

# Workplace Ostracism Scale: Psychometric Analysis of the Workplace Ostracism Scale Among Indian IT Professionals

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

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This study aimed to validate the Workplace Ostracism Scale by Ferris et al. (2008) among 403 IT employees in India using a cross-sectional survey design and purposive sampling. The self-report questionnaire measured experiences of ostracism, and data analysis was performed using SPSS 26 and Jamovi 2.6. Internal consistency reliability analysis yielded an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.92, with item-rest correlations ranging from 0.58 to 0.77. Confirmatory factor analysis, using maximum likelihood estimation, produced acceptable fit indices (Chi-square = 154.65, df = 35,  $p < 0.0001$ , CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.93, SRMR = 0.04, RMSEA = 0.09 [90% CI: 0.08–0.11]). Concurrent validity was evidenced by a significant positive correlation between workplace ostracism and burnout ( $r = 0.32$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ). In contrast, discriminant validity was supported by a significant negative association with psychological well-being ( $r = -0.41$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ). These findings underscore robust psychometric properties and the relevance of the scale for measuring workplace ostracism among Indian IT employees.

**Keywords:** Workplace Ostracism, Psychological well-being, Burnout, Scale Validation, Cross-cultural validation, India

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## INTRODUCTION

Ostracism, defined as the extent to which an individual is ignored or excluded by others, is a pervasive social phenomenon that can have profound psychological effects on individuals (Bedi, 2021). In the workplace context, ostracism manifests when employees feel overlooked or excluded from social interactions and work-related activities, leading to detrimental impacts on their well-being, job performance, and overall organisational climate. Understanding workplace ostracism is crucial, as it affects the individuals who experience it and has broader implications for team dynamics and organisational effectiveness.

Historically, ostracism has roots in ancient practices, such as the Athenian practice of "ostrakimos," where individuals could be exiled from the community through voting (Dash et al., 2023). Over the years, social psychologists have increasingly recognised the significance of ostracism in various social contexts, including

educational settings and interpersonal relationships. However, it was not until the development of the Workplace Ostracism Scale by Ferris et al. (2008) that researchers systematically measured and analysed the phenomenon within organisational environments. This scale provided a foundational tool for assessing the experiences of employees who feel ostracised, yet the application and validation of this tool across diverse cultural contexts remain limited (Fatima et al., 2023; Yang & Tan, 2023).

Despite the growing body of literature on workplace ostracism, significant research gaps persist, particularly regarding the validation of measurement tools across different cultures. Most existing studies have predominantly focused on Western contexts, leaving a dearth of understanding about how workplace ostracism is perceived and experienced in collectivist cultures, such as those in India. This cultural nuance is essential, as the interpretation and impact of ostracism can vary significantly based on societal values and norms. Consequently, there is an urgent need to validate the Workplace Ostracism Scale in diverse cultural settings to ensure its reliability and applicability (Uysal-Bozkir et al., 2013).

The objective of this study is to validate the Workplace Ostracism Scale within the Indian context, thereby addressing the existing research gap. By examining the factorial structure and reliability of the scale among Indian employees, this research aims to provide insights into the unique experiences of workplace ostracism in a collectivist culture. Ultimately, this study seeks to enhance the understanding of workplace ostracism and equip HR practitioners with reliable tools to assess and address this critical issue within their organisations.

The Workplace Ostracism Scale (WOS), developed by Ferris et al. (2008), is a pivotal tool designed to measure the perception of being ignored or excluded in workplace environments. The development of the scale involved a systematic approach that began with the generation of potential items based on a thorough review of existing literature on ostracism and related constructs. The researchers employed a deductive item-generation method, ensuring the items were grounded in theoretical frameworks. Following item generation, the scale underwent rigorous psychometric testing across six independent samples, which included a diverse group of 822 employees from various organisations and professions. The original study demonstrated high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.92, indicating excellent internal consistency. Furthermore, the scale exhibited strong convergent and discriminant validity, confirming its effectiveness in accurately measuring the construct of workplace ostracism. Since its introduction, the WOS has been extensively utilised in global research to explore the implications of ostracism on various organisational outcomes, including employee well-being, job performance, and interpersonal dynamics. Studies have linked workplace ostracism to negative consequences such as decreased job satisfaction, increased turnover intentions, and diminished organisational commitment, highlighting its significance in understanding workplace behaviour. However, the application of the WOS in the Indian context has been relatively limited, revealing a significant gap in the literature regarding how workplace ostracism is perceived and experienced in collectivist cultures. Recent research efforts, such as those by Kamboj and Garg (2022), have begun to validate the WOS within Indian samples, uncovering unique cultural nuances in the experience of ostracism. Their findings suggest that the scale retains its reliability and validity even in the Indian context. However, some items were modified, and two items were deleted to better reflect local cultural dynamics. This emerging body of research underscores the importance of culturally relevant assessments in organisational studies, as it provides insights into the distinct ways in which workplace ostracism manifests across different cultural settings. Overall, the WOS serves as a crucial instrument for both researchers and practitioners aiming to understand and address the detrimental effects of ostracism in diverse workplace environments.

## **METHODS**

### **Measures**

**Workplace ostracism-** We measured ostracism in the workplace using a 10-item scale created by Ferris et al. (2008). Examples include "Others ignored me at work" and "Others left when I entered the area." The responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly concur) on a 7-point Likert scale.

**Burnout-** Burnout was measured using a 16-item scale created by Maslach et al. (1997). Some sample items included "I feel emotionally drained from my work" and "Working all day is really a strain for me". On a 7-point Likert scale, responses are ranked from 6 (Everyday) to 0 (Never).

**Psychological well-being-** Psychological Well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The PWB (Psychological Well-Being) 18-item scale is a measurement instrument used to evaluate the psychological well-being of an individual. The PWB scale has six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, and self-acceptance; these six sub-dimensions account for individuals' overall psychological well-being. Some sample items included "I like most parts of my personality" and "The demands of everyday life often get me down." This scale uses a 7-point Likert scale in which responses range from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was taken from the Institute Human Ethics Committee (IHEC), Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (IITR/IIC/22/2-06). Participation in the research study was purely voluntary. A written informed consent was obtained from the participants. Participants were informed about the nature of the study and were communicated that they could withdraw from the study at any time. They were also told that the data would be used solely for research purposes and that only the researchers could access it.

### **Sample and Data Collection**

The present study is a cross-sectional survey design with a self-report questionnaire to investigate the relationship between workplace ostracism. Using purposive sampling, data were collected in person from various IT sector organisations from India's major IT hubs. Permission was obtained from the human resources department to circulate a survey to the consenting employees. Written consent was obtained from the participants. Employees were ensured the confidentiality of their responses and were informed about their anonymity. Only the required demographic information was obtained from the respondents, except their names and employee IDs, to ensure confidentiality.

### **Data Filtration**

A complete 403 respondents' data was retained for the final analysis out of 413 responses collected (Memon et al., 2020). After carefully evaluating the collected data, data from 403 respondents were retained for the final analysis after deleting the outliers, such as incomplete responses and participants who did not fit the inclusion criteria.

### **Data Analysis**

A series of statistical analyses using SPSS 27 and Jamovi 2.6 were performed to evaluate the psychometric properties of the Workplace Ostracism scale. Descriptive statistics provided initial insights into the distribution and central tendencies of the data. Reliability analysis, including Cronbach's alpha and item-total correlations, was employed to assess the scale's internal consistency. We conducted confirmatory factor analysis using the maximum likelihood method using Jamovi 2.6 to evaluate the model fit and factor loadings. The criterion validity of the Workplace Ostracism scale was assessed using concurrent and divergent validity measures. Concurrent validity was evaluated by examining the correlation between Workplace Ostracism and Burnout, while discriminant validity was assessed by examining the correlation between Workplace Ostracism and Psychological Well-being.

## **RESULTS**

The demographic characteristics of the sample (N = 403) included 76.48% males, 23.01% females, and 0.24% others. The age distribution was 66.25% aged 20-30, 32% aged 30-40, and 1.73% aged 40-50. Regarding experience, 56.57% had 0-5 years, 23.82% had 6-10 years, and 19.60% had over 10 years. Educationally, 61.78% held a bachelor's degree, and 38.21% held a master's degree (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Demographic details of participants

Demographics	Description	Frequency (N=403)	Percentage%
<b>Gender</b>	Female	93	23.01
	Male	309	76.48
	Others	1	0.24
<b>Age</b>	20-30	267	66.25
	30-40	129	32.00
	40-50	7	1.73
<b>Experience</b>	0-5 Years	228	56.57
	6-10 Years	96	23.82
	10-15 Years and above	79	19.60
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor's degree in Engineering /Technology	249	61.78
	Master's degree in Engineering /Technology	154	38.21

**Table 2.** Item Reliability Statistics

Items	Mean	SD	Item-rest correlation	Alpha( $\alpha$ ) If item dropped	Stand. Estimate	t-value	p-value
WOS1	2.34	1.33	0.62	0.91	0.65	14.29	< .0001
WOS2	1.66	1.24	0.58	0.91	0.61	13.10	< .0001
WOS3	1.85	1.18	0.71	0.91	0.73	16.60	< .0001
WOS4	2.14	1.49	0.62	0.91	0.65	14.15	< .0001
WOS5	1.83	1.20	0.75	0.90	0.78	18.29	< .0001
WOS6	1.97	1.35	0.77	0.90	0.80	19.01	< .0001
WOS7	1.87	1.25	0.72	0.91	0.77	17.75	< .0001
WOS8	1.68	1.21	0.72	0.91	0.77	17.70	< .0001
WOS9	1.69	1.20	0.72	0.91	0.77	17.79	< .0001
WOS10	2.00	1.32	0.71	0.91	0.74	16.89	< .0001
Scale	1.90	0.97	Alpha	0.92			

The internal consistency reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The overall Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.92, indicating good reliability. Item-rest correlations ranged from 0.58 to 0.77, suggesting adequate item discrimination. The Cronbach's alpha if the item was dropped values were all above 0.90, indicating that removing any single item would not substantially improve the scale's reliability (see Table 2).

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to evaluate the model fit of the scale using maximum likelihood estimation with a sample size of 403. The chi-square test was significant,  $\chi^2(35) = 154.65$ ,  $p < .0001$ , indicating that the model did not perfectly fit the data. However, other fit indices suggested an acceptable fit: the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0.95, and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was 0.93. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was 0.04, below the 0.08 threshold for good fit. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.09, with a 90% confidence interval of 0.08 to 0.11, indicating an acceptable fit. The standardised estimates for each item ranged from 0.61 to 0.80, all statistically significant ( $p < .0001$ ), demonstrating strong item loadings (see Table 3 and Figure 1).

Table 3. Confirmatory factor analysis

Chi sq. test			CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA		
Chi.sq.	df	P value				RMSEA	95% LLCI	95% ULCI
154.65	35	<0.0001	0.95	0.93	0.04	0.09	0.08	0.11
Estimation method: Maximum Likelihood, N = 403, Tool: SEM (syntax) Module, Jamovi 2.3								

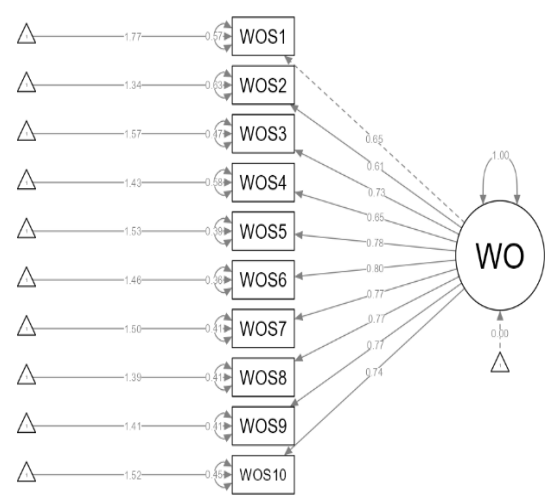


Figure 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The discriminant validity results showed a significant negative correlation between workplace ostracism and psychological well-being ( $r = -0.41$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), indicating that higher levels of workplace ostracism were associated with lower psychological well-being. The results of concurrent validity showed a significant positive correlation between Workplace Ostracism and Burnout ( $r = 0.32$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), indicating that higher levels of workplace ostracism were associated with higher levels of Burnout. The findings suggest that the workplace ostracism scale has good concurrent validity, as it is negatively correlated with psychological well-being, and acceptable discriminant validity, as it is positively correlated with burnout, providing empirical evidence for validity (see Table 4).

Table 4. Concurrent and Discriminant Validity

SL	Latent variables	1	2	3
1.	Workplace ostracism (WO)	1		
2.	Psychological well-being (PWB)	-0.41 **	1	
3.	Burnout	0.32 **	-0.52 **	1

Notes: \*\*. Correlation is significant at 0.0001 (2-tailed); \*\*  $p < 0.0001$ . N = 403

DISCUSSION

The validation of the Workplace Ostracism Scale (WOS) within the Indian context provides critical insights into the phenomenon of workplace ostracism in a collectivist culture. The scale demonstrated good internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.92, suggesting that the items consistently measure the construct of workplace ostracism (Cho, 2016). Item-rest correlations and Cronbach's alpha values, if items were dropped, indicate that each item contributes meaningfully to the overall reliability of the scale. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the model fit. The significant chi-square test result ( $\chi^2 (35) = 154.65$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) indicated that the model did not perfectly fit the data. However, other fit indices, including CFI (0.95), TLI (0.93), SRMR (0.04), and RMSEA (0.09), suggested an acceptable model fit (Sellbom & Tellegen, 2019). These indices collectively indicate that the WOS is a robust tool for measuring workplace ostracism among Indian employees despite minor deviations in model fit. The results of the study also highlighted the scale's criterion validity. Discriminant validity was evidenced by a significant negative correlation between workplace ostracism and psychological well-being ( $r = -0.41$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). This finding aligns with existing literature that suggests higher levels of ostracism are associated with poorer psychological health. Concurrent validity was demonstrated through a significant positive correlation between workplace ostracism and burnout ( $r = 0.32$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), indicating that those who experience higher levels of ostracism tend to higher levels of burnout. These validity assessments confirm that the WOS is effective in distinguishing workplace ostracism from related psychological constructs. These findings are significant as they extend the application of the WOS beyond Western contexts, providing a culturally relevant tool for Indian organizational settings. The unique cultural dynamics of collectivist societies like India, where group harmony and interpersonal relationships are highly valued, underscore the importance of understanding how workplace ostracism is perceived and experienced differently compared to individualistic cultures. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of workplace ostracism, highlighting its universal impact on employee well-being and organizational outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The Workplace Ostracism Scale has been validated for use within the Indian context, demonstrating good reliability and validity. These findings suggest that the WOS is a robust tool for assessing workplace ostracism in collectivist cultures, offering valuable insights into the unique experiences of ostracised employees.

Limitations and Suggestions

Despite its strengths, the study has limitations. The sample was limited to a specific region in India, which may not fully represent the diverse cultural nuances across the entire country. Future research should include a more diverse sample to enhance generalizability. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Future studies should consider using mixed-method approaches to capture a more comprehensive understanding of workplace ostracism. Incorporating longitudinal designs could also provide insights into the long-term effects of ostracism on employee outcomes.

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