# Workplace Ostracism as a Determinant of Organizational Commitment among Teachers

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## Abstract

Workplace ostracism is a pervasive issue that significantly affects the professional performance of teachers. This research, which explores the relationship between workplace ostracism and the fulfillment of organizational commitment among teachers of the Vaishali district, has important implications for organizational practices. The study's sample comprised 100 Teachers from the Vaishali District. Data were collected during 2025 using the Workplace ostracism scale by Ferris to assess workplace ostracism and the Organizational commitment scale by Shah and Ansari to measure organizational commitment. The data were then analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's product-moment correlation, and simple linear regression (SLR) through SPSS. The findings revealed a significant negative correlation between workplace ostracism and organizational commitment and its dimensions, suggesting potential strategies for addressing it in organizational settings.

## INTRODUCTION

One widespread occurrence in the workplace is ostracism. A number of domestic studies on workplace ostracism within organizations have been conducted in the last ten years, and the topic has gained significant attention in both academia and business. When Ferris *et al.* published a paper titled "When Silence Is Not Golden: Measuring Ostracism in the Workplace" in the Journal of Applied Psychology in 2008, they formally presented the concept of "Workplace Ostracism" and created a workplace ostracism scale, which laid the groundwork for further research on the topic. This marked the beginning of workplace ostracism as a new field of study. Despite being a relatively recent idea, workplace ostracism has been examined previously in relation to bullying, counterproductive behavior, and social influence strategies.

The survey findings lend credence to the idea that ostracism is a shared experience, as most people have either been ostracised or ostracised others. According to one survey, 75% of relationship respondents acknowledged that a loved one had used the silent treatment on them. In contrast, 67% of respondents said they had used the silent treatment on a loved one (Faulkner, Williams,

Sherman, & Williams, 1997). Over 13% of respondents to a survey of more than 5,000 employees reported experiencing ostracism from their place of employment within the last six months (Hitlan, Kelly, Schepman, Schneider, & Zarate, 2006). According to a different survey, 66% of workers reported receiving silent treatment over a five-year period; of those enquired, 18% said they were sent to an isolated location, and 29% said others had left the room when they entered (Fox & Stallworth, 2005).

Researchers have not agreed upon definitions of ostracism in the workplace. However, they all remained consistent in their belief that workplace ostracism is a practice that harms organizations and their employees. Ferris first suggested the concept of workplace ostracism because he thought that "people were suffering ostracism when employees in the workplace perceived exclusion, ignorance, and disrespectful treatment by others." (Ferris *et al.*, 2008). The widespread phenomenon of ostracism impacts people of all ages and genders. In various contexts, children exclude specific individuals from their play groups or even from the company of animals like chimps and lions. One subtle but common abuse is workplace ostracism, the intentional exclusion or disregard of someone by their colleagues when inclusion is socially expected. Because this behavior may be considered a form of "cold violence" in the workplace, researchers are closely monitoring it. (Robinson, O'Reilly, & Wang, 2013).

From the perspective of organizational commitment, ostracized workers show a reduced organizational commitment, also directing toward a lower intensity of commitment at work (Leung *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, ostracism must prove to be a concerning circumstance for the organization. According to the conservation resource (COR) theory, experiencing workplace ostracism depletes an employee's resources (both physical and emotional), which further affects work-related outcomes like performance and organizational commitment, as well as social behaviors like OCB.

According to Caught and Shadur (2000), organizational commitment is when employees are dedicated to accomplishing the organization's goals and encompasses their identification, involvement, and loyalty levels. People's behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes can be used to measure this emotional response, ranging from extremely low to extremely high. Organizational commitment can be classified into three categories: affective, continuous, and normative, according to John Meyer and Nancy Allen (1997).

Numerous research has looked at the connection between organizational commitment and workplace ostracism, illuminating the detrimental effects of ostracism on workers' loyalty to their organizations. For example, Ferris *et al.* (2008) investigated how workplace ostracism affected organizational commitment in a sample of workers from different companies. The results showed a substantial negative correlation between workplace ostracism and affective, normative, and continuance commitment—the three aspects of organizational commitment. Lower degrees of emotional attachment, a sense of duty, and the perceived costs of quitting the company were indicated by workers who had been ostracised.

Workplace ostracism is often conducted silently and invisibly, undermining the victim's sense of being valued as a member of the organization and reducing his or her organizational identification (Ferris *et al.*, 2008; Wu *et al.*, 2016). In addition, because workplace ostracism can deplete the victim's personal resources, the victim may seek to protect his or her resources by reducing organizational commitment or leaving the organization (Zheng *et al.*, 2016). However, research has shown that ostracism's prevalence poisons employees' workplace attitudes. Ostracized employees are shown to have low job satisfaction, affective commitment, and overall organizational commitment (Eickholt & Goodboy, 2017; Ferris *et al.*, 2008; Hitlan, Kelly, *et al.*, 2006; Lyu & Zhu, 2019; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2014), which is likely to reduce their contribution to the organizations they work for. Workplace ostracism is reported to flame up employees' negative emotions, resulting in high intentions to sabotage organizations' services (Abubakar, Yazdian, & Behravesh, 2018)

## Need of the study

The experience of being ignored, excluded, or socially isolated in a professional setting is known as

workplace ostracism (Ferris *et al.*, 2008), and it has become a crucial topic in organizational behavior research. Understanding how workplace ostracism affects organizational commitment is crucial since organizations depend on their employees' psychological attachment and commitment to guarantee productivity and long-term success. According to Meyer and Allen's (1991) conceptualization, organizational commitment has three components: normative commitment (a feeling of duty to remain), continuation commitment (the perceived cost of quitting), and affective commitment (emotional attachment to the organization). According to research, ostracism at work has a detrimental effect on these aspects and eventually reduces workers' loyalty to their organization.

The following objectives of this study have been framed.

· To study the correlation between workplace ostracism and organizational commitment.
· To study the correlation between workplace ostracism and affective commitment.
· To study the correlation between workplace ostracism and normative commitment
· To study the correlation between workplace ostracism and continuance commitment.

Based on the objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated.

· Workplace ostracism would negatively correlate with organizational commitment.
· Workplace ostracism would negatively correlate with affective commitment.
· Workplace ostracism would negatively correlate with normative commitment.
· Workplace ostracism would negatively correlate with continuance commitment.

## Method

## Research Design

In the study, a descriptive survey method and a correlational research design have been adopted. Descriptive research describes the characteristics of the population or phenomenon being studied. Correlational research is a type of non-experimental research in which the researcher measures two variables and assesses the statistical relationship (i.e., correlation) between them with little or no attempt to control extraneous variables.

## Sample

The purposive sampling method was used to collect data from teachers in the Vaishali district. The sample for the present study includes 100 teachers who were selected from various tehsil of Vaishali district.

## Measures

### *Workplace Ostracism Scale*

A 10-item scale developed by Ferris *et al.* (2008) was used to measure workplace ostracism. Responses were taken on a seven-point scale ranging from "1 for Never to 7 for Always." Sample questions are "Others at work shut you out of the conversation," "Others left the area when I entered," and "Others ignored me at work." The alpha reliability for this scale is .92.

### *Organizational Commitment Scale*

The Organizational Commitment Scale, developed by Shah and Ansari (2000), will be used to measure organizational commitment. This scale consists of three components: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The scale comprises 15 items, each component including five items. It is a 7-point Likert scale. Shah and Ansari (2000) reported that the scale's reliability coefficient is 0.80 and its congruent validity is 0.76.

## Procedure

Written consent was obtained from the participants before starting the data collection. All information related to this research was given to the participants verbally and in writing. Further processing was done only after their consent to participate in the study was obtained. A rapport was established with the participants before test administration. Scoring for the tools was done per the scoring procedure specified for each scale.

## Result

The obtained data was statistically analyzed on SPSS-26 (Statistical Package for Social Science)

**Table 1:** Summary of correlation result of workplace ostracism and organizational commitment and its dimensions

|  | Affective Commitment | Normative Commitment | Continuance Commitment | Organizational Commitment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Workplace Ostracism | -.297** | -.225* | -.235* | -.342** |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

using descriptive statistics, bivariate correlation and regression analysis. Table 1 represents a correlation analysis of the data.

The results of the correlational analysis of workplace ostracism with organizational commitment (dimensions and overall) are presented in the following Table 1 reveals that workplace ostracism is significantly negatively associated with affective commitment (r = -.297, $p$ <0.01), normative commitment (r = -.225, $p$ <0.05), continuance commitment (r = -.235, $p$ <0.05) and overall organizational commitment(r = -.342, $p$ <0.01). These results imply that there is a negative correlation between workplace ostracism, organizational commitment, affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. This means as the workplace ostracism level increases in the organization, it lowers the organizational commitment, affective, normative and continuance in employees within the organization.

Table 2 depicted that workplace ostracism is a significant predictor of organizational commitment with a coefficient value of -.342 (F = 13.001, $p$ <.001); this represents that workplace ostracism explains an 11.7% variance in organizational commitment. Workplace ostracism is a significant predictor of

affective commitment with a coefficient value of -.297(F=9.505, $p$ <.01); this represents that workplace ostracism explains an 8.8% variance in affective commitment. Workplace ostracism is a significant predictor of normative commitment with a coefficient value of -.225 (F=5.250, $p$ <.01); this represents that workplace ostracism explains a 5.1% variance in normative commitment. Workplace ostracism is a significant predictor of continuance commitment with a coefficient value of -.342 (F=5.732, $p$ <.01); this represents that workplace ostracism explains a 5.5% variance in continuance commitment. These results indicate that workplace ostracism is a significant predictor of organizational commitment, affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment, so our four hypotheses state that 'Workplace ostracism negatively predicts organizational commitment, affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment is accepted.

## Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable information on the relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational commitment and its dimension among group teachers of Vaishali district, which adds to the growing body of research that investigates how psychological variables impact invisible employee social death and also impact their organizational commitment toward his own organization. The findings indicate the strong and negative correlation between workplace ostracism, organizational commitment, and all its dimensions. The aforementioned outcomes can be explained by the fact that ostracism at work is frequently carried out covertly and silently, which weakens the victim's sense of value as an employee and decreases their organizational identity (Ferris *et al.*, 2008; Wu *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, because the victim's resources

**Table 2:** Regression analysis of predictor workplace ostracism

| Variable | β | $R^2$change | Adjusted $R^2$ | F | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Organizational commitment | -.342 | .117 | .108 | 13.001 | .000 |
| Affective commitment | -.297 | .088 | .079 | 9.505 | .003 |
| Normative commitment | -.225 | .051 | .041 | 5.250 | .024 |
| Continuance commitment | -.342 | .055 | .046 | 5.732 | .019 |

may be depleted by workplace ostracism, the victim may try to protect themselves by cutting back on their organizational engagement or quitting the organization (Zheng *et al.*, 2016).

The current study utilizes the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) and equity theory (Blau, 1964), which offers an ideal opportunity for comprehending the effects of workplace ostracism (Xia *et al.*, 2019). Workplace ostracism reduces worthy resources vital to support organizational personnel (Leung *et al.*, 2011). A person's defense system would be activated in this circumstance. Employees may experience ongoing stress and resource damage to protect against more resource loss, which could lead to several detrimental organizational outcomes relating to their work.

Furthermore, consistent with the conservation resource theory, personal, situational, and other resources might aid in the reduction of harmful effects of resource loss that may ultimately result in substandard performance. Therefore, we propose perceived organizational support (POS) as an environmental job resource in this study, which might play a significant role as a recovery source and aid in reducing the harmful influence of ostracism on railway employees. A supportive culture of an organization is positively associated with the commitment of employees to their roles (Lok & Crawford, 2001), along with their work satisfaction and the excellence of customer care that employees provide (Kangas *et al.*, 1999)

Simple regression analysis confirmed that workplace ostracism significantly predicts diminished organizational commitment and its dimension. In essence, increased workplace ostracism leads to a significant decrease in organizational commitment and its dimension. This finding also aligns with previous research. However, research has shown that ostracism's prevalence poisons employees' workplace attitudes. Ostracized employees are shown to have low job satisfaction, affective commitment, and overall organizational commitment (Eickholt & Goodboy, 2017; Ferris *et al.*, 2008; Hitlan, Kelly *et al.*, 2006; Lyu & Zhu, 2019; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2014), which is likely to reduce their contribution to the organizations they work for. Workplace ostracism is reported to flame up employees' negative emotions, resulting in high intentions to sabotage organizations' services (Abubakar *et al.*, 2018). The study contributes to the existing literature by empirically supporting the application of Organizational commitment and its dimension in the context of workplace ostracism. Understanding how ostracism undermines organizational commitment can help develop interventions to reduce ostracism behaviors and mitigate their impact on employees. For example, organizations and policymakers can focus on creating work environments that support organizational needs, which may buffer against the negative impacts of ostracism.

## Conclusion

Workplace ostracism directly undermines the basic organizational needs outlined by conservation resource theory and equity theory, leading to decreased motivation, organizational commitment, well-being, and job satisfaction. Addressing ostracism in the workplace is essential for fostering an environment where employees' organizational commitments are met, ultimately leading to better individual and organizational outcomes. Ostracism and workplace ostracism are critical issues affecting individual employees and the overall health of organizations. By applying the conservation resource and equity theories, this study sheds light on the psychological mechanisms through which ostracism exerts its shameful effects. Measurement challenges, contextual factors, causal ambiguity, and longitudinal research gaps are limitations and challenges for future researchers. Future research should explore these relationships and test interventions to protect employees' organizational needs.

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