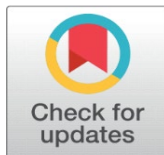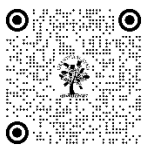# WORKPLACE OSTRACISM IN THE SELECTED SERVICE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS IN CHHATTISGARH: IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of workplace ostracism on employee well-being, performance, engagement, and withdrawal intentions in service sector organizations in Chhattisgarh. Through a descriptive research design, data was collected from 300 employees across various industries including finance, banking, transportation, and BPOs. The study reveals that workplace ostracism significantly reduces employees' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity, while increasing absenteeism and turnover intentions. Furthermore, perceived organizational support was found to moderate the negative effects of ostracism, helping employees better cope with exclusionary behaviors. The findings underscore the importance of raising awareness about ostracism, fostering employee engagement, and creating inclusive work environments. The study concludes with practical recommendations for organizations to address ostracism through training, leadership development, peer mentoring, and promoting psychological safety, aiming to improve both individual and organizational outcomes.

Keywords: Workplace Ostracism, Employee Well-being, Organizational Performance, Employee Engagement, Service Sector, Chhattisgarh, Withdrawal Intentions, Perceived Organizational Support

1. INTRODUCTION

Ostracism at workplace denotes an extensive workplace perspective. Scholars have not come to conscious on the distinct definitions of workplace or social exclusion, but they firmly believe that workplace ostracism is a behavior that has enormous effect on organizations Ferris Introduced the concept of workplace ostracism and observed that people are suffering ostracism when they perceived exclusion, ignorance and discriminatory treatment by the superiors or co-workers. Ostracism induces behaviors such as, rejecting or ignorant behavior or eye contact with the victim. In addition to abusive supervision, uncivilized behavior, and bullying, workplace ostracism is passive and offensive as it appears cryptic, such as silence, ignorance, no response to greeting on regular basis. In general, two types of ostracism are seen at workplace, one is intentional ostracism and second is heedless. The former means, a person ignores another person intentionally and the person is well aware of such actions, to discomfort someone and most of the time purposeful

ostracism at the workplace is a silence treatment. Heedless ostracism is when individuals are not ignoring others intentionally as they are unaware of the fact that their behavior is hurting person in front.

Coworker interactions are hampered by racism, which has an impact on workers' psychological and mental health. Employees feel more engaged, more at ease, and more committed to their company when they express their feelings. In addition to its capacity to cause social suffering, ostracism is disgusting and serves as a warning to fundamental human needs such the need for control, the need for belongingness, the need for self-worth, and the need for a meaningful life. These demands have a long history in psychology, with several authors contending that all facets of social conduct are based on these needs, either alone or in combination (K.D. Williams, 1997).

The danger of expulsion from the group is one way that racism affects a person's sense of belonging. According to research, ordinal types of ostracism, like being kicked out of a computer-based ball-toss game, can make someone feel less recognized by their group and less like they belong. Workers who experience ostracism may believe that they have done something wrong or that they are inherently ugly, which lowers their self-esteem. People who experience ostracism have diminished feelings, their activities elicit no reaction from others, and they lack any other means of putting an end to the exclusion.

After undergoing several research situation it was found that workplace ostracism has been studiod majorly as an organizational phenomenon. Its ill-effects at personal level of human resources involved in organizations have not been given much emphasis in studies. Ostracism at any given level whether individual or organizational level is equally relevant considering this aspect, we are proposing a working model based on past literature, determining the relationship between ostracism and several inter-related variables, so that functional mechanism/intervention can be introduced to counter the ostracism at workplace.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

1) **Gruter & Masters (1986):** Identified ostracism as a regular and powerful phenomenon in sociology and psychology.
2) **homas & Velthouse (1990):** Expanded the understanding of empowerment and linked it to employee engagement in the context of workplace exclusion.
3) **Williams (1997, 2001):** Demonstrated that workplace ostracism activates brain areas associated with physical pain and termed it a personal stressor with severe mental health implications.
4) **Eisenberger, Lieberman & Williams (2003):** Found that ostracism triggers brain areas similar to those affected by physical pain.
5) **Leary et al. (2003):** Established ostracism as a distinct and regular occurrence impacting social and organizational dynamics.
6) **Fox & Stallworth (2005):** Conceptualized ostracism as a passive form of bullying, distinguishing it from more overt forms of aggression.
7) **Ferris et al. (2008):** Highlighted workplace ostracism's negative effects on job satisfaction, mental well-being, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).
8) **Heaphy and Dutton (2008)** said Ostracism adversely affects the potential for social connections, which is must for people to meet their psychological needs. It is believed that workplace ostracism affects employee's mental well-being.
9) **Hitlan et al. (2008):** Demonstrated decreased job contributions and performance due to ostracism
10) **O'Reilly & Robinson (2009):** Identified ostracism as an act of omission with a strong influence on decreasing employees' sense of belonging and contribution.
11) **Hitlan and Noel (2009)** says workplace ostracism is an influential factor in explaining confined belonging along with job contributions.
12) **Wu et al. (2012):** Found a positive correlation between ostracism and emotional exhaustion, deteriorated psychological health, and reduced job performance.

13) **Chiang & Hsieh (2012):** Demonstrated that psychological empowerment significantly influences OCB and job performance.

14) **Robbinson et al (2013)** showed an integrated model where task resources related to task, psychological needs, and attitudes mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and its behavioral outputs. Individuals experiencing ostracism for a longer time are vulnerable to serious health hazard.

15) **Ferris, Lian, Brown & Morrison (2014):** Showed that ostracism negatively impacts OCB and increases deviant workplace behaviors.

16) **Kaya (2017):** Investigated the relationship between workplace ostracism and work engagement, finding a negative relationship between the two.

17) **Chung & Kim (2017):** Established that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and workplace behaviors like task performance and organizational citizenship.

18) **Chung (2018):** Found perceived stress mediates the impact of workplace ostracism on helping behavior and task performance, moderated by psychological empowerment

19) **Zimmerman, Carter-Sowell & Xu (2018):** Examined faculty experiences and highlighted that department gender ratios do not mitigate workplace ostracism among women.

20) **Erkutlu & Chafra (2019):** Identified behavioral integrity and effective communication as key factors in reducing ostracism in academic settings in Turkey.

21) **Jiang & Poon (2022):** Individual differences and contextual factors significantly moderate the impact of ostracism on employees. For example, Jiang & Poon (2022) found that agreeable employees are more vulnerable to experiencing heightened distress when subjected to ostracism.

22) **Rahaman et al. (2023)** highlighted that individuals with a high need for belongingness are more adversely affected by ostracism, amplifying its negative consequences. Additionally, employees with lower self-esteem or limited psychological resilience may also exhibit stronger adverse reactions to workplace ostracism. Conversely, factors like high emotional intelligence or robust social support systems can mitigate the detrimental effects of ostracism, enabling individuals to better cope with exclusion.

23) **Feng et al. (2022)** Research reveals multiple mediating mechanisms through which workplace ostracism damages employee outcomes. Thwarted needs for control, meaningful existence, belongingness, nd self-esteem mediate the effects of ostracism on job strain, turnover intentions, and counterproductive behaviors.

3. NEED FOR THE STUDY

The intentional isolation or disregard of workers by their supervisors or coworkers, known as workplace ostracism, is becoming more widely acknowledged as a serious workplace problem. Ostracism at work can have serious psychological, emotional, and organizational repercussions despite its subtlety. But little research has been done on this topic in the context of service sector organizations, especially in states like Chhattisgarh where organizational dynamics, socioeconomic conditions, and culture are distinct.

1) Service sector organizations in Chhattisgarh play a significant role in the state's economy and provide employment to a diverse workforce. These organizations rely heavily on interpersonal interactions, teamwork, and employee engagement. Workplace ostracism in such settings can disrupt team dynamics, lower productivity, and negatively impact customer service, making it an important area to investigate.

2) Workplace ostracism can lead to reduced employee well-being, diminished job satisfaction, and increased withdrawal intentions. Over time, these factors can adversely affect overall organizational performance, retention rates, and workplace morale. Understanding these impacts is essential to developing strategies for fostering a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

3) While workplace ostracism has been studied in broader contexts, there is a lack of empirical research focusing on its prevalence and impact in Chhattisgarh. The state's unique socio-cultural landscape, including its significant rural and tribal workforce, necessitates localized studies to provide insights that can inform tailored interventions.

4) Businesses in the service industry want to improve performance, lower attrition, and encourage employee engagement. In order to accomplish these objectives, workplace ostracism must be addressed. Organizations in

Chhattisgarh can use research on this subject to determine the causes of ostracism and put preventative measures in place.

5) Researching occupational ostracism in the service industry of Chhattisgarh will advance scholarly knowledge of this problem in areas that have received little attention. Additionally, it will emphasize how employee engagement, perceived organizational support, workplace exclusion, and other behavioral outcomes interact.

4. SOCIAL RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

In this modem era where people hesitate to express or confess their mental state and ignore this by focusing much upon physiological needs and aspects by running towards career goals and ambitions. It has been clearly observed that any sort of ostracism at workplace (ignorance, bullying, overlooked or discriminated) whether intentional or unintentional results adversely on employees mental as well as physical well-being such as performance, attitude, and may further lead to withdrawal intentions. All these factors affects the organization inversely as productivity gets hampered at individual level and team level also. Intent of workmen becomes questionable and if they quit the organization, all the resources invested on hiring and training the employee for making him perform better gets wasted. This study is intended towards finding the existing relationship between variables closely related to ostracism at workplace so that better insights on ostracism can be availed to the workforce engaged in industrial operations and to facilitate them in dealing with ill-effects of ostracism by coming up with some sort of framework, mechanism or interventions to cope up ostracism at workplace.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
5.1. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

1) To explore workplace ostracism, well-being, attitude, performance, perceived organizational support, employee engagement, and withdrawal intentions among employees in various service sector organizations.
2) To analyze the relationships between the identified variables in the study, namely workplace ostracism, well-being, attitude, performance, withdrawal intention, perceived organizational support, and employee engagement.
3) To assess the impact of workplace ostracism on employees' well-being, attitude, performance, and withdrawal intentions.
4) To evaluate the moderating role of employee engagement and perceived organizational support on employees' well-being, attitude, performance, and withdrawal intentions conducting the research.

Research Design: This study used a descriptive research design as its methodology.

Methods of Sampling: Stratified random sample was used for the collection of data.

Sample size: A proposed standard sample of 300 respondents from the targeted population belonging to Service Sector Industries.

Area of Sampling: Respondents from the service sector industries such as financing, banking, transportation, BPOs etc., was considered as a sample to be drawn from the Chhattisgarh.

Sources of Data Collection: The study was use primary data collected through structured questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups with employees, along with secondary data from organizational reports, academic literature, government publications, and industry reports.

Instrument for Data Collection: Data will be drawn by the use of Standard Questionnaires.

Data Collection: Respondents from the service sector industries such as financing, banking, transportation, BPOs etc., was considered as a sample to be drawn from the Chhattisgarh.

6. DISCUSSION: FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM THE STUDY
6.1. FINDINGS

The study underscores the pervasive impact of workplace ostracism on employees and organizational outcomes in service sector organizations in Chhattisgarh. Workplace ostracism emerged as a critical factor negatively influencing employees' psychological and professional dimensions. Employees subjected to ostracism reported heightened stress levels, anxiety, and reduced psychological well-being, leading to adverse effects on their overall health. This exclusionary behavior significantly shaped their attitudes, fostering mistrust, demotivation, and diminished commitment toward their roles and the organization.

Furthermore, workplace ostracism was found to have a profound effect on performance metrics. Employees facing ostracism exhibited diminished focus, suboptimal productivity, and a lack of initiative, ultimately impairing organizational efficiency. The study also revealed a strong correlation between ostracism and withdrawal intentions, with employees demonstrating absenteeism, disengagement, and a higher likelihood of turnover.

Perceived organizational support emerged as a moderating variable, capable of alleviating some adverse effects of ostracism. Employees who felt valued and supported by their organizations were better able to cope with exclusionary experiences, maintaining higher levels of well-being and performance. However, the study highlighted that ostracism directly undermines employee engagement, leading to reduced collaboration and innovation—essential drivers of organizational success. This disengagement poses a threat to the achievement of strategic organizational goals and objectives.

A notable finding of the study was the widespread lack of awareness and actionable solutions to workplace ostracism. Many employees, despite experiencing ostracism, hesitated to report these incidents due to fear of retaliation or stigmatization. Organizations acknowledged the existence of the issue but lacked robust mechanisms to address it effectively. This gap highlights the urgent need for proactive interventions and a culture shift toward inclusivity and support.

6.2. SUGGESTIONS

- **CreateAwareness**

Organizations should conduct training sessions to educate employees and leaders about workplace ostracism, its effects, and how to recognize and prevent it.

- **Enhance Employee Engagement:** Encourage team-building activities and collaborative projects to improve engagement. Recognizing employee contributions helps align individual efforts with organizational objectives, reducing the impact of ostracism.
- **Leadership Training:** Equip leaders to identify and address ostracism within teams. Leadership programs can help foster respect, inclusivity, and better conflict management practices.
- **Focus on Solutions:** Develop practical measures like peer mentoring, anonymous feedback systems, and constructive conflict resolution mechanisms to tackle ostracism effectively.
- **Promote Psychological Safety:** Create a safe environment where employees feel free to express their concerns without fear of retaliation. Emphasizing trust and empathy in communication can enhance psychological safety.
- **Regular Assessments:** Conduct periodic surveys to monitor workplace dynamics, identify issues like ostracism, and gauge employee well-being and engagement levels.

7. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant impact of workplace ostracism on both individual employees and organizational outcomes in service sector organizations in Chhattisgarh. It demonstrates that ostracism, whether intentional or unintentional, negatively affects employees' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and overall performance. Employees subjected to ostracism experience heightened stress, anxiety, and a sense of isolation, which in turn leads to reduced engagement, productivity, and increased withdrawal intentions, including absenteeism and turnover. The

research also underscores the moderating role of perceived organizational support, showing that employees who feel valued by their organizations are better equipped to cope with the adverse effects of ostracism. However, a key finding of the study is the lack of awareness and effective mechanisms within organizations to address ostracism. Many employees are reluctant to report experiences of ostracism due to fear of retaliation or stigmatization, and organizations often fail to implement adequate solutions. This gap in organizational practices calls for the introduction of comprehensive strategies to mitigate ostracism. The study suggests that raising awareness through training, enhancing employee engagement, and fostering leadership skills to manage ostracism are essential steps. By creating a more inclusive, supportive work environment and emphasizing psychological safety, organizations can reduce the negative impact of ostracism, improve employee well-being, and enhance overall organizational performance. Addressing workplace ostracism is, therefore, critical not only for the health and satisfaction of employees but also for the long-term success and productivity of the organization.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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