

Workplace Ostracism, Employee Silence and Organisational Commitment among Private Sector Tech Employees

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ABSTRACT

In the dynamic landscape of the technology sector, workplace dynamics such as ostracism, employee silence, and organizational commitment play pivotal roles in shaping organizational culture and employee well-being. This research explores these dynamics among private sector tech employees in Kerala and Bangalore, India. The study investigates the relationships between workplace ostracism, employee silence, and organizational commitment, considering gender differences. A correlational research design with purposive sampling was employed, and data were collected using validated scales. Results reveal a significant positive correlation between workplace ostracism and employee silence, as well as organizational commitment. Surprisingly, no significant gender differences were found in these dynamics. These findings underscore the importance of addressing workplace ostracism and fostering inclusive environments to mitigate employee silence and enhance organizational commitment. Practical implications include prioritizing inclusivity in organizational culture, providing leadership training, and implementing continuous monitoring strategies. However, limitations such as regional and sample size constraints warrant cautious interpretation of the results. This research contributes to understanding workplace dynamics in the tech sector and informs strategies for fostering positive organizational cultures and enhancing employee engagement.

Keywords: Workplace Ostracism, Employee Silencing, Organisational Commitment, Private Sector Tech Employees, Males, Females

In the rapidly evolving landscape of the modern workforce, the technology sector stands as a bastion of innovation and growth. Over the past few decades, the tech industry has not only revolutionized the way we live and work but has also become a major driver of economic prosperity in the private sector. Their work shapes the future, driving digital advancements and enhancing our connectivity, productivity, and quality of life. However, the challenges they face within their organizations often remain hidden beneath the sheen of technological achievement. Workplace ostracism, employee silence, and organizational commitment represent critical dynamics within the tech workforce. Tech employees, who

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navigate the intricate landscape of innovation, have emerged as the architects of our digital future.

This research embarks on a journey to explore the multifaceted dimensions of workplace dynamics within the technology industry. Specifically, it delves into the phenomena of workplace ostracism, employee silence, and organizational commitment among tech employees in private sectors. In an age where the line of private organizations in the tech sector is often blurred, understanding how these aspects influence the workforce and, in turn, organizational success is imperative.

Workplace ostracism is a complex and nuanced social phenomenon, wherein employees experience exclusion, neglect, or social isolation within their organizational environment. It involves the deliberate or unintentional act of ignoring, excluding, or neglecting an individual or group, which can manifest in various forms, such as withholding information, social exclusion, or neglect of opinions and ideas (Ferris, et al., 2008). Employee silence pertains to situations in which employees withhold their thoughts, opinions, feedback, or concerns from their organizations or superiors. It can be both a defensive mechanism and a reaction to negative experiences, including perceived workplace injustices (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Organizational commitment refers to an employee's psychological attachment and loyalty to their organization. It can be categorized into three components: affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (perceived costs of leaving), and normative commitment (sense of obligation) (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

The tech industry, comprising private sectors, is a unique environment with distinctive challenges and opportunities. Private-sector tech companies are often driven by competitive pressures, profit motives, and rapid innovation. The significance of this study is multifaceted and far-reaching. Firstly, it addresses pressing concerns within the technology sector, where the rapid evolution and innovation are juxtaposed with profound workforce challenges. By examining workplace ostracism, employee silence, and organizational commitment, the research provides invaluable insights into the dynamics that shape the tech industry.

The study titled "Empirical Investigation of Relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Employee Silence: A Test of Mediating Effects of Self-Esteem and Meaningful Existence in Context of Public Sector Universities in Punjab" by Fatima et al., aimed to examine the association between workplace ostracism and employee silence among professors in Punjab's public sector universities. Results revealed a positive link between workplace ostracism and employee silence, with self-esteem and meaningful existence partially mediating this relationship (Fatima et al., 2017).

A study by Nevin Deniz (2013) and colleagues on "The Relationship between Employee Silence and Organizational Commitment in a Private Healthcare Company" in a private hospital in Istanbul. The results of this research show us there is a negative and significant relationship between defensive employee silence and organizational commitment.

The study titled "The moderating role of workplace ostracism between employee training, employee participation and organizational commitment among bank employees," conducted by Paul Kojo Ametepe et al., investigates the relationships between employee training, participation, workplace ostracism, and organizational commitment in the banking sector. The findings suggest positive associations between training, participation, and commitment,

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with a negative correlation with workplace ostracism. Additionally, workplace ostracism was found to moderate the relationship between organizational climate and commitment. The study recommends management prioritize employee training, involve them in decision-making, and address workplace ostracism to enhance organizational commitment among bank employees.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Objectives:

1. To understand the relationship between workplace ostracism and employee silence among private sector employees.
2. To understand the relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational commitment among private sector employees.
3. To understand the relationship between employee silence and organizational commitment among private sector employees.
4. To study the gender difference of workplace ostracism in private sector employees.
5. To study the gender difference of employee silence in private sector employees.
6. To study the gender difference of organisational commitment in private sector employees.

Hypothesis:

- H1: There is a significant relationship between workplace ostracism and employee silence among private sector employees.
- H2: There is a significant relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational commitment among private sector employees.
- H3: There is a significant relationship between employee silence and organizational commitment among private sector employees.
- H4: There is a significant difference in organizational commitment between females and males. H5: There is a significant difference in employee silence between females and males.
- H6: There is a significant difference in workplace ostracism between females and males.

Sample:

The sample size was 200. This study was conducted on private sector tech employees between the age group of 25-45. This includes both males and females. A purposive sampling method was used to collect the data for the study. The research design was employed for the study was a Correlational Research Design used in the study.

Instruments:

1. **Socio-demographic** details through google form.
2. **Workplace Ostracism Scale:** WOS is developed by Ferris et al. (2008). It is used to measure the workplace ostracism of the employees in the workplace. It is a 13-point item scale. All ratings were made on a 7- point scale (1 strongly disagree and 7 strongly agree).
3. **Employee Silence Scale:** Employee silence was measured using Jain's (2015) 24-item scale, which was specifically developed to measure silence in India. The scale measures four aspects of silence behaviour: fear of retaliation, intrinsic motivation, self-competence and self-image. The measure uses the following stem: "I do not

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contradict my boss/managers/seniors because of' and respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree=7).

Procedure

A total of 200 Private Tech Sector Employee participants between the age group of 25-45 were recruited for the present study. A proper informed consent was sought from each participant. Before the google form was shared with the participants, a proper instruction was given regarding the study and what was expected of the participant. The google form was self-administered. The data was collected through google forms that was circulated through social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram and LinkedIn. The responses were recorded directly in the google form.

Analysis

The study focusses on finding out the relationship between the study variables, gender differences about the variables in the study as well as the level of difference of workplace ostracism, employee silence and organisational commitment among the population. The analysis employed for the same was Pearsons Correlational Analysis to assess the relationship between workplace ostracism, employee silence and organisational commitment, t-test was done to analyse the differences in the variables.

Ethical Concern:

All ethical considerations were followed during the process of the study. The participants were briefed about the purpose of the study and an informed consent was sought. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and the data was only used for the purpose of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Socio demographic characteristics of participants.

SN	Socio demographic details	N	%
1.	Female employees	100	50
2.	Male employees	100	50

Table 1 shows the demographics of the participants of this research study. The sample consisted of 100 (50%) male employees and 100 (50%) female employees.

Table 2: shows the correlation between workplace ostracism and employee silence.

Variables	N	M	SD	1	2
1. Workplace Ostracism	200	20.984	13.402	-	.521**
2. Employee Silence	200	77.969	19.399	.521**	-

**p>0.01

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the correlation between Workplace Ostracism and Employee Silence. The mean and standard deviation of the variable of Workplace Ostracism are 20.984 and 13.402 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of the variable Employee Silence are 77.969 and 19.399 respectively. To see whether there is a relationship between the two variables, the scores were subjected to Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. Here the mean of employee silence is higher than workplace ostracism. The significance value is .000 which is less than 0.01. Hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The

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results indicate a significant positive correlation between workplace ostracism (WOS) and employee silence (ESS) among private sector employees. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.521 ($p < 0.01$) suggests a moderately strong positive relationship between WOS and ESS.

Table 3: shows the correlation between workplace ostracism and organisational commitment.

Variables	N	M	SD	1	2
1. Workplace Ostracism	200	20.984	13.402	-	
2. Organisational Commitment	200	21.407	5.691	.201**	-

** $p > 0.01$

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the correlation between Workplace Ostracism and Organisational Commitment. The mean and standard deviation of the variable of Workplace Ostracism are 20.97 and 13.40 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of the variable Employee Silence are 21.40 and 5.69 respectively. To see whether there is a relationship between the two variables, the scores were subjected to Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. Here the mean of organisational commitment is higher than workplace ostracism. Hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.201 ($p < 0.01$) suggests a positive relationship between WOS and OCS, with a significance level (Sig.) of 0.004 which is less than 0.01.

Table 4: shows the correlation between organisational commitment and employee silence.

Variables	N	M	SD	1	2
1. Organisational Commitment	200	21.41	5.691	-	
2. Employee Silence	200	77.97	19.400	.519**	-

** $p > 0.01$

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of the correlation between Organisational Commitment and Employee Silence. The mean and standard deviation of the variable of Organisational Commitment are 21.41 and 5.691 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of the variable Employee Silence are 77.97 and 19.400 respectively. To see whether there is a relationship between the two variables, the scores were subjected to Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. Here the mean of Employee Silence is higher than Organisational Commitment. Hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a positive correlation of 0.201 between OCS and ESS, with a significance level (Sig.) of 0.000 which is less than 0.01.

Table 5: shows the gender differences in workplace ostracism, employee silence and organisational commitment

Variables	Female		Male		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Workplace Ostracism	20.61	13.802	21.36	13.123	.395	.693

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics of the t-test. The mean and standard deviation of workplace ostracism of female employees are 20.61 and 13.802 and of male employees are 21.36 and 13.123 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of employee silence of

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females are 76.77 and 17.59 and 79.16 and 21.150 for males subsequently. The mean and standard deviation of organisational commitment of females are 21.73 and 5.751 and 21.09 and 5.671 for males subsequently.

The t value of 0.395 for workplace ostracism, 0.868 for employee silence and 0.787 for organisational commitment as well. Thus, the alternate hypothesis is rejected. There are no significant gender differences in workplace ostracism, employee silence and organisational commitment among male and female employees.

DISCUSSION

This finding suggests that higher levels of workplace ostracism are associated with increased tendencies for employees to remain silent about workplace issues. This finding aligns with the hypothesis and underscores the importance of addressing workplace ostracism to promote open communication and a supportive work environment where employees feel empowered to voice their concerns without fear of repercussions. Notably, the study by Panagiotis Gkorezis et al. (2016) sheds light on the intricacies of this relationship within the nursing context. Their investigation revealed that workplace ostracism significantly affects nurses' silence towards patient safety, with this effect partially mediated through organizational identification. This suggests that when nurses experience ostracism in the workplace, they may be less likely to identify with their organization, consequently leading to increased silence regarding critical issues such as patient safety. Moreover, the study by Yao et al. (2022) delves into the moderating role of negative reciprocity beliefs in the relationship between workplace ostracism and employee silence in service organizations. Their research highlights that employees' beliefs about negative reciprocity, wherein they expect retaliation for speaking up, can influence the extent to which workplace ostracism leads to employee silence. This implies that when employees perceive a high likelihood of negative consequences for speaking up against workplace ostracism, they may be more inclined to remain silent. The meta-analysis titled "The Antecedents and Outcomes of Workplace Ostracism" by Matt C. Howard, Joshua E. Cogswell, and Mickey B. Smith provides a comprehensive overview of the factors leading to workplace ostracism and its subsequent outcomes. The findings of this meta-analysis likely support the notion that workplace ostracism contributes to increased employee silence, as it examines the outcomes of ostracism, which may include silence as a coping mechanism or withdrawal behavior. Combining these findings with the correlation analysis, we can conclude that workplace ostracism indeed has significant implications for employee silence across various organizational contexts, including nursing and service organizations. The mediating role of organizational identification and the moderating role of negative reciprocity beliefs provide valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying this relationship. Organizations must recognize the detrimental impact of workplace ostracism on employee attitudes and behaviours, particularly regarding critical issues such as patient safety and service quality. Strategies aimed at fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment, where employees feel empowered to speak up without fear of reprisal, are crucial for mitigating the negative consequences of workplace ostracism on employee silence. These findings underscore the importance of addressing workplace ostracism comprehensively to promote a healthy and productive organizational culture.

This implies that higher levels of workplace ostracism are associated with increased organizational commitment among employees. The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), indicating that this relationship is unlikely to have occurred by

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chance alone. This finding suggests that employees who perceive higher levels of ostracism in the workplace tend to exhibit greater commitment to their organization. Such a positive correlation underscores the complex dynamics at play within organizational contexts, where even negative experiences like ostracism can paradoxically lead to increased commitment from employees, possibly as a coping mechanism or a desire to maintain a sense of belonging within the organization. The analysis of the data revealed a significant positive relationship between workplace ostracism (WO) and organizational commitment (OC) among private sector employees, contrary to the prevailing evidence in the literature which predominantly suggests a negative relationship between these variables. This unexpected finding prompts a deeper exploration into the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that may explain this counterintuitive relationship. While this study's findings are notable, it's essential to consider the broader body of literature on the topic. Opposing studies such as "The moderating role of workplace ostracism between employee training, Employee Participation and organizational commitment among bank employees" by Ametepe et al. and "Relation between Nurses' Workplace Ostracism and their Organizational Commitment" by Ramadan et al. have found contrasting results. These studies highlight the moderating role of workplace ostracism, which may influence the relationship between other organizational factors such as employee training, participation, and nurses' workplace experiences, ultimately affecting their organizational commitment. The discrepancies between these opposing studies and the current findings suggest that the relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational commitment may be contingent upon various contextual factors, including industry, organizational culture, and individual differences among employees. While some studies have demonstrated a negative impact of workplace ostracism on organizational commitment, others have indicated that the relationship may be more complex, with potential moderating effects of other organizational variables. These results challenge the prevailing understanding of the relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational commitment, emphasizing the importance of considering contextual factors and individual differences in understanding employee attitudes and behaviors. While further research is warranted to validate and explore the underlying mechanisms driving this unexpected relationship, the findings from this study underscore the complexity of organizational dynamics and the need for a nuanced approach to understanding employee responses to workplace experiences.

In summary, the analysis indicates that contrary to the hypothesis proposing a negative relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational commitment, the findings suggest a positive association between these variables among private sector employees. This unexpected result highlights the need for continued exploration and examination of the factors influencing employee attitudes and behaviors in response to workplace experiences. Further research is necessary to validate and elucidate the underlying mechanisms driving this unexpected relationship and to inform organizational strategies aimed at fostering a positive work environment and enhancing employee commitment.

While the results of our analysis support a positive relationship between employee silence and organizational commitment, it is essential to acknowledge the presence of opposing studies in the literature. One such study by Nevin Deniz et al. examined the relationship between employee silence and organizational commitment in a private healthcare company. Their findings revealed a significant and negative relationship between affective commitment and one dimension of employee silence, defensive silence. This study suggests that employees who engage in defensive silence may experience lower levels of affective

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commitment to their organization, highlighting the detrimental effects of certain forms of silence on organizational commitment. Furthermore, another study by Dong et al. investigated the relationship between ageism and employee silence, with a focus on the serial mediating roles of work alienation and organizational commitment. Their findings underscored the complex interplay between ageism, work alienation, organizational commitment, and employee silence. Specifically, the study identified work alienation and organizational commitment as serial mediators in the relationship between ageism and employee silence, suggesting that ageist attitudes in the workplace may lead to feelings of alienation and reduced organizational commitment, ultimately resulting in employee silence. Despite the presence of opposing studies, our analysis provides empirical evidence for a positive relationship between employee silence and organizational commitment among private sector employees. These findings highlight the importance of fostering open communication and addressing factors that may contribute to employee silence in the workplace. Organizations must recognize the potential negative consequences of silence on organizational commitment and implement strategies to promote a culture of transparency, trust, and employee engagement. In summary, while opposing studies present contrasting findings, our analysis contributes to the broader understanding of the relationship between employee silence and organizational commitment.

Implications:

The findings of the study showed that workplace ostracism, employee silence and organisational commitment are positively correlated. Thus, the practical implications can be that the positive relationship between workplace ostracism and employee silence underscores the importance of addressing issues related to social exclusion in the workplace. Organizations should prioritize creating inclusive environments where all employees feel valued and respected, thus reducing the likelihood of silence as a coping mechanism. The positive relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational commitment highlights the impact of interpersonal dynamics on employees' commitment to the organization. Organizations should focus on fostering positive relationships among employees and implementing strategies to reduce ostracism, ultimately enhancing organizational commitment levels. The finding of no significant gender differences in workplace ostracism, employee silence, and organizational commitment suggests that these workplace dynamics affect male and female employees similarly. Organizations should adopt gender-neutral approaches to addressing issues related to workplace ostracism and employee silence, focusing on creating an inclusive environment for all employees regardless of gender. Creating a workplace environment free from ostracism and silence can contribute to higher levels of employee engagement and satisfaction. Training programmes and developing leadership skills in creating inclusive environments can contribute to enhancing organizational commitment and reducing employee silence. Given the significant relationship between workplace ostracism, employee silence, and organizational commitment, organizations should implement mechanisms for continuous monitoring of these dynamics. Proactive intervention strategies should be developed to address any emerging issues and promote a positive work environment conducive to employee well-being and organizational success.

Limitations:

The research focused exclusively on employees in Kerala and Bangalore, resulting in a limited sample size due to time constraints. Consequently, the findings may not be broadly applicable, as they cannot be generalized beyond this specific population. Additionally, there

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is a risk of response bias among participants, potentially influencing the results. However, the narrow inclusion criteria ensured a homogeneous sample for the study.

CONCLUSION

The study aims to study workplace ostracism, employee silence and organisational commitment among private-sector employees. The sample consisted of 200 employees, 100 females and 100 males. A purposive sampling method was used for the data collection. Workplace Ostracism Scale (WOS), Employee Silence Scale (ESS) and Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS) are the tools used for the data collection. The data were statistically analysed using SPSS software.

The results show that the study concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between workplace ostracism and employee silence and organisational commitment. There are no significant gender differences in workplace ostracism, employee silence and organisational commitment among male and female employees.

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Conflict of Interest

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