organizational issue. Literature predominantly establishes ostracism as a detrimental factor affecting performance, engagement, and well-being, yet gaps in understanding persist. This discussion synthesizes key insights and potential avenues for future research based on existing theoretical and empirical findings.

Theoretical Contributions

The existing literature demonstrates that workplace ostracism significantly impairs employee motivation, psychological safety, and job satisfaction. However, there remains a need to explore its complex interplay with various organizational factors. Our study emphasizes the necessity of refining conceptual models to incorporate mediating and moderating variables such as resilience, leadership styles, and cultural dimensions. These additions could provide a more holistic understanding of How workplace ostracism triggers employee behavior.

Practical Implications

An applied View is findings underscore the necessity of proactive organizational interventions. Companies must develop policies that foster inclusiveness and psychological safety, thereby mitigating the adverse effects of ostracism. Implementing structured feedback mechanisms, peer support programs, and training initiatives could enhance workplace culture and employee well-being. Additionally, leadership development programs focusing on inclusive management styles may serve as an effective deterrent to workplace ostracism.

This systematic Literature review discusses Training, mindfulness, and effective leadership will help to reduce workplace ostracism and promote total wellbeing.
Organizational Implications: In collectivistic cultures, workplace ostracism can hinder service performance, mediated by job tension and organizational identification (Mattar et al., 2022). The adverse effects of ostracism on performance can be moderated by organizational-based self-esteem and performance goal orientation ("Workplace ostracism", 2022). Conversely, some argue that workplace ostracism may inadvertently

foster resilience among employees, prompting them to develop coping strategies that could enhance their productivity in the long run. However, this perspective remains less supported in current literature.

Empirical research identifies several effective strategies to mitigate workplace ostracism, focusing on interventions that enhance interpersonal relationships and foster a supportive work environment. Key strategies include training and development programs that promote awareness of ostracism and its impacts, as well as initiatives that encourage open communication and trust among team members (Mohammad & Nazir, 2023). Additionally, interventions such as mentorship and empowerment have proven successful in increasing the persistence of ostracized individuals in team tasks, thereby improving overall team dynamics (Reece et al., 2021). Furthermore, fostering a culture of inclusivity and monitoring group interactions can help reduce feelings of exclusion, while promoting task interdependence and job autonomy enhances employee engagement (Mohammad & Nazir, 2023) ("Individual and Group Predictors of Workplace Ostracism and Employee Coping", 2022). Collectively, these strategies not only address the immediate effects of ostracism but also contribute to a healthier organizational culture (Asmita et al., 2024) (Sommer et al., 2021).

Limitations
This systematic review, undertaken in accordance with PRISMA 2020 principles, recognizes some limitations inherent in its scope and methodology

Publication Bias: The review primarily incorporates findings from published studies, potentially excluding insights from unpublished research, grey literature, and preprints.
1. Heterogeneity of Studies: The included studies exhibit significant variation in design, participant demographics, and measures of ostracism, limiting the ability to draw direct comparisons or perform meta-analyses.
2. Focus on Individual-Level Outcomes: While this review offers critical insights into individual-level consequences of ostracism, the broader implications on organizational-level outcomes remain underexplored.

Research Implication The findings underscore the critical importance of addressing workplace ostracism to promote well-being and organizational effectiveness. The following organizational strategies are proposed:
1. **Training and Awareness Programs:** Educational initiatives targeting both employees and managers are essential to raise awareness about the manifestations, impacts, and prevention of ostracism.
2. **Foster Inclusive Cultures:** Organizations must proactively cultivate environments that emphasize diversity, inclusivity, and respectful communication to mitigate ostracism.

3. **Support Systems:** The provision of support mechanisms, such as counseling services and peer-support networks, is crucial for individuals affected by ostracism.
4. **Develop Clear Policies**: Organizations should establish explicit policies that define and prohibit ostracism, coupled with accessible mechanisms for reporting and addressing incidents.

Research Implication Model
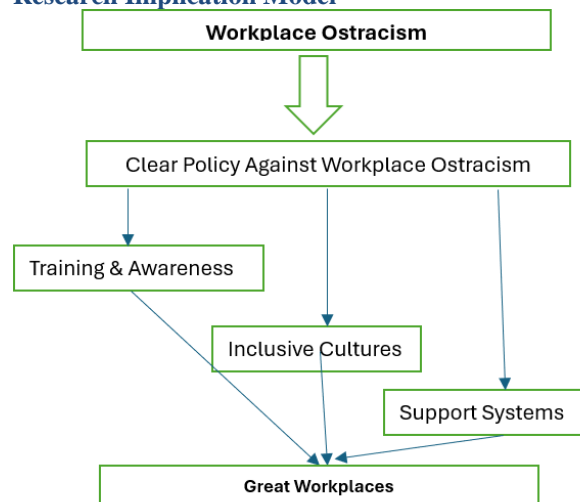
Research Hypothesis
H1: Training and awareness have a statistically significant impact on ostracism behaviors.
H2: There is a statistically significant effect of inclusiveness on workplace ostracism practices.
H3 - The Support system has a statistically significant impact on ostracism behaviors.
H4 - There is a statistically significant relationship between ostracism behaviors and great places to work.

CONCLUSION
This systematic review brings together evidence to present the pervasive and detrimental effects of workplace ostracism on employee outcomes ranging from psychological health to work performance. Organizations can minimize the negative consequences of ostracism by applying sound policies, building inclusive cultures, and facilitating the support of involved employees. More empirical studies and intervention studies are essential in building knowledge and practice in this domain, leading eventually to healthier and more inclusive workplaces.

Future Research Direction
Organizational behavior studies now identify workplace ostracism as a serious concern, with direct implications for staff performance, attitude, and actions. Although extant literature has widely discussed the adverse effects, there are yet some gaps remaining to be analyzed, which this study suggests the need to undertake. Future investigations should develop subsequent research implication theory and hypotheses

generated in our investigation to enhance both theoretical and empirical knowledge.

As remote and hybrid work arrangements have become more popular, virtual ostracism has become more widespread. Research in the future must explore the role of digital communication platforms in experiences of exclusion and employee well-being.

All workers do not respond to ostracism alike. Future studies should explore variables like personality characteristics (e.g., neuroticism, self-efficacy), leadership, and organizational practices that may temper or enhance the effects of ostracism.

Although prior studies have established direct effects of ostracism, the mediating mechanisms are less explored. Future research should explore mediating variables like emotional exhaustion, workplace resilience, and coping mechanisms.

Expanding on the implications set forth in our hypothesis model, future research should design and evaluate organizational interventions for mitigating workplace ostracism.

Subsequent studies must advance theoretical and empirical understanding of workplace ostracism through multidisciplinary insights and high-end research methodology. Leveraging the implications model of this research and the developed hypotheses, academics can play their role in further shaping stronger, inclusive, and high-performing work settings. Bridging the above-mentioned gaps will not only enrich outcomes for employees but also enhance organizational sustainability amid rising competitiveness and diversification in the workforce environment.

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