Work Environment and Occupational Wellbeing among Employees: The Intervening Role of Workplace Ostracism

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT

OPEN ACCESS

This study examined the relationships between organizational culture, workplace ostracism, and occupational well-being among employees. It was hypothesized that workplace ostracism mediates the relationship between organizational culture and occupational well-being. Correlational research design was used and data were collected from 300 employees aged 25–45 years (M = 32.13, SD = 6.85) through purposive sampling across educational, banking, and telecommunication sectors. The study employed the Working Environment Scale (WES-10; Rossberg, Eiring & Friis, 2004), the Workplace Ostracism Scale (Ferris et al., 2008), and the Occupational Well-Being Scale (OWB; Daovisan & Intarakamhang, 2024). Results revealed that workplace ostracism significantly mediated the relationship between organizational culture and occupational well-being. A more intense work environment was associated with higher levels of ostracism, which in turn negatively impacted employee well-being. The findings highlight the importance of fostering an affective organizational culture to reduce ostracism and enhance employee well-being.

Introduction

In today's complex and rapidly evolving work environment, ensuring the wellbeing and vitality of employees has become one of the hot topics for organizational researchers and human resource management programs (Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009). Seeking the antecedents of employee wellbeing and consequences of ignoring it are considered priority issues (Bretones & González, 2010). Amid increasing competition and race to increase performance output in an organization - the managerial and policy level concerns now extend to the mental and emotional wellbeing of employees, along with job productivity (Murtaza, Kun & Molnár, 2023). Hence, emerged the

construct of Occupational Wellbeing (OWB) which refers to an individual's ability to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life in a way that fosters health, satisfaction, and financial stability (Demirel, 2014; Song, Gu, & Zhang, 2020). Early models of occupational wellbeing were derived from Ryff's multidimensional model of psychological wellbeing, extended into the workplace by researchers like Warr and Sonnentag. Warr (1990) identified three key dimensions of OWB - affective (emotions and mood at work), professional (task engagement and performance), and social (workplace relationships). Sonnentag, Dormann, and Demerouti (2010) further refined the construct to include cognitive, psychological, and psychosomatic elements, hence recognizing the interaction of thoughts, emotions, and physical reactions in shaping employees' work experience.

Literature review shows that the construct has been conceptualized both positively and negatively, i.e., reflecting on the positive employment factors like autonomy, recognition, and professional growth which promote job satisfaction and well-being – and the performance inhibitors like high job demands and lack of resources leading to burnout (Saaranen et al., 2015; Dicke et al., 2018; Rivkin et al., 2015).

The importance of occupational wellbeing lies in its role as a buffer against personal and professional debacles – such as stress and diminished job performance and turnover intention. Research indicates that when employees perceive high levels of wellbeing, they are more likely to be resilient in the face of organizational demands, display lower intentions to quit, and maintain higher job satisfaction (Hart & Cotton, 2003; Wang et al., 2022). On the other hand, poor occupational wellbeing is closely linked to burnout, emotional exhaustion, and absenteeism - outcomes that are not only harmful to the individual but also costly to organizations (Pitch, 2018). This significance urges the organizations to seek the determinants of occupational wellbeing and ways to improve them (Murtaza, Kun & Molnár, 2023).

As per the conceptualization of Saaranen et al. (2015), occupational wellbeing is an empowerment process that emerges from the balance between workload and available resources. This dynamic model presents wellbeing as not a static and independent entity, but responsive to changes in job demands and support structures in the surroundings – highlighting the role of work environment in the occupational wellbeing of employees. Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) defined work environment to be encompassing two key dimensions; i.e., the work itself, which includes elements like task variety, autonomy, training opportunities, and a sense of achievement; and the context, which refers to both the physical and social conditions in the workplace.

Expanding on this definition of work environment, a narrower dimension "organizational climate" – that refers to the employees' shared perceptions of policies, practices, and procedures in their work environment (James & McIntyre, 1996) – has consistently emerged as the most influential predict (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Jankalová, 2020; Roczniewska et al., 2021; Saidi et al., 2019)

(McCowan, 2001; Jones et al., 1987) tor of occupational wellbeing, surpassing both personal characteristics and isolated work experiences, in research studies across different professional groups – including police officers, teachers, and health professionals (Hart & Cotton, 2003; Hart et al., 1996; Griffin et al., 2000). This emphasizes the role work environment plays in determining occupational wellbeing, which cannot simply be a product of individual resilience or job content. The physical, organizational, and psychosocial aspects of the workplace have a direct impact on employees' safety, wellbeing, and overall health (Schulte et al., 2019). Work load, interpersonal relations, leadership style, role-clarity, opportunities for participation in decision-making, and

fairness in appraisal systems – all of which form the primary elements of a work environment, form the climate that either supports or undermines employee wellbeing (Griffin et al., 2000; James & McIntyre, 1996). When organizations actively cultivate a positive climate, they create a systemic framework in which employees can flourish. Similarly, a poor work environment encompassing factors like high work load or job demands, lower job autonomy, lack of support, conflicts etc. can lead to reduced job satisfaction, work engagement and higher turnover intention, absenteeism. Similarly, researches have shown a considerable association between faulty work environment and burnout, stress, depression and anxiety – counting as psychological counterparts of employee wellbeing.

Taken together, the existing literature states that occupational wellbeing is a complex, multidimensional construct influenced heavily by organizational context. It integrates emotional, cognitive, and physical domains, and is responsive to both structural and interpersonal factors within the workplace. As such, work environment plays a foundational role, acting both directly and indirectly to shape employees' subjective and objective experiences of their work.

The Mediating Role of Workplace Ostracism

Occupational wellbeing, as previously established, is significantly shaped by the work environment. However, one crucial yet often overlooked pathway through which the work environment impacts wellbeing is workplace ostracism – a subtle but harmful form of social mistreatment. Ostracism is defined as the experience of being ignored or excluded by others within a workplace setting (Williams & Nida, 2017), manifested as being left out of conversations, given the "silent treatment," or intentionally excluded from group activities (Ferris et al., 2008). These behaviors may appear passive but carry serious lasting effects on an employee's psychological and physical health (Williams & Nida, 2017). Being excluded challenges the need for positive social connections, which are fundamental psychological needs that are closely linked to both physical and emotional health (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). This has a direct impact on an individual's wellbeing, especially their emotional and psychological aspects, which are essential elements of occupational wellbeing (Murtaza, Kun, & Molnár, 2023).

The literature has extensively established the detrimental effects of occupational exclusion. It has been shown to increase job-related stress, emotional exhaustion and depressed mood (Wu et al., 2012), while decreasing organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Duffy et al., 2002). In collectivist societies, like Pakistan, where social cohesiveness and interpersonal harmony are duly considered, these effects are exacerbated (Powell et al., 2009; Shamim & Abbasi, 2012). Being socially excluded in these settings thus jeopardizes one's sense of belonging and emotional stability in addition to one's professional identity. Ostracism puts physical and mental health at risk, as Ferris et al. (2008) indicated, so it is a serious issue for company executives who want to protect workers' well-being.

However, despite mounting evidence of its negative effects, research on the determinants of workplace ostracism – in terms of workplace elements that may cause or worsen such behaviors – is limited. Since interpersonal dynamics are shaped by environmental elements including leadership style, communication techniques, work load and task distribution etc., it is imperative to investigate how these aspects of the workplace may unintentionally encourage exclusionary behaviors. Organizations looking to reduce workplace ostracism and, in the process, enhance occupational wellbeing – may find useful insights from an understanding of this link.

Rationale

While existing literature has extensively documented the consequences of workplace ostracism - there is a noticeable gap in identifying its antecedents, particularly within the work environment, predominantly in collectivist societies, like Pakistan – where despite the cultural salience and widespread impact of this issue, research on workplace ostracism remains scarce, and even fewer studies have explored the organizational or environmental factors that might lead to such experiences. Employees in Pakistani organizations, accustomed to considering social relationships as one of the core elements in personal settings – may find it hard to cope with, when they face exclusion by their fellow employees. This can result in poor physical and psychological health along with decreased work performance, as discussed above in the light of recent studies. However, if the work environment factors that increase ostracism are sought after, it can foster a more harmonious organizational culture that corresponds with the collectivist culture of Pakistan.

Therefore, this study aims to address this significant gap by examining the predictive role of work environment characteristics in fostering workplace ostracism, and how, in turn, such ostracism mediates the relationship between work environment and occupational wellbeing. By doing so, it expands the understanding of workplace mistreatment beyond its outcomes, shifting focus to why and how ostracism occurs in the first place.

H1: Work environment will be positively related to workplace ostracism in employees.

H2: Work environment and workplace ostracism will be negatively related to occupational wellbeing in employees

H3: Workplace ostracism will mediate the relationship between work environment and occupational wellbeing in employees.

Method

Research Design

The current study employed a correlational (cross-sectional) research design.

Participants

A sample of 300 employees, including both men and women with the age range of 25–45 years with ($M=$ 32.13, $SD =$ 6.85). The participants were drawn through a non-probability convenient sampling technique from different organizations including educational, banking and telecommunication from different cities of Pakistan. The employee who had spent at least six months in the respective organization, having no physical disability were included in the study.

Instruments

The Working Environment Scale 10 (WES-10)

Røssberg, Eiring, and Friis (2004) developed the WES-10. It is a self-report questionnaire and comprises the ten items including four factors, i.e., self-realization, conflict, workload, and nervousness. The items comprising the WES-10 were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1, not at all or never, to 5, very often or to a large extent. The internal consistency of the sub factors of the WES-10 were ranging from .66 to .86. A high score on the working environment scale indicates a negative working environment.

Workplace Ostracism Scale

A 13-item scale adopted from the work of Ferris et al. (2008) will be utilized to measure employees' perceptions of workplace ostracism. The responses of participants for items were 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Sample items include: "Others ignored you at work" and "Others at work treated you as if you weren't there." Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.89. High scores is 65 and lower scores is 13. A high score on the workplace ostracism scale indicates high ostracism.

Occupational Well-Being Scale (OWB)

Daovisan & Intarakamhang (2024) develop occupational well-being (OWB) scale which is used to measure the occupational wellbeing. The 47-items scale is used to assess the teacher occupational wellbeing. The OWB scale is include six dimensions Affective wellbeing, Professional wellbeing, Social wellbeing, Cognitive wellbeing, Psychological well-being and psychosomatic well-being. The composite score reliability of Occupational wellbeing scale is .65. Higher scores OWB scale predict higher occupational well-being. A high score on the occupational well-being scale indicates high occupational wellbeing.

Procedure

The study plan was submitted to the research committee at Bahria University for approval. After receiving approval, data collection from participants was carried out. The participants belonged to different organizations including educational, banking and telecommunication were recruited by using convenience sampling. Participants were approached in person and given an informed consent form. They were also given a clear explanation of the research topic and the procedures involved. Participants received assurance that the data would remain confidential, anonymous, and used exclusively for study. They were informed that they could draw anytime they wanted. Participants were requested to answer the questions attentively and truthfully, as their responses would impact the study's outcomes. A 100% response rate was attained since each participant filled out and returned the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 28 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and IBM AMOS version 26. Initially, descriptive statistics were employed to provide a detailed overview of the demographic characteristics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Further descriptive statistics were calculated, alongside reliability analysis and the evaluation of normality of the measures. In the final stage, structural equation modeling was carried out to asse the mediating role of workplace ostracism between work environment and occupational wellbeing. All statistical tests were carried out with a 95% confidence interval, and the significance level was set at $\alpha = .05$.

Results

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=300)*

Variables	*f*	*%*	*M*	*SD*
Gender				
Female	120	40		
Male	180	60		
Age (in Years)			32.13	6.85
Marital Status				

Single	52	17.4	
Married	248	82.6	
Organization			
Educational	100	33.33	
Banking	100	33.33	
Telecommunication	100	33.33	
Working Experience (Years)			6.27 5.14
Monthly Income (PKR)			
50000-100000	82	27.33	
Up to 150000	127	42.33	
Up to 200000	60	20.00	
Up to 250000	21	7.00	
250000 Above	10	3.33	

Note: f=frequency, %=percentage

Table 1 explains the demographic characteristic of participants. The gender distribution of the sample is slightly varied where women is 40% and men were 60%.with the average age of 32.13 and SD of 6.85. The sample is representative of a variety of organizations, with an equal representation (educational =33.33%, banking = 33.33%, telecommunication = 33.33%. A smaller percentage of participants were single, i.e., 17.4%, but the majority are married with 82.6%. The sample's average working expereince of 6.27 years with the SD of 5.14.

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis of Study Variables (N=300)*

Variable					Ranges		
	k	**α**	**M**	**SD**	**Actual**	**Potential**	**W**
Work Environment	10	.74	26.74	6.84	12-46	10-50	.84
Self-Realization	4	.71	11.58	3.74	6-20	4-20	.81
Workload	2	.62	8.41	2.45	4-10	2-10	76
Conflict	2	.64	7.85	2.14	4-10	2-10	.74
Nervousness	2	.65	7.04	3.11	2-10	2-10	.71
Workplace Ostracism	13	.74	39.33	10.75	18-54	13-65	.92
Occupational Wellbeing	47	.78	118.71	20.07	76-226	47-235	.88
Affective	12	.76	18.14	6.98	14-45	12-60	.95
Professional	10	.74	17.45	4.39	16-42	10-50	.83
Social	6	.81	14.85	3.88	9-23	6-30	.83
Cognitive	5	.78	11.24	3.14	5-21	5-25	.91
Psychological	9	.73	21.29	6.54	10-40	9-45	.94
Psychosomatic	5	.71	10.58	2.38	6-18	5-25	.84

Note. k=number of items, α= Cronbach's alpha. W = Shapiro–Wilk

Table 2 indicates the number of items, reliability, mean, standard deviation, range (actual and potential), skewness and kurtosis. The reliability analysis showed that Cronbach Alpha reliability for work environment and sub factors were ranging from .71 to 84, the internal consistency for workplace ostracism was .92, while the internal consistency of occupational wellbeing and subscales were ranging from .83 to .95. Furthermore, the estimates of Shapiro–Wilk's test indicated that the data of all variables were normally distributed.

Table 3: *Pearson correlation between Work Environment, Workplace Ostracism, Occupational Wellbeing in Employees (N=300)*

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 Work Environment	.43***	.47***	.52***	.49***	.34***	-.28**	-.10	-.23**	-.28**	-.10	-.16*	-.04
2 Self Realization		.46***	.45***	.39**	.19*	.14	-.01	-.05	-.09	-.11	-.19*	-.06
3 Workload			.45***	.47***	.17*	-.18*	-.16	-.02	-.26**	-.09	-.13*	-.07
4 Conflict				.37***	.31**	-.31**	-.21**	-08	-03	-06	-22*	-08
5 Nervousness					.26**	-.22***	.-08	-.14	-.11	-.05	.02	-.10
6 Workplace Ostracism						-.34***	-.18*	-.26**	-.17*	-.01	.21**	-.07
7 Occupational Wellbeing							.63***	.28***	.50***	.35***	.39***	.48***
8 Affective								.38***	.46***	.35***	.42***	.39***
9 Professional									.39***	.56***	.65***	.47***
10 Social										.54***	.47***	.61***
11 Cognitive											.48***	.57***
12 Psychological												48***
13 Psychosomatic												

*p<.05., **p<.01, ***p<.001.

Table 3 showed the results of the Pearson product moment correlation showed that work environment was found to be significantly positively correlated with workplace ostracism and significantly negatively correlated with occupational wellbeing including its subscales professional wellbeing, social wellbeing, and psychological wellbeing. Self-realization was found to be significantly positively associated with workplace ostracism and negatively associated with psychological wellbeing. Moreover, workload was found to be significantly positively correlated with workplace ostracism and negatively correlated with occupational wellbeing including its subscales social wellbeing and psychological wellbeing. Conflict was found to be significantly positively associated with workplace ostracism while it had a significantly negative association with occupational wellbeing including its subscales affective wellbeing and psychological wellbeing. Nervousness was found to be significantly negatively positively correlated with workplace ostracism and significantly negatively correlated with occupational wellbeing. Workplace ostracism was found to significantly negatively associated with occupational wellbeing including its subscales affective wellbeing, professional wellbeing, and social wellbeing while it had a significantly positive association with psychological wellbeing.

Structural equation modeling was employed to examine mediating role of academic self-efficacy between epistemic curiosity and academic self-regulated learning among university students. Model fit is showed in table 4.

Table 4: *Fit Indices for Work Environment, Workplace Ostracism, Occupational Wellbeing in Employees (N = 300).*

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	NNFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Initial Model	311.16	63	4.94	.84	.81	.12	.10
Model Fit	147.85	61	2.42	.93	.91	.04	.02

Note. All change in chi square values is computed relative to model, $\chi^2 > .05$., CFI=comparative fit index, NNFI= non-normed fit index; RMSEA=root mean square error of approximation, SRMR=Standardized root mean square.

Table 4 represents the model fit indices of the indirect of effects through workplace ostracism between work environment and occupational wellbeing in employees in employees. The results from the path analysis showed a sub-optimal absolute model fit, χ^2 (61) = 147.85, p <.05. However, the theorists claimed that the chi-square test results are sensitive to the number of parameters and the sample size, according to Hair et al. (2010). Therefore, the goodness of the model fit was examined by taking relative fit indices: CFI, NNFI, RMSEA, and SRMR. As indicated by the criteria proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999), an acceptable relative model fit has a χ^2/df of 0 to 3, with RMSEA and SRMR being at .08 or lower and CFI and NNFI values of .9 or higher. However, the fit of the model assessed did not meet these standard criteria. See Figure 1 for the baseline model.

A model modification was thus employed to include covariance's between the error terms, associated with indicators of occupational wellbeing. Only then were covariance's accepted if they changed the chi-square value by 4.0 or more in value (Kenny, 2012; Arbuckle, 2012). Subsequently, a new comparison was made of absolute and relative fit indices. The model fit had RMSEA and SRMR values fixed at .04 and .02, respectively. Conversely, the CFI and NNFI values for the path analysis model were revealed to be at .93 and .91, respectively. These indices show that the model is well-fitted to evaluate the estimates.. See figure 1.

Figure 1: *Empirical Results of Mediation Analysis of Work Environment, Workplace Ostracism, Occupational Wellbeing in Employees.*
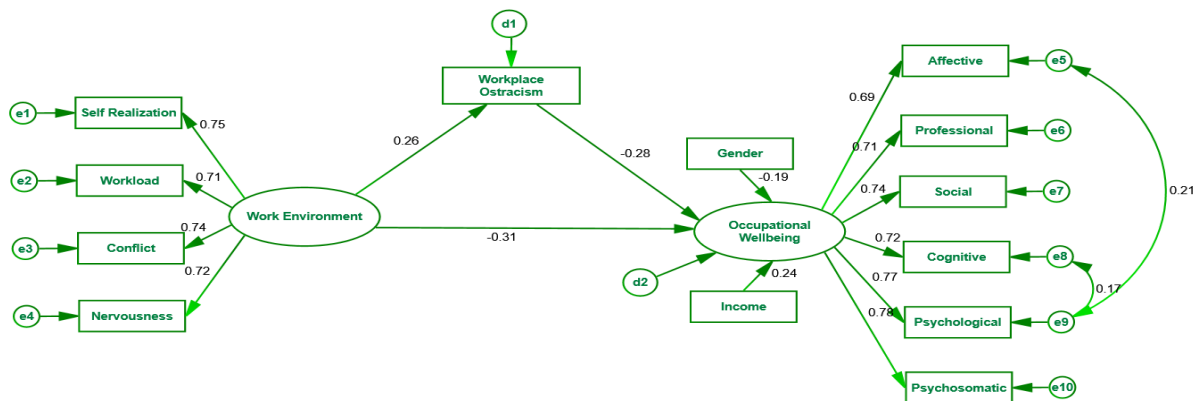
The estimates were analyzed for direct and indirect effects after done with the model fit, for epistemic work environment, workplace ostracism, occupational wellbeing in employee students (table 5 and 6).

Table 5: *Standardized Estimates of Direct Effects for Work Environment, Workplace Ostracism, Occupational Wellbeing in Employees (N = 300).*

Variables	Workplace Ostracism		Occupational Wellbeing	
	β	*SE*	β	*SE*
Work Environment	.26[**]	0.17	-.28[***]	0.21
Workplace Ostracism			-.31[**]	0.27
Covariates			-	-
Gender			-.19[*]	0.16
Income			.24[**]	0.14
Total R^2	.271		.382	

Note. Gender, Men = 1, Women = 0 *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

The direct effect revealed that work environment was found significant positive predictor of workplace ostracism. On contrary, work environment and workplace ostracism were significant negative predictors of occupational wellbeing in employee. Additionally, covariates indicated that gender was found significant negative predictor of occupational wellbeing, while income found to be significant positive predictor of occupational wellbeing in employee

Table 6: *Standardized Estimates of Indirect Effects through Workplace Ostracism between Work Environment and Occupational Wellbeing in Employees (N = 300).*

Variables	Occupational Wellbeing	
	β	*SE*
Work Environment	.06[*]	0.04

*p<.01.

The results of indirect effect indicated that workplace ostracism was found to be significant positive mediator between work environment and occupational wellbeing in employees. Results showed that increase in work environment tend to increase workplace ostracism. An increase in workplace ostracism in-turn decreases occupational wellbeing in employees.

Discussion

The current research focused on examining the relationship between work environment, workplace ostracism and occupational well-being, while accounting for the mediating role of workplace ostracism. The findings of this study are hence, discussed in the light of literature and theoretical frameworks.

Firstly, it was hypothesized that work environment (and its subscales; self-realization, workload, conflict and nervousness) will be positively related to workplace ostracism. The results verified this hypothesis where the work environment – along with all its subscales came out to be positively correlated with workplace ostracism. Scott and Duffy (2015) argued in the favor of these findings, where – in the model of the antecedents of workplace ostracism – they postulated that employee unreliability and perceived lack of contribution, as well as group members' perception of employee as a liability and a hazard to group efficiency – which can be a result of extreme workload or interpersonal conflicts – is positively related to workplace ostracism. Their study also presents an argument regarding "Individual Level Self-Concept Maintenance" which speaks in favor of self-realization aspect of work environment. If a greater number of organizational members rate higher on self-realization and are generally more confident and reaching their full potential at work place – in order to maintain a sense of self-concept and organizational identity intact – they're more likely to ostracize the employees who do not align with organizational goals or are having trouble giving maximum output. As far as nervousness is concerned, a study conducted by Wu, Wei and Hui (2011) found out a positive correlation between neuroticism and workplace ostracism.

It was further hypothesized that work environment and workplace ostracism are likely to be negatively related to occupational wellbeing. The results confirmed this hypothesis where work environment – along with its subscales; workload, conflict and nervousness – came out to be significantly and negatively correlated with occupational wellbeing (and its subscales – professional, social and psychological). According to Rossberg, Eiring and Friis (2004), a poor work environment is associated to lower job satisfaction and work performance (lower professional wellbeing), and higher burnout, depression (lower psychological wellbeing) and negative and cynical attitude towards colleagues (lower social wellbeing).

The subsequent finding was that a significant and negative correlation was found between workplace ostracism and occupational wellbeing (subscales; affective, professional, social and psychological). These results are contingent with the findings of developers of workplace ostracism scale; Ferris et al. (2008). According to their research, ostracism came out to be positively correlated with anxiety and depression, and showed a negative correlation with in-role performance, job satisfaction and affective commitment.

Lastly, it was hypothesized that workplace ostracism will mediate the relationship between work environment and occupational wellbeing in employees. Considering the predicting role of work environment over workplace ostracism, the arguments of Robinson, Reilly and Wang (2013) can be quoted who attempted to find the antecedents of workplace ostracism. The study concluded that in workplaces where there is a high conflict rate and lower conflict resolution, organizational members are likely to resort to non-verbal ways of expressing disapproval such as ostracism. Additionally, organizational members are more likely to ostracize those employees who they perceive as less contributive towards dyadic exchanges or burdensome (liable, emotionally needy) or a threat to group's identity – which can be as a result of individual nervousness or high rates of workload and self-realization in organizational members, at a workplace. Hence, a toxic or unsupportive work environment depletes employee's social resources – known as workplace ostracism.

According to Conservation of resource theory by Hobfoll (1989) individuals strive to achieve, retain and preserve their resources, and they experience stress when those resources are lost or at risk of being lost – hence becoming desperate to conserve whatever resources remain. When employees feel ostracized at a workplace, they experience a further loss of crucial personal and professional resources like self-esteem, belongingness and purposeful existence (Williams, 1997). Furthermore, ostracism also limits access to informational and emotional support, making it harder to cope with stress that has already been prevailing due to a negative work environment. It turns into a vicious resource-loss cycle where the workplace resources are being diminished, leading to social resources' depletion – not leaving stressed and ostracized employees with any coping mechanism – and hence they turn to reserve their remaining professional resources, resulting in reduced occupational well-being (e.g., lower job satisfaction, higher emotional exhaustion, and decreased engagement and positive affect etc.).

Other researches have also established a predictive relationship between workplace ostracism and occupational wellbeing. Eisenberger's (2012) finding about social pain caused by ostracism being similar to the physical pain, stands true for the psychosomatic aspect of occupational wellbeing in our study. As per the findings of Anjum et al. (2019), workplace ostracism positively predicts negative affect in employees. Haq (2014) and Sarwar et al. (2019) claimed ostracism to be the source of job stress. According to Hitlan and Noel (2009) workplace ostracism results in stress and decreases job satisfaction, psychological health of an employee, his work attitude and patterns of work behavior.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are a number of limitations that can be catered to, while conducting future researches on similar variables. Firstly, carrying out a quantitative research has for sure garnered rich results for us in this study but a longitude or case-study based qualitative research can prove to be a more helpful source in getting an in-depth view of a toxic work environment and ostracism's personal and professional impacts.

Similarly – since this research focused more on the wellbeing of employees at the receiving end of ostracism – further research can expand on the impact of workplace ostracism on the ostracizer. Moreover, in retrospect of the negative association between ostracism and occupational wellbeing – the moderating role of personality traits (introversion/extraversion, agreeableness etc.), supervisor involvement and leadership policies etc., can be taken into account.

Additionally, this study did not differentiate between public or private sector employees, which can be a confounding factor, along with the nature of organizational culture as a collectivist or individualistic one. This aspect can be a goal of separate study.

Implications

This study carries significant implications for organizations, policymakers, and researchers by emphasizing how crucial the work environment is in influencing workplace ostracism and overall occupational well-being. A positive and supportive work atmosphere can help reduce ostracism at work, while a toxic or unsupportive setting can lead to social isolation and increased stress. To combat ostracism, organizations should adopt policies that encourage inclusivity, open communication, and fair treatment.

Leadership training programs can equip managers to cultivate a more supportive culture, and well-being initiatives – like counseling services, stress management workshops, and peer mentorship programs – can help alleviate the negative impacts of ostracism and resource depletion. Creating collaborative workspaces and promoting teamwork can also boost social integration.

HR professionals must incorporate ostracism detection tools into employee engagement surveys and ensure there are effective for addressing psychological disturbances. Moreover, policymakers should think about including workplace well-being measures in labor laws to protect employee mental health. Future research should delve into protective factors such as organizational support, job autonomy, and emotional intelligence to gain a deeper understanding of how to counteract the harmful effects of a negative work environment. By tackling these issues, organizations can create a healthier, more productive workplace that enhances both employee satisfaction and overall performance.

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