# WORKPLACE OSTRACISM AS A PREDICTOR OF TURNOVER INTENTIONS IN THE BANKING SECTOR

Nupur Agarwal*, Dr. Jyoti Sinha** and Dr. Neeraj Panwar***

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** In professional settings, individuals who feel excluded, disregarded, or rejected by their colleagues are experiencing workplace ostracism. This phenomenon can lead to various adverse effects, such as reduced job contentment, heightened stress levels, and diminished work performance. Recent studies have increasingly focused on exploring the connection between employees' sense of ostracism and their inclination to depart from their current organizations.

**Aim:** The aim of the current research is to investigate if workplace ostracism acts as a predictor of turnover intentions of employees in the banking sector.

**Method:** Data was acquired from employees of the banking sector, totalling 98 employees, using standardized questionnaires that had a good level of reliability and validity.

**Results:** The statistical outcome from Pearson's correlation matrix indicates a positive association between employees feeling ostracism at work and their intentions to leave (r=0.619; p < 0.001). Further, it was indicated that ostracism acts as a predictor of turnover intentions ($R^2 = 0.384$; P < 0.001).

**Conclusion:** There exists a positive relationship between workplace ostracism and turnover intentions of employees from the banking sector, along with ostracism being a strong predictor of an employee's decision to leave an organisation.

*Keywords: ostracism, turnover intentions, banking sector*

***About authors:***

\* PhD Scholar, School of Health Sciences, Sushant University, Haryana

\*\* Corresponding author, Associate Dean, School of Health Sciences, Sushant University, Haryana

\*\*\*Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Christ University, Delhi-NCR

## INTRODUCTION

The significance of workplace ostracism has grown in recent years. Ostracism in a work environment involves deliberately excluding, ignoring, or limiting an individual's social interactions with others (Ferris et al., 2008). Initially, ostracized individuals experience emotional distress and shock, searching for explanations for their exclusion while evaluating their situation (Williams, 2007). The conservation of resources theory proposes that individuals are motivated to establish, enhance, and safeguard their resources (such as possessions, employment, respect, and financial assets) within the framework of their inherent or acquired characteristics. Stress intensifies when people anticipate or experience the loss of their possessions (Hobfoll, 2001). Consequently, those facing the threat of ostracism or actual exclusion from their peer group encounter elevated stress levels. Furthermore, they become anxious about potential further resource depletion, having already lost valuable assets like a sense of belonging, social support, and respect (Zhu et al., 2017).

Workplace ostracism stands apart from other forms of workplace misconduct, including bullying, sexual harassment, and abusive supervision. Its key distinguishing feature is the lack of intentional malice or motivation to harm others (Wesselmann et al., 2021). This absence of deliberate harmful intent sets ostracism apart in

the spectrum of deviant workplace behaviours. Ostracism encompasses the lack of desired conduct, such as being excluded from requests by coworkers, having one's greetings disregarded by others, and not establishing eye contact (Lei et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2016). Although isolation is a highly severe manifestation of ostracism, it can also manifest in a less intense manner, such as silent treatment (Williams et al., 1997). Ostracism is a widespread occurrence that is observed in various cultures, age groups, and animals. Research on ostracism has demonstrated that persons who are ostracized suffer distressing and uncomfortable situations (Daniele et al., 2016; Eisenberger et al., 2004) along with psychological issues such as emotional exhaustion, anxiety, psychological well-being, depression and workplace engagement (Howard et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021).

Given that talented employees are a crucial asset for achieving success in an organization, managers must consider the detrimental impact of ostracism on employees. One potential consequence is employees' intention to leave their jobs, which has a notable effect on both their personal well-being and the overall success of the organization. The penultimate step in employee's decision to leave an organization is known as turnover intention, which is characterized by a desire to find new employment and a lack of identification with the current employer (Tett et al., 1993). There are a series of psychological phases that workers go through before they open up about their plans to leave. Employees go through a series of mental processes that involve weighing the pros and cons of staying in their current position, considering the pros and cons of leaving their current position, and weighing the pros and cons of potential new positions (Mobley, 1978). The cost incurred by a business when an employee departs is tangible. Discovering and educating new personnel requires both time and financial resources. Additionally, these new employees may encounter challenges and make errors as they familiarize themselves with the job responsibilities (Yang, 2008).

The mechanisms by which ostracism leads to turnover intentions are complex and involve a variety of factors, including job insecurity, organizational commitment, emotional labour, superior-subordinate relationship, job stress, and job autonomy and organisational support (Khan et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2017).

## Research Objective:

To investigate the prediction of ostracism at work on turnover intentions of employees in the banking sector.

## Hypothesis

- There will be a significant and positive relationship between ostracism and turnover intentions ($H_1$).

- Workplace ostracism will act as a predictor of turnover intentions ($H_2$).

## METHOD

### Research Design

The study incorporates a correlational research design as it focuses on understanding the relationship and impact of ostracism on employees' intention to leave an organisation in the banking sector.

### Participants

The study utilized a convenience sampling method, a non-probability sampling technique, to select a total of 98 employees. This approach prioritizes accessibility, focusing on readily available participants who are easy to reach for the research.

**Table 1**

*Summary of demographic information (N = 98)*

| Demographics | Sub-categories | N | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Family Type | Nuclear | 40 | 41% |
| | Joint | 58 | 59% |
| Area of Living | Rural | 10 | 10% |
| | Urban | 88 | 90% |

Specific inclusion and exclusion criteria guided the study's participant selection. Employees from both private and public sector banks were included in the research. However, individuals who struggled with English comprehension or had any form of impairment were not considered for participation in the study.

**Measures**

Standardized questionnaires were used to collect the data. The workplace ostracism scale (Ferris et al., 2008) has ten items to be scored on a range of 7-point Likert scale and has a Cronbach's $\alpha$ of 0.92. The Turnover Intention scale (Roodt, 2004) comprises six items. A score of 18 on this scale indicates a wish to stay, whereas scores greater than 18 indicate a desire to leave. The scale exhibits a Cronbach $\alpha$ coefficient of 0.91. Both the scales were found to be highly reliable.

**Procedure**

This research is a component of the researcher's thesis project. The data was obtained by obtaining consent from a banking sector organization's workers through internet communication. After receiving the necessary approvals, the organization's personnel were assembled in a communal space and divided into four groups to complete the data collection process. The staff were briefed on the research aims and assured that the collected data would be solely utilized for study purposes. The questionnaires, accompanied by a consent form, were sent to the employees, and their inquiries were addressed. A total of 120 responses were gathered from the organization and subsequently evaluated based on a scoring system.

**Analysis**

The research data was analyzed using Jamovi software (version 2.3.28). The analysis included the calculation of descriptive statistics, encompassing mean, standard deviation, and standard error values. The study employed Pearson's Correlation and regression analysis to test the hypothesis.

**RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION**

This study seeks to examine how workplace ostracism predicts turnover intentions among employees in the banking sector. To evaluate the hypothesis, the research utilized statistical software to perform descriptive statistics (presented in Table 2) and regression analysis (shown in Table 3). The findings of this investigation are as follows:

**Table 2**

*Summary table of Pearsons' Correlation matrix*

| Variables | Mean | S.D. | Workplace Ostracism |
|---|---|---|---|
| Workplace Ostracism | 17.80 | 6.38 | - |
| Turnover Intentions | 16.80 | 4.57 | 0.619*** |

*Note: *** p < .001*

Table 2 indicates the association between workplace ostracism and turnover intentions of employees from the banking sector. The results indicate a positive relationship among the variables (r = 0.619; P<0.001). The mean values in the above table indicate the minimum-maximum possible score of the tool. It can be observed that employees in the banking sector are likely to face less ostracism at work. Hence, the desire to stay persists.

**Table 3**

*Summary of Regression Analysis*

|  | *Estimate* | *b* | *$\beta$* | *$R^2$* | *F for $R^2$* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Workplace Ostracism* | 8.93 | 0.44 | 0.619 | 0.384 | 59.8 |

*Note: b= Unstandard coefficient; Beta= Standard Coefficient; $R^2$= prediction value of DV; F for $R^2$= Frequency of $R^2$*

Table 3 indicates the prediction of ostracism on turnover intentions. It can be inferred that there exists a strong prediction (b = 0.44; $R^2$ = 38.4%) of ostracism on employees' decision to leave an organisation. In the above table, $\beta$ signifies that a change of 0.619 brings a 0.1-point change in the dependent variable, i.e. turnover intentions.

**Discussion**

The current investigation aims to enhance existing research by exploring the correlation between workplace ostracism and employee turnover intentions within the banking industry. The study drew its data from a sample of 98 banking sector employees.

An employee's social identity and workplace relationships significantly impact their psychological well-being and may influence their decision to leave an organization. These factors mutually reinforce and affect employees' psychological and behavioural aspects within companies. Conversely, employees with a weak social identity and poor workplace relationships are prone to feeling ostracized by colleagues and supervisors. The results support the initial hypothesis, which proposed a positive relationship between ostracism and turnover intentions. Various studies corroborate these findings. Farasat et al. (2021) identified a positive correlation between workplace ostracism and turnover intention, with job fatigue serving as a mediating factor. Similarly, Li et al. (2019) observed a strong positive connection between workplace ostracism and employees' likelihood of quitting their jobs.

The study's findings also support the second hypothesis, which posits that ostracism predicts turnover intentions. In today's globalized economy, developing human capabilities is considered crucial to meeting basic survival needs in a competitive market. Organizations face ongoing challenges in retaining highly skilled employees, with costs for recruiting, training, and retention steadily increasing. Ostracism negatively affects both employee and organizational productivity. Psychosomatic factors such as stress, low job satisfaction, unfavourable working conditions, and extended working hours contribute to the development of ostracized behavior among employees, subsequently leading to increased turnover intention rates. This behaviour is pervasive and has cumulative counterproductive effects that conflict with organizational goals. These results align with research by Javed et al. (2018), which demonstrates that ostracism impacts employee performance, ultimately resulting in higher turnover intentions.

Effective elimination of workplace ostracism can be achieved through the implementation of constructive strategies and the cultivation of a supportive environment. The creation of psychological safety for employees relies heavily on the presence and involvement of both colleagues and managers/leaders. Future studies should explore the role of additional variables in moderating and mediating this relationship. For instance, employee job

satisfaction may moderate the impact on turnover, while employee absenteeism could serve as a mediator. Additionally, researchers might consider examining other dependent variables, such as organizational citizenship behaviour, employee psychological contracts, and various other employee-centric factors.

## REFERENCES

- Ali, N., Ali, Z., & Khan, A. (2018). The relationship between ostracism and turnover intention: Role of commitment as a mediator. *Global Social Sciences Review*, *III*(IV), 389–399. https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2018(iii-ivi).26

- Eisenberger, N. I., & Lieberman, M. D. (2004). Why rejection hurts: a common neural alarm system for physical and social pain. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 8(7), 294–300. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2004.05.010

- Farasat, Afzal, Jabeen, Farhan, & Sattar. (2021). *Journal of Asian Finance Economics and Business*, *8*(11), 265–276. https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2021.vol8.no11.0265

- Gou, L., Ma, S., Wang, G., Wen, X., & Zhang, Y. (2022). Relationship between workplace ostracism and turnover intention among nurses: the sequential mediating effects of emotional labor and nurse-patient relationship. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 27(7), 1596–1601. https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2021.1905859

- Hobfoll, S. E. (2001). The influence of culture, community, and the nested-self in the stress process: Advancing conservation of resources theory. *Psychologie Appliquee [Applied Psychology]*, *50*(3), 337–421. https://doi.org/10.1111/1464-0597.00062

- Howard, M. C., Cogswell, J. E., & Smith, M. B. (2020). The antecedents and outcomes of workplace ostracism: A meta-analysis. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*(6), 577–596. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000453

- Javed, S., Shabbir Shah, H., & Bashir, T. (2018). Workplace ostracism as a predictor of employee performance and employee turnover- evidence from the banking sector. *Proceedings of the 42nd International Academic Conference, Rome*.

- Li, B., Li, Z., & Wan, Q. (2019). Effects of work practice environment, work engagement and work pressure on turnover intention among community health nurses: Mediated moderation model. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *75*(12), 3485–3494. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14130

- Liu, H., & Xia, H. (2016). Workplace ostracism: A review and directions for future research. *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies*, *04*(03), 197–201. https://doi.org/10.4236/jhrss.2016.43022

- Mobley, W. H., Horner, S. O., & Hollingsworth, A. T. (1978). An evaluation of precursors of hospital employee turnover. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, *63*(4), 408–414. https://doi.org/10.1037//0021-9010.63.4.408

- Roodt, G. (2004). *Turnover intentions. Unpublished document*.

- Tett, R. P., & Meyer, J. P. (1993). Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Turnover Intention: Path Analyses based on Meta-analytic Findings. *Personnel Psychology*, *46*.

- *The face of ostracism: The impact of the social categorization on the thermal facial responses of the target and the observer*. (n.d.).

- Wang, L.-M., Lu, L., Wu, W.-L., & Luo, Z.-W. (2022). Workplace ostracism and employee wellbeing: A conservation of resource perspective. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *10*, 1075682. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.1075682

- Wang, Z., Du, J., Yu, M., Meng, H., & Wu, J. (2021). Abusive supervision and newcomers' turnover intention: a perceived workplace ostracism perspective. *The Journal of General Psychology*, *148*(4), 398–413. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221309.2020.1751043

- Wesselmann, E. D., & Dvir, M. (2021). Exploring the overlap among workplace ostracism, mistreatment, and related constructs. In *Workplace Ostracism* (pp. 35–63). Springer International Publishing.

- Williams, K. D. (2007). Ostracism. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *58*(1), 425–452. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.58.110405.085641
- Williams, K. D., & Sommer, K. L. (1997). Social ostracism by coworkers: Does rejection lead to loafing or compensation? *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, *23*(7), 693–706. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167297237003
- Yang, L., Murad, M., Mirza, F., Chaudhary, N. I., & Saeed, M. (2022). Shadow of cyber ostracism over remote environment: Implication on remote work challenges, virtual work environment and employee mental well-being during a Covid-19 pandemic. *Acta Psychologica*, *225*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2022.103552
- Zhu, H., Lyu, Y., Deng, X., & Ye, Y. (2017). Workplace ostracism and proactive customer service performance: A conservation of resources perspective. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *64*, 62–72. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2017.04.004

**Conflict of interest**

All the authors have reviewed the manuscript and have no conflict of interest.

**Statement of publication consent**

Author 1 has worked on the initial draft of the manuscript and Author 2 & 3 has reviewed and provided inputs to finalize the manuscript. Based on the specific role contributed by both the authors, we do have consent for the publication of the current manuscript.

**Statement of Funding**

**Acknowledgements**