ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Psychology

A STUDY ON WORKPLACE OSTRACISM, PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND WORK ENGAGEMENT AMONG PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYEES IN MUMBAI

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ABSTRACT

The current study focuses on the relationship between workplace ostracism, psychological capital and work engagement among private sector employees in Mumbai. The data was collected from a total of 180 private sector employees (i.e., 90 males, 90 females). The tools been administered are The Workplace Ostracism Scale by Ferris et al. (2008), Psychological Capital Questionnaire- PsyCap-12 by Luthans et al. (2007), and The Utretch Work Engagement Scale- UWES-9S by Schaufeli et al. (2002). Correlational research design using quantitative approach was used. The findings of the study indicate significant relationships between the variables, with perceived workplace ostracism accounting for a significant variational impact on psychological capital and work engagement. Years of work experience also show to have a significant difference on the perception of workplace ostracism. Surprisingly, no significant gender difference was observed.

INTRODUCTION

As one of the top rising economies, the country is experiencing rapid development and expansion in this age of globalization and organizations are needed to be more focused to foster and nurture human capital rather than focusing on financial capitals and physical capitals (Tamar & Wirawan, 2018). The recent stream of research within psychology involves studying the individual and contextual characteristics that allow people and organizations to flourish and increase their competitive advantage. It emphasizes on the need to merge theory and research about human resource strengths and psychological resources that find application of such knowledge and skills in organizational contexts (Sihag & Sarikwal, 2014).

Workplace Ostracism:

An employee's perception of being neglected or rejected by coworkers is known as Workplace Ostracism (Ferris et al., 2008). Ostracism is a concept that has gained scholarly attention only in recent years. According to Bellou (2016), an individual's attitude and behavior at job, such as work satisfaction, work engagement, organizational citizenship behavior, performance, and well-being, can all be negatively impacted by being ostracized. Ostracism at the workplace is a problem that affects several sectors, and academic interest in this topic and its potential consequences has grown. Studying this issue and its effects in a varied sample of workers from the private sectors is crucial since interpersonal stressors can cause a variety of undesired consequences, such as job stress and intents to quit (Sommer, Nagel & Williams, 2021).

Psychological Capital:

Psychological Capital (PsyCap) is the understanding and use of human resource strengths and cognitive talents that can be assessed, nourished, and effectively regulated for performance management. It is a core concept of positive psychology

consisting of the positive psychological resources or factors of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience (Ferreira, 2015). Self-efficacy is the ability of an individual to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to successfully execute a certain activity within a given setting. Optimism refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to succeed and is linked to positive perspectives grounded in realistic analyses and optimistic projections of current and future success (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Hope is an employee's desire to commit to and achieve goals, as well as their positive state of motivation. Lastly, resilience is the capacity to endure and recover from adversity, obstacles, and uncertainties faced along the path (Luthans et al., 2006).

People with high PsyCap are more likely to respond positively and move through stressful situations at work, helping them avoid spiraling out of control and developing resigning intentions. Resilience is linked to joy, commitment, job engagement, and satisfaction at work. When faced with ostracism, PsyCap can reinforce or strengthen other resources that have been inadequate.

Work Engagement:

Employee Work Engagement can be explained as a positive, rewarding, job-related frame of mind that is marked by vigor, devotion, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). According to recent studies, engaged workers exhibit high levels of energy and psychological commitment to their jobs. Even though it is widely acknowledged that the relevance of work engagement is a higher-order psychological construct that is expressed by various psychological states of contentment, much is still unknown in the eastern emerging economies, particularly in the Indian context. Assessing vigor, dedication, and absorption can enable employers in identifying areas where employees may require more training or development. Enhancing employee engagement is a challenging task in the present competitive market but it reaps immense benefits for both individuals and for organizations because the way individuals fulfill their work and accomplish their tasks depends on how engaged they are in their work. The success of any organization depends on the contribution of its engaged employees and hence it is important to study and maintain the factors influencing human capital to optimize their potential and increase organizational effectiveness. By encouraging work engagement and focusing on positive behavior, better services may be provided, also increasing overall client satisfaction (Sahoo et al., 2017).

METHODOLOGY

The research problem of the present study was to examine the relationship between Workplace Ostracism, Psychological Capital and Work Engagement among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai. Non- experimental correlational research design using quantitative approach was adopted for the study.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To understand the relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Psychological Capital among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai
2. To understand the relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Work Engagement among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai
3. To examine the impact of Perceived Workplace Ostracism

on the Psychological Capital among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

4. To examine the impact of Perceived Workplace Ostracism on the Work Engagement among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

5. To examine if Gender Differences have an influence on the perception of Workplace Ostracism among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

6. To examine if Work Experience has an influence on the perception of Workplace Ostracism among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

Hypotheses:

H_o1: There is no significant relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Psychological Capital among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

H_o2: There is no significant relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Work Engagement among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

H_o3: Perceived Workplace Ostracism has no impact on the Psychological Capital among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

H_o4: Perceived Workplace Ostracism has no impact on the Work Engagement among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

H_o5: Gender has no significant difference on the perception of Workplace Ostracism among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

H_o6: Years of work Experience have no significant difference on the perception of Workplace Ostracism among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

The sample comprised of 180 (90 males and 90 females) private sector employees working in Mumbai with a minimum experience of one year in their field of expertise. The samples were selected through convenient sampling technique and consent of the participants were taken prior to the conduction of the test.

Tools Used:
- Consent For
- Socio-Demographic Data Sheet
- Workplace Ostracism Scale by Ferris et al. (2008)
- Psychological Capital Questionnaire- PsyCap-12 by Luthans et al. (2007)
- The Utretch Work Engagement Scale- UWES-9S by Schaufeli et al. (2002)

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

H_o1: There is no significant relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Psychological Capital among Private Sector Employees

Table 1 shows the correlation between Workplace Ostracism and Psychological Capital among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

	N	M	SD	R	p
Workplace Ostracism	180	14.85	5.56	-.396**	.00
Psychological Capital		4.81	.70		

Table 1 reveals that the correlation coefficient of -.396 indicates a moderate negative correlation between Workplace Ostracism and Psychological Capital, that is, as workplace ostracism increases psychological capital decreases. As the p value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that there is a significant relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Psychological Capital. This can be supported by a previous study being done which showed a significant relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological capital

(Toker & Baturay, 2019).

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Work Engagement among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

Table 2 shows the correlation between Workplace Ostracism and Work Engagement among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

	N	M	SD	R	p
Workplace Ostracism	180	14.85	5.56	-.368**	.00
Work Engagement		4.72	1.01		

Table 2 reveals that the correlation coefficient of -.368 indicates a moderate negative correlation between Workplace Ostracism and Work Engagement, that is, as workplace ostracism increases work engagement decreases. As the p value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that there is a significant relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Work Engagement. This can be supported by a previous study being done which showed a significant relationship between workplace ostracism and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Ho3: Perceived Workplace Ostracism has no impact on the Psychological Capital among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

Table 3 shows the simple linear regression analysis between Workplace Ostracism and Psychological Capital among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

	N	M	SD		R2	p
Workplace Ostracism	180	14.85	5.56	-.396	.157	.00
Psychological Capital		4.81	.70			

The p-value for Psychological Capital is 0.00, indicating the statistically significant correlation between Workplace Ostracism and Psychological Capital (p < 0.05). With an R2 value of 0.157, workplace ostracism accounts for 15.7% of the variation in psychological capital. Psychological Capital has an unstandardized regression coefficient ( ) of -.396. Holding all other factors equal, this indicates that for every unit increase in Psychological Capital, there is a 0.396 unit decrease in Workplace Ostracism. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that workplace ostracism does impact psychological capital. This ca be supported by a previous study where workplace ostracism was found to have a negative impact on psychological capital (Kim, Shin & Swanger, 2017).

Ho4: Perceived Workplace Ostracism has no impact on the Work

Work Experience →	1-10		11-20		21-30		31-40		F	P
Variable→	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Work Ostracism	16.46	6.54	13.36	3.47	16.05	6.41	14.86	4.59	4.23	.006

Engagement among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

Table 4 shows the simple linear regression analysis between Workplace Ostracism and Work Engagement among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

	N	M	SD		R2	p
Workplace Ostracism	180	14.85	5.56	-.368	.135	.00

Work Engagement	4.72	1.01			

The p-value for Psychological Capital is 0.00, indicating the statistically significant correlation between Workplace Ostracism and Work Engagement (p < 0.05). With an R2 value of 0.135, workplace ostracism accounts for 13.5% of the variation in work engagement. Work Engagement has an unstandardized regression coefficient ( ) of -.368. Holding all other factors equal, this indicates that for every unit increase in Work Engagement, there is a 0.368 unit decrease in Workplace Ostracism. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that workplace ostracism does impact work engagement. This ca be supported by a previous study where workplace ostracism was found to have a negative impact on work engagement (Kim, Shin & Swanger, 2017).

Ho5: Gender has no significant difference on the perception of Workplace Ostracism among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

Table 5 shows the Independent Sample t test for Workplace Ostracism based on Gender

Gender →	Male			Female			t	p
Variable	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Workplace Ostracism	180	14.74	5.93	154	14.97	5.20	-.855	.639

Table 5 reveals that the females have a higher level of academic anxiety than males. As the p value is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted which means that there is no significant difference in workplace ostracism among private sector employees based on gender, t = -.855, p = .639. The findings are consistent with earlier study by Zimmerman, Carter-Sowell & Xu (2016) which showed that females experienced more workplace ostracism than men faculty members.

Ho6: Years of work Experience have no significant difference on the perception of Workplace Ostracism among Private Sector Employees in Mumbai

Table 6 shows the Means, Standard Deviations, and One- Way Analyses of Variance in Workplace Ostracism based on Work Experience

Table 6 reveals that as the p value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that there is a significant difference in workplace ostracism among private sector employees based on work experience. Therefore, an analysis of variance showed that the difference of work experience on Workplace Ostracism was significant, F = 4.23, p = .006.

Major Implications
Firstly, the research can shed insight on the negative effect of workplace ostracism on employees' psychological well-being and work engagement. It can help reveal that when employees feel ignored or excluded by their coworkers or bosses, they are less likely to feel motivated or involved in their job, in turn, affecting their productivity and overall job performance.

Secondly, the study can help organizations recognize the importance of creating an inclusive workplace culture. Employers may be more likely to take steps to address issues related to workplace ostracism and promote a more supportive and inclusive work environment. This may include implementing policies that promote diversity and inclusion, providing training for managers and employees on how to identify and address workplace ostracism, and creating opportunities for employees to connect and collaborate with their colleagues.

Lastly, the findings can help individuals understand the impact of workplace ostracism on their own psychological well-being and work engagement. Employees who are aware of the negative effects of workplace ostracism may be better equipped to cope with such situations or seek support from their colleagues or managers.

Overall, the research study can have important implications for both organizations and individuals in terms of promoting a positive work environment and improving employees' psychological well-being and work engagement.

Limitations
The present study was conducted on a small sample with only 180 participants due to time constraints, making it difficult to generalize the findings to larger populations. The results and inference may not be applicable to public and other private sectors since the responses were majorly gathered only from employees working in the information technology, energy and transportation industries in Mumbai. Additionally, the research did not test the moderating effects of the various factors under psychological capital and work engagement on workplace ostracism which could give more clarity and insight into the findings.

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Conflict of Interests
The authors declared no conflict of interests.

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