

DOCTORAL THESIS

Antecedents and consequences of supervisor and coworker ostracism: an investigation from the target perspective

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**Antecedents and Consequences of Supervisor and Coworker
Ostracism: An Investigation from the Target Perspective**

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ABSTRACT

Ostracism, typically defined as being ignored or excluded, is an important social phenomenon that substantially impacts the way people treat and being treated by others. Despite its importance, little attention had been paid to workplace ostracism. In the past two years, researchers have begun to examine workplace ostracism and what they have found suggests that workplace ostracism may have a detrimental impact on both employees and organizations.

Despite the progress, there are several limitations in the literature. *Theoretically*, past research rarely differentiate sources of ostracism (e.g., supervisor and coworker) though different foci of ostracism may have different sources and implications, and may interact to influence employee work outcomes. Moreover, the antecedents of workplace ostracism as well as the mediating and moderating processes linking workplace ostracism to employee work outcomes remain largely unexplored. In other words, it is still unclear how ostracism takes place and functions in the workplace. *Methodologically*, past research on workplace ostracism has predominately made use of cross-sectional research designs, which limits our understanding of the real impact of workplace ostracism.

Integrating the theory of cooperation and competition and social identity theory, this research proposed and tested a model about the antecedents, consequences, and mediating and moderating processes of supervisor and coworker ostracism. Specifically, this research examined: (1) the main and interactive effects of employees' goal interdependence with the supervisor and coworkers and social skill on supervisor and coworker ostracism; (2) the main and interactive effects of supervisor and coworker

ostracism on employee job performance and organizational citizenship behavior (OCBO and OCBI); (3) the mediating effect of work group identification on the relationships of supervisor ostracism, coworker ostracism, and their interaction with employee job performance and organizational citizenship behavior (OCBO and OCBI); and (4) the moderating influence of collectivism on the relationships of supervisor ostracism, coworker ostracism, and their interaction with work group identification.

Two field studies were conducted in mainland China. Study 1, a two-wave study, tested the hypotheses regarding the antecedents of supervisor and coworker ostracism. Results of hierarchical regression analysis revealed that cooperative goals with the supervisor (coworkers) reduced, while competitive and independent goals with the supervisor (coworkers) facilitated supervisor ostracism (coworker ostracism). In addition, social skill strengthened the negative impact of cooperative goals with the supervisor (coworkers) on supervisor ostracism (coworker ostracism), and neutralized the positive impact of competitive goals with the supervisor (coworkers) on supervisor ostracism (coworker ostracism).

Study 2, a three-wave study, tested the hypotheses regarding the consequences of supervisor and coworker ostracism. Results of hierarchical regression analysis showed that supervisor ostracism, coworker ostracism, and their interaction were negatively related to job performance and organizational citizenship behavior (OCBO and OCBI) via work group identification. Moreover, collectivism strengthened the negative impact of supervisor ostracism, coworker ostracism, and their interaction on work group identification. In general, these findings are consistent with the theoretical predictions of the theory of cooperation and competition and social identity theory, and contribute to the

workplace ostracism research by demonstrating how supervisor and coworker ostracism take place and function in the workplace.

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