

The Mediating Role of Psychological Distress between Ostracism, Work Engagement, and Turnover Intentions

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Abstract

Drawing on the conservation of resources and job-demands resource theories, this study proposes and tests psychological distress as an underlying mechanism mediating the relationships between workplace ostracism, work engagement, and turnover intentions. Furthermore, it investigates how resilience and perceived external employability condition the aforementioned relationships. Four- and five-star full-time hotel employees provided the data for this study. The findings suggest that psychological distress mediated the relationship between workplace ostracism and turnover intention, but did not mediate the workplace ostracism-work engagement linkage. Also, workplace ostracism plummeted the work engagement of less resilient employees, and surprisingly aroused that of more resilient employees. Finally, the result did not support the argument that employees with perceived high external employability would have stronger turnover intentions compared to those with lower external employability. This study offered new insights into the interface between workplace ostracism, engagement, and turnover intention, and relevant theoretical implications and address to managers are further discussed.

Keywords: Workplace ostracism; Psychological distress; Turnover intentions; Work engagement; Resilience; External employability.

Highlights

- 25 • The indirect effect of workplace ostracism on work engagement and turnover intention
26 was investigated
- 27 • Psychological distress mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and
28 turnover intention
- 29 • Resilience moderated the relation of workplace ostracism and work engagement
- 30 • Workplace ostracism mitigated less resilient employees' engagement, it stimulated more
31 resilient employees' engagement.
- 32 • The conservation of resources and job demands-resources provided the theoretical
33 underpinnings

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37 **1. Introduction**

38 The stressful and challenging environment of the hospitality setting prevents employees from
39 delivering excellent service and also stimulates quitting cognitions (Ram, 2018). A
40 ubiquitous but stealthy form of stressors in the workplace is ostracism, a type of interpersonal
41 mistreatment which erodes employees' psychological and mental health (Williams, 2007).
42 The literature defines ostracism as "a general process of social rejection or exclusion" (Gruter
43 & Masters, 1986, p. 150), which manifests by ignoring or excluding someone or a group by
44 another individual or group (Williams, 2001). People's needs for social bonding can be
45 fulfilled when they feel accepted by others. However, ostracism and social rejection prevent
46 this need from being met (DeWall & Bushman, 2011). Excluding someone from a group can
47 have a more detrimental impact on that person than aggression, intimidation, and pestering
48 (Williams & Nida, 2009). It threatens the essential needs and desires of belonging or fitting in

49 the group, self-esteem or self-respect (Wesselmann, Bagg, & Williams, 2009), and is
50 recognized as one of the factors which decrease employees' work engagement, causes
51 distress, and increases turnover intentions (TI) among employees (Ferris, Brown, Berry, &
52 Lian, 2008; Leung, Wu, Chen, & Young, 2011; Turkoglu & Dalgic, 2019).

53 Over three decades since the seminal work of Gruter and Masters (1986), and despite
54 the significant pervasiveness of ostracism in the workplace (Ferris et al., 2008) and its
55 detrimental consequences on employees and organizations highlighted by the general
56 management literature, hospitality and tourism scholars have sparingly paid attention to this
57 phenomenon (Hsieh & Karatepe, 2019; Zhu, Lyu, Deng, & Ye, 2017), although Mao, Liu,
58 Jiang and Zhang's (2018) review of workplace ostracism highlights several loopholes in the
59 body of knowledge. Few studies (e.g., Huertas-Valdivia, Braojos, & Lloréns-Montes, 2019;
60 Hsieh & Karatepe, 2019; Zhao, Peng, & Sheard, 2013; Zhu et al., 2017) have enhanced our
61 understanding of some outcomes of ostracism in the hotel industry. Mao et al.'s (2018)
62 review indicated that ostracism-induced stressors might result in diminished work
63 engagement. However, to the authors' best knowledge, only Leung et al. (2011) empirically
64 examined this relationship.

65 There is a practical relevance related to the investigation of workplace ostracism in
66 the hospitality industry. Above and beyond the pervasiveness of the phenomenon in the
67 industry, it poses a critical threat to the quality of employees' social interactions and
68 interpersonal relations (Ali, Usman, Pham, Agyemang-Mintah, & Akhtar, 2020; Huertas-
69 Valdivia et al., 2019). High quality relationships between employees can benefit hospitality
70 organizations because they enhance social bonds that support employees from stress-driven
71 emotional labor, and bolster collaboration and knowledge sharing, all of which are essential
72 in managing unforeseen contingencies arising during service delivery (Ali et al., 2020;

73 Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019). However the prevalence of workplace ostracism undermines
74 such interpersonal relationships and indirectly harms the organization by disengaging
75 employees and motivating their quitting intentions and actual turnover (Bedi, 2019; Howard,
76 Cogswell, & Smith, 2020; Leung et al., 2011). Reports suggest that organizations with
77 engaged employees are 21 percent more productive and 22 percent more profitable and suffer
78 much less turnover. Yet, globally, only 13 percent of employees feel engaged (Hoisington,
79 2019).

80 Additionally, by inhibiting employees' self-esteem and social support, workplace
81 ostracism detrimentally affects their wellbeing, an issue associated with negative outcomes
82 like job dissatisfaction, burnout, absenteeism and turnover; thus posing a threat to the
83 psychological integrity of employees who are key success factors to guests' satisfaction and
84 the organization's competitiveness (Kirillova, Fu, & Kucukusta, 2020). Workplace ostracism
85 is the least manifest type of mistreatment (Bedi, 2019), which makes it challenging to directly
86 address. Thus, it is important to understand the mechanisms and conditions that lead
87 ostracized employee disengagement and turnover intention to provide hospitality managers
88 with the necessary tools to take on a concealed and inconspicuous threat.

89 Accordingly, the paramount aim of the present study is to extend to the hospitality
90 narrow body of knowledge on workplace ostracism in a threefold articulation, by proposing
91 and testing a model using the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory as the theoretical
92 groundwork. The first objective of this study is to extend the current literature examining the
93 relationship between workplace ostracism, work engagement, and turnover intention as
94 behavioral tendencies and attitudinal outcomes. To date, the link between workplace
95 ostracism, turnover intention, and work engagement has been empirically established (e.g.
96 Bedi, 2019; Leung et al., 2011, Turkoglu & Dalgic, 2019; Wu, Liu, Kwan, & Lee, 2016), few

97 of which in the hospitality sector. These studies explained that ostracized employees undergo
98 social exclusion, which jeopardizes their basic needs for control, self-esteem and
99 meaningfulness, and later on curtail their work engagement and encourage their intent to quit.

100 Yet, the underlying mechanisms through which workplace ostracism influences
101 individuals' engagement and intention to quit remains understudied and the scarce studies
102 examining this stream (e.g. Lyu & Zhu, 2019; Turkoglu & Dalgic, 2019) have called for
103 more scholarly attention. To this end, we propose psychological distress, a state of ill-being
104 that is induced by the dampening effects of successive uncontrolled stressors, as an
105 underlying mechanism explaining the impact of workplace ostracism on work engagement
106 and turnover intention. Mao et al. (2018) underscored that affective and emotional channels
107 could elucidate the mean by which ostracism influences attitudinal outcomes, in line with
108 Ferris et al.'s (2016) findings of the mediating role of anxiety in the indirect effect of
109 workplace ostracism on counterproductive work behaviors. Anxiety is a component of
110 psychological distress (see Alwerthan, Swanson, & Rogge, 2018; Macedo et al., 2018), which
111 Wu, Yim, Kwan, & Zhang (2012) found to have a positive association with workplace
112 ostracism. In other words, ostracism is emotionally cumbersome to employees and is
113 associated to their anxiety, sadness and depressive moods (Mao et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2012),
114 states that greatly contribute to their psychological distress. Moreover, the hospitality
115 literature underscored that psychological distress is associated to emotional exhaustion, and
116 to protect their emotional and psychological resources, employees often disengage and
117 withdraw (Anasori, Bayighomog & Tanova, 2020; Park & Min, 2020). Psychological
118 distress, therefore, appears to be a potential underlying mechanism through which ostracism
119 undermines employee engagement and influences their turnover intentions.

120 Second, contingent factors related to how people cope with their ostracism experience
121 have not been examined adequately (Chen, DeWall, Poon, & Chen, 2012). That is, how
122 individuals' heterogeneity determines the ability to withstand ostracism. As human beings'
123 characteristics are diverse, personality, and other distinctive characteristics and capacity to
124 deal with this phenomenon define the extent to which one may deal with, or be affected by
125 social rejection. Resilience as a component of psychological capital might help individuals to
126 cope better with rejection and ostracism (Waldeck, Tyndall, & Chmiel, 2015). Resilience
127 comprises a set of personal capital, capabilities, and abilities to adjust to stressful conditions
128 and difficulties and to overcome challenging circumstances (Hsu et al., 2013). *Studies*
129 *showed that resilience is negatively associated with neuroticism and positively related to*
130 *agreeableness, underscoring that resilient employees are less likely to suffer from negative*
131 *moods and emotions and, therefore, can better cope with or recover from daily mistreatment*
132 *(Oshio, Taku, Hirano, & Saeed, 2018; Yang, Lu, & Huang, 2020). Moreover, resilient*
133 *employees, including in the hospitality sector, have been found to be more engaged in their*
134 *work than their less resilient colleagues (Dai, Zhuang, & Huan, 2019; Malik & Garg, 2020;*
135 *Tsaur, Hsu, & Lin, 2019). Hence, resilience may weaken the negative association of*
136 *workplace ostracism with work engagement because resilient employees are less likely to*
137 *suffer emotional and psychological erosion, can bounce back from challenges and stressful*
138 *encounters and thus may dispose of more emotional resources to engage in their work. In*
139 *contrast, less resilient employee may be prey to emotional demands arising from the stress-*
140 *induced ostracism and may subsequently be driven towards disengagement as a resource*
141 *conservation mechanism. Thus, the second objective of this study is to investigate the*
142 *moderating role of resilience in the relationship between workplace ostracism and work*
143 *engagement.*

144 Third, this study also sheds light on the potential role of perceived external
145 employability on workplace ostracism–turnover intention linkage. External employability
146 describes a situational cue wherein an employee believes to possess unique – or at least
147 necessary – human capital that significantly increases his/her chances of employment outside
148 the organization (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). The employability paradox underlines that
149 external employability threatens organizations (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011). For instance,
150 studies have revealed that it undermines employee attachment (De Cuyper & De Witte,
151 2011), and can indirectly induce actual turnover through quitting cognitions (Nelissen,
152 Forrier, & Verbruggen, 2017). Despite the extensive scholarly attention on turnover intention
153 in the hospitality industry, the role of current employee’s perceived mobility coupled with
154 hindrance stressors such as ostracism has quite interestingly been overlooked. Rothwell and
155 Arnold (2007) conceptualized two forms of employability, internal and external. An
156 employee with perceived internal employability may believe to have significant skillsets that
157 can facilitate a shift or a position change within the organization, especially if avoiding
158 contact with the ostracizers. On the other hand, perceived external employability, the
159 emphasis of the current study, may underline more latent quitting intention because of the
160 opportunity to leave the organization. Although the perception of external employability
161 stems from a self-assessment of personal abilities, it may also relate to the opportunity to
162 exploit those abilities outside the organization. In this vein, studies indicated that while
163 perceived external employability was negatively related to turnover intentions, there was no
164 significant association between internal employability and turnover intention (Baranchenko,
165 Xie, Lin, Lau, & Ma, 2020; Nelissen et al., 2017; Lu, Sun, & Du, 2016). The current study
166 postulates that the negative relationship of workplace ostracism with turnover intention may
167 be strengthened by an employee’s perceived external employability. In other words,

168 perceived external employability may strengthen the psychological detachment that an
169 ostracized employee may be going through, encouraging motivations to quit.

170 To address these objectives, the next section presents the theoretical underpinning of
171 the proposed research hypotheses, followed by the method implemented to carry out the
172 study and obtained results. Discussion and implications are further examined.

173 **2. Theoretical background**

174 **2.1. Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory**

175 The COR theory posits that people work towards preserving their existing resources that are
176 valued (conservation) and obtain new ones (acquisition), which includes cognitive,
177 emotional, or physical assets that employees utilize to confront stress-arousing events and/or
178 meet personal and professional objectives (Bedi, 2019; Hobfoll, 2001). Moreover, it further
179 contends that stress will arise when individuals undergo a threat of or actual loss of resources
180 or lack of resource gain, which will make them more likely to lose further resources (Hobfoll,
181 1989). Accordingly, an employee experiencing a depleting feeling of belongingness, which
182 results from social exclusion, will have his/her (emotional) resources substantially drained.
183 Therefore to preserve the residual ones, resource-poor employees will curtail their work
184 engagement and performance efforts, and exhibit depersonalization (Leung et al., 2011,
185 Wright & Hobfoll, 2004).

186 Scholars have extensively used the COR theory as a theoretical perspective to
187 investigate and explain the influence of workplace ostracism (Deci, 2019). Workplace
188 ostracism in contrast to other forms of conspicuous and direct impairing behaviors is latent,
189 thus making it harder to directly address and reprimand. It subsequently subjects victims into
190 an incessant exposure that exhaust their supporting and motivating resources (Leung et al.,
191 2011). Ostracized employees in this context will engage their protective mechanisms to

192 preserve the remaining resources. Yet, the very protective strategies necessitate an investment
193 of residual resources and energies, and that endeavor *per se* may be also stressful; it results
194 that employees with limited resources to protect against future losses become more
195 vulnerable to a resources loss spiral, more prone to anxiety, and less attuned to positive work
196 attitudes (Leung et al., 2011; Wright & Hobfoll, 2004).

197 **2.2. Workplace ostracism**

198 Ostracism is the elimination of constructive attention, and it is conceptually dissimilar from
199 active practices of incivility, such as bullying, harassment, or abuse (Balliet & Ferris, 2013;
200 Robinson, O'Reilly, & Wang, 2013). Ostracism significantly undermines one's need to
201 belong, and such constant psychological need depletion might cause weakness and dejection
202 (Williams & Nida, 2011). Among the four fundamental needs according to Williams (2001)
203 — (i) need for control, (ii) need for a meaningful existence, (iii) need to belong, and (iv) self-
204 esteem — the need to belong has attracted scholars' attention in its capacity to inform on
205 what individuals can do after social rejection (Baumeister, Brewer, Tice, & Twenge, 2007;
206 Stenseng, Belsky, Skalicka, & Wichstrøm, 2014).

207 Workplace ostracism defines an employee's perception of being excluded or ignored
208 by others at work (Ferris et al., 2008). There are numerous signs of ostracism in the
209 workplace which include but are not limited to giving the silent treatment to the ostracized
210 employees, avoiding eye contact, ignoring the ostracizee's greetings, isolation from social
211 contact (Ferris et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2013; Zhu et al., 2017). It is *de facto* an integral
212 part of a broader family of interpersonal mistreatments which include bullying, abuse,
213 undermining, and incivility and reflects the “darker” spectrum of organizational behavior
214 (Bedi, 2019; Leung et al., 2011; Robinson et al., 2013). Within this darker spectrum,
215 workplace ostracism is the least apparent and overt type of mistreatment, which makes it
216 challenging for the management to frontally address.

217 At the individual level, studies suggest that ostracized employees display conformity
218 and engage in pro-social behaviors in an attempt to gain back acceptance from other group
219 members (e.g. Derfler-Rozin, Pillutla, & Thau, 2010; Williams & Sommer, 1997; Xu, Huang,
220 & Robinson, 2015). Other studies argue that workplace ostracism victims instead exhibit anti-
221 social behaviors (e.g. aggressive behavior, counterproductive work behaviors, lowered
222 citizenship and helping behaviors, and diminished performance) (Chung & Yang, 2017;
223 Ferris, Lian, Brown, & Morrison, 2015; Mao et al., 2018; Yang & Treadway, 2018) as
224 retaliation or to regain back personal control over the environment (Leung et al., 2011). Hsieh
225 and Karatepe (2019) noted that is particularly problematic for service organizations when
226 employees display negative behaviors because the overall service process is at risk, which
227 can lead to customers' grievances and negative word-of-mouth.

228 Ostracized employees undergo a considerable amount of personal and social resources
229 erosion that they strive to control and halt. However, the subtlety and ambiguity of workplace
230 ostracism contribute in avoiding perpetrators' identification and punishment (Robinson et al.,
231 2013), making it difficult to clamp down on by the management, and therefore protracts the
232 efforts of the victims who in shortage of resources supply, engage in withdrawal or retaliatory
233 behaviors. Moreover, workplace ostracism cues a distinction between the victim and the rest
234 of the group, which diminishes the feeling of belongingness and erodes the sense of
235 assimilations to and congruence with the organization (Wu et al., 2016). The target in this
236 circumstance suffers from low self-esteem, becomes detached, and feels demotivated.

237 **2.3.Workplace ostracism, work engagement and turnover intention: the mediating** 238 **effect of psychological distress**

239 Work engagement is a “positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is
240 characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, &

241 Bakker, 2002, p. 74). Absorbed employees are volitionally immersed into and display an
242 intense focus on their work so much that detaching from it becomes difficult; vigorous
243 employees possess a considerate reserve of energy and mental resources that they do not
244 withhold while performing their respective tasks, even much when facing adversity;
245 dedicated employees feel enthused, proud and inspired by their work, and usually express a
246 sense of significance towards their tasks.

247 Moreover, the well-being literature suggests that vigor and dedication which are the
248 two core dimensions of work engagement, and emotional exhaustion and cynicism which are
249 the core dimension of burnout are respective antipodes of two underlying bipolar dimensions
250 labeled as energy and identification (González-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Lloret, 2006;
251 Schaufeli et al., 2002). In other words, vigor is the diametric opposite of emotional
252 exhaustion in the energy continuum, while dedication is the antipode of cynicism in the
253 identification continuum. Engaged employees identify to their organization and therefore
254 invest their resources by putting up unwavering efforts aimed at contributing to the welfare of
255 their organization.

256 A significant body of hospitality research found that hindrance stressors wear out
257 employees' engagement (e.g. Karatepe, Rezapouraghdam, & Hassannia, 2020; Karatepe,
258 Yavas, Babakus, & Deitz, 2018; Jung & Yoon, 2019; Yousaf, Rasheed, Hameed, & Luqman,
259 2019). Within the realm of workplace mistreatment, Wang and Cheng (2020) and Leung et
260 al. (2011) found respectively that co-worker incivility and workplace ostracism thwarted
261 hotel employee work engagement, while Qian et al. (2019) demonstrated that ostracized
262 employees reported burnout symptoms. Moreover, meta-analyses illustrate that ostracized
263 employees are low in engagement, belongingness, and wellbeing while they show higher
264 cynicism and emotional exhaustion (Bedi, 2019; Howard et al., 2020)

265 Workplace ostracism burdens targeted employees with a significant and vicious
266 emotional toll that emboldens their perceptions of job demands. Moreover, it threatens
267 ostracized employees' sense of identification and motivation which are critical to work
268 engagement. Ostracized employees are less engaged because their feeling of discrimination
269 from the group and the resulting emotional strain contribute to their emotional exhaustion and
270 cynicism toward their organization. They subsequently feel less enthused in their work and
271 restrain from exerting high efforts because their self-concept is detached from the
272 organization.

273 In this study, we propose that the influence of workplace ostracism on work
274 engagement is not proximal. Rather, it impacts work engagement through various underlying
275 mechanisms such as psychological distress. Work attitudes and behaviors usually result from
276 internal cognitive and emotional processes that occur idiosyncratically, from social and
277 interpersonal interactions at the workplace. Workplace ostracism *per se* can be considered as
278 a source of resource depletion in terms of lack of support from coworkers which conveys a
279 callous and contemptuous form of treatment towards the target (Lyu & Zhu, 2019). These
280 form of painful and distressing experiences undermine an ostracized employee psychological
281 wellbeing by exacerbating the perceived stress (Chung, 2018), which facilitates their overall
282 state of psychological distress characterized by sadness, depressive moods, anxiety, and
283 negative affectivity (Mao et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2012).

284 Consistent with the COR theory, distressed employees are generally in a low supply
285 of resources and are more likely to experience further losses to become emotionally
286 exhausted (Anasori et al., 2020). We could expect that since work engagement requires a full
287 load of resources, an ostracized and subsequently distressed employee would be in shortage
288 of much-needed resources and, therefore, will instead withhold the scarce available resources

289 for another purpose like maintaining an emotional balance. We thus posit that workplace
290 ostracism indirectly relates to a target employee work engagement by exacerbating this latter
291 psychological distress.

292 **H1.** Psychological distress mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and work
293 engagement.

294 In this same vein and consistent with the tenet of conservation, an ostracized and
295 psychologically distressed employee would nurture quitting intentions from the perceived
296 nefarious workplace in an attempt to halt the depletion process. The ultimate aim would be to
297 preserve the remaining emotional and psychological resources from further depletion by
298 moving out of the organization. Turnover intention, an employee's willingness to leave the
299 organization, represents the last stage of the withdrawal cognition sequence (Hwang, Lee,
300 Park, Chang, & Kim, 2014). Past studies in the hospitality literature have documented that
301 high level of occupational stressors is associated with higher turnover cognitions (Huang et
302 al., 2018; Karatepe et al., 2018; Kim, Im, & Hwang, 2015; O'neill & Davis, 2011; Pan &
303 Yeh, 2019; Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016).

304 Among various forms of work stressors, Hwang et al. (2014) indicated that unfair
305 treatment was the most prominent contributor to turnover intention, followed by a lack of
306 support. Moreover, recent meta-analyses (Bedi, 2019; Howard et al., 2020) suggested that
307 employees who experience incivility and mistreatment, workplace ostracism included, are
308 more open to seek alternative work opportunities elsewhere, or even enact the move outside
309 the organization. Earlier we discussed that ostracism threatens employees' self-esteem, the
310 need to belong, and the need for a meaningful life. Consequently, victims suffer from an
311 emotional imbalance and drained social resources that subject them to greater
312 psychologically distressing states but also frustrate their organizational identification. [Park](#)

313 and Min (2020) outline that the negative emotional charges of job stressors elicit negative
314 responses associated with job distress. To shield their psychological and emotional resources
315 from further loss, they disengage and withdraw themselves from their work (Park & Min,
316 2020).

317 We argue in this sense that employees that undergo but fail to contain the strain
318 overload do not only resolve to relinquish their efforts but actively engage in extreme
319 withdrawal cognition. For instance, Hsieh and Karatepe (2019) recently outlined that
320 workplace ostracism exacerbated restaurant employees' job tension and this latter prompted
321 their propensity to be late for work or to leave early. From another perspective, Turkoglu and
322 Dalgic (2019) found that organizational identification mediated the relationship workplace
323 ostracism- turnover intention. Their study highlighted that workplace ostracism diminished
324 employees feeling of integration to the organization and as a result, prompted their desire to
325 separate from it. Likewise, Lyu and Zhu (2019) revealed that ostracized are less embedded in
326 their job which in turn aggravated their intention to leave their organization. In the light of
327 this empirical evidence and the above discussion, this study posits that workplace ostracism
328 indirectly promotes turnover intention by subjecting employees to a great deal of
329 psychological distress instigated by less social resources, stigmatization, detachment, and
330 overall ill-being, which in turn will motivate them to quit. This prompts the following
331 hypothesis:

332 **H2.** Psychological distress mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and
333 turnover intention.

334 **2.4.The moderating role of psychological resilience**

335 Resilience is an idiosyncratic capacity to bounce back from stressful encounters that one uses
336 to preserve psychological or physical wellbeing and thrive under undesirable conditions (Hsu

337 et al., 2013). Research has shown that more resilient individuals demonstrate higher
338 emotional and mental strength when they encounter difficulty and are more likely to perform
339 better when they experience stressors. Hsu et al. (2013) highlighted that those with higher
340 resilience showed a greater tendency to reduce the undesirable effect of social rejection
341 through a protective and adaptive coping style. In this vein, Niu, Sun, Tian, Fan, and Zhou
342 (2016) revealed that the reported depression of individual low in resilience was significantly
343 stronger in magnitude compared to those who were more resilient.

344 In the service industry, studies have documented that resilient employees are better
345 equipped to handle and recover from workplace stressors, subsequently increasing their
346 engagement, job performance (Darvishmotevali & Ali, 2020; Kašpárková, Vaculík,
347 Procházka, & Schaufeli, 2018) and mitigate their emotional exhaustion (Anasori et al., 2020).
348 These findings are congruent with the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001) that low-resource
349 individuals are more susceptible to resource loss, in contrast to resourceful individuals who
350 can better prevent future losses. These findings are equally backed by the extension of the Job
351 Demands-Resources model, which stipulates that employees use their resources to alleviate
352 the toll of job demands (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007).

353 Accordingly, the current study proposes that ostracized employees can tap into their
354 psychological resilience to weaken the magnitude of cognitive and psychological resources
355 loss generated by workplace ostracism. However, the coping abilities and the subsequent
356 effect on work engagement are contingent on each employee's resilience capital. Resilient
357 employees are endowed with traits that enable them to withstand and overcome adversity,
358 which will have a minimal adverse influence on their well-being and allow them to display
359 relatively decent and positive outcomes. However, when they do not possess enough
360 resilience, the hardship of stressors experience dampens their well-being, making it

361 significantly likely to exhibit subpar standards and performances. In other words, less
362 resilient employees will have their work engagement significantly sapped compared to those
363 who are more resilient. Therefore, we hypothesize:

364 **H4.** Psychological resilience weakens the relationship between ostracism and work
365 engagement so that the engagement of employees with low resilience is lower than the
366 engagement of employees with high resilience.

367 **2.5.The moderating role of perceived external employability**

368 Employees with higher employability have capabilities, competencies, and knowledge that
369 are transferable across various jobs and duties. Thus they are highly proficient within the
370 employment market (De Cuyper, Mäkikangas, Kinnunen, Mauno, & Witte, 2012). The
371 literature highlighting the impact of employability on turnover intention is somewhat mixed.
372 For example, on the one hand, Virga et al. (2017) found that employees with a high level of
373 employability had a stronger intention to quit their job. On the other hand, De Cuyper,
374 Mauno, Kinnunen, and Mäkikangas (2011) did not find a significant effect of employability
375 on turnover intention, while Acikgoz, Sumer, and Sumer (2016) stressed that perceived
376 employability was not significantly related to turnover intention. However, Acikgoz et al.
377 (2016) also revealed that specific conditions, such as affective organizational commitment,
378 could affect the significance of this relationship. Specifically, their study underscored that
379 low affective commitment and perceived employability reinforced quitting intention.

380 These inconsistent findings may be rooted in the holistic conceptualization of
381 perceived employability. Rothwell and Arnold (2007) empirically distinguished internal from
382 external employability, with the latter associated with an employee perception of ease of job
383 mobility in the external job market. *Studies later revealed that internal employability and
384 turnover intention were not significantly related, in contrast, perceived external employability*

385 had a significant negative association with turnover intentions (Baranchenko et al., 2020;
386 Nelissen et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2016). Employees with high external employability have the
387 conviction of owing solid human capital (knowledge, skills, and abilities) to easily secure a
388 position outside their current organization. Studies (e.g. Rodrigues, Butler, & Guest, 2020;
389 Nelissen et al., 2017; De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011) that adopted this perspective yielded
390 consistent findings, suggesting a lowered attachment to the organization and augmented
391 quitting intentions cognitions from employees perceiving high external employability. In line
392 with these scholars and the precise objectives of the present study, we adopted perceived
393 external employability for parsimony, rather than the more holistic construct of
394 employability.

395 It is hardly arguable that ostracized employees develop less affection and
396 subsequently commitment to their organization. For instance, Yam, Raybould, and Gordon
397 (2018) revealed that more than 70 percent of their participants considered that friendship at
398 work and being part of an affective work team environment were essential to their
399 embeddedness and emotional attachment to their employer, above and beyond human
400 resources management related practices. Those two factors however contrast with isolation,
401 exclusion, or avoidance that characterizes ostracism felt by an individual at the workplace.
402 While we concord with existing findings that an ostracized employee will be prone to
403 develop TI, we propose that the cognitive process of quitting will be precipitated, or at least
404 matured, by an idiosyncratic feeling of being able to control and impact upon the external job
405 market (De Cuyper et al., 2012). This perceived ability is a personal resource (Rodrigues et
406 al., 2020), which makes an employee feel highly competent to find another job in another
407 organization. The COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001) suggests that individuals use their available
408 resources to prevent future resource depletion and seek additional resources gain.

409 From these premises, we posit that employees with higher external employability will
410 have a stronger intention to leave their job when they endure workplace ostracism. This is
411 because they might be more tenured (therefore experienced for the position) or they believe
412 to have valuable, tacit, and transferable skills set that can be used elsewhere. In other words,
413 external employability as a personal resource will accentuate or prompt an ostracized
414 employee intention to leave the current job with the expectation of a better employment
415 environment. Therefore, we postulate that:

416 **H4.** Perceived external employability strengthens the relationship of workplace
417 ostracism with turnover intention so that the intention is stronger when perceived external
418 employability is high than when it is low.

419 **3. Method**

420 **3.1. Sample and procedure**

421 This empirical study gathered data from four- and five-star hotel employees in North Cyprus.
422 At the time of the study, there were 22 five-star and 5 four-star hotels with a cumulated bed
423 capacity of 17,240, which is more than 2/3 of the total accommodation establishments
424 capacity based on the statistics from the Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE, 2020).
425 The seasonality of tourism in North Cyprus peaks in July and August and extends till late
426 November, when the average occupancy rate plunges below 50 percent (MTE, 2020). The
427 resulting impact on the economy in this sector heavily affects the workforce, substantially
428 waned from part-time employees during low periods. The present study, therefore, used a
429 judgmental sampling to include only full-time employees whose organizational life
430 experience spans broader and more consistently than part-time employees (Bayighomog &
431 Arasli, 2019; Karatepe et al., 2018). This study also focused on four- and five-star hotels
432 because they are assumed to be leading the industry in terms of upscale standards and service

433 quality (Hsieh & Karatepe, 2019). This translates into more work demands and intense
434 interpersonal interactions from their employees, subjecting them to more occupational
435 stressors (Huang, van der Veen, & Song, 2018; Hwang et al., 2014).

436 The sample consisted of full-time employees, such as waiters, receptionists,
437 housekeepers, security, and kitchen personnel. The Management of 15 five-star and 2 four-
438 star hotels agreed to participate in the study, although some did not allow the research team to
439 personally distribute the surveys to employees. Nonetheless, the participants received surveys
440 in sealable envelopes accompanied by a cover letter informing them that their participation
441 was voluntary; their answers were solely used for research purposes on a confidential and
442 anonymous manner, and will not be evaluated on a right or wrong basis. These ex-ante
443 procedures were observed to control for threats of common method variance and social
444 desirability bias (Karatepe et al., 2020; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012).

445 The sample size adequacy was determined by conducting a statistical power analysis
446 using G*Power 3 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). To achieve a minimum power of
447 0.80 (Cohen, 1988) at the 95 percent confidence level, for an anticipated medium effect size,
448 the results of a correlation/regression power analysis of multiple regression with 10 predictors
449 (workplace ostracism, psychological distress, resilience, external employability, the 2
450 interaction terms workplace ostracism*resilience and workplace ostracism*external
451 employability, and the 4 control variables) revealed a minimum sample of 118 participants
452 was sufficient to detect large effect sizes. 400 self-administered surveys were distributed and
453 321 usable ones remained after the screening, yielding a response rate of 80.28 percent
454 (321/400). Table 1 provides exhaustive details of the participants' demographic profile

455 [Insert Table 1 here]

456 **3.2.Measures**

457 The measures used in this study were withdrawn from the existing literature. The survey was
458 initially drafted in English then translated into Turkish using the translation and back
459 translation procedure (McGorry, 2000). The 10-item scale from Ferris et al.'s (2008) was
460 employed to measure workplace ostracism. A sample statement was "Others at work shut you
461 out of the conversation", rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale from "never" (1) to "always"
462 (7). The 10-item Hopkins Symptoms Checklist (HSCL – 10) was adopted from Kleppang and
463 Hagquist (2016) to measure employee psychological distress. Participants were asked to
464 report the frequency of 10 symptoms (e.g. "Feeling hopeless about the future") on a 4-point
465 scale from "Not at all" (1) to "Extremely" (4). Resilience was assessed using six items from
466 Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007). A sample item such as "I can be "on my own," so to
467 speak, at work if I have to" was measured on a 6-point anchor from "Strongly agree" (6) to
468 "strongly disagree" (1).

469 The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9) (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova,
470 2006) was employed to operationalize work engagement. Each item (e.g., "I am enthusiastic
471 about my job") was rated in terms of its frequency of occurrence from 0 (Never) to 6 (Daily).
472 Three items were taken from Kim, Poulston, and Sankaran (2017) and adapted to
473 operationalize turnover intention on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5
474 (strongly disagree). A sample statement was "I am seriously thinking of quitting my job".
475 Finally, six items from Rothwell and Arnold (2007) were employed to measure perceived
476 external employability. Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1
477 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly disagree). An indicative item was "I could easily get a
478 similar job to mine in almost any organization".

479 **4. Results**

480 **4.1.Measurement model**

481 The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed that the model had a good fit to
482 the data: $\chi^2/df = 1.481$, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.962, Tucker-Lewis Index
483 (TLI) = 0.962, Incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.959, root mean square error of approximation
484 (RMSEA) = 0.039 and standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR) = 0.044. These
485 statistics met the recommended cutoff criteria (Hu & Bentler, 1999) and provided support for
486 the appropriateness of the model in this research. Table 2 depicts standardized factor loadings
487 (SFLs) and their *t*-values, average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR), and
488 Cronbach's alpha of each latent construct. The SFLs were significant and exceeded 0.5 (Hair
489 et al., 2010), except one item of resilience and three items of external employability that were
490 dropped during the CFA due to unsatisfactorily low loadings. The AVE estimates were
491 greater than 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) and ranged between 0.56 and 0.69. These criteria
492 provided sufficient support for convergent validity.

493 [Insert Table 2 here]

494 The discriminant validity was strongly demonstrated as (1) each AVE square root was
495 greater than each pair of latent constructs' correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and (2)
496 scrutiny of the correlation matrix (Table 3) shows that the highest correlation is 0.396 which
497 is far below 0.85, while none of the correlations' confidence interval straddled 1 (Anderson &
498 Gerbing, 1988). Finally, all latent constructs met the reliability requirements as all CR and
499 alpha values exceeded the 0.7 thresholds (Hair et al., 2010; Nunnally, 1978).

500 [Insert Table 3 here]

501 Because this study collected data from the same source, the likelihood of common
502 method variance (CMV) threat remains (Podsakoff et al., 2012). To control for CMV, we
503 conducted a series of CFA and compared competing models. As displayed in Table 4, the

504 proposed 6-factor model was superior in fit to the 4-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 (9) = 1217.3, p <$
505 0.01), while the single-factor model was significantly worse ($\Delta\chi^2 (15) = 4577.06, p < 0.01$).
506 Furthermore, the result of Harman's test outlined that the first emerging factor explained only
507 22.16% of the variance. Therefore, CMV did not pose a serious threat to this study.

508 [Insert Table 4 here]

509 4.2. Test of mediation hypotheses

510 A structural equation model (SEM) was estimated to test the mediation hypotheses and
511 following the recommendations of Hayes and Scharkow (2013) and Zhao, Lynch Jr, and
512 Chen (2010), we performed a 95% bias-corrected confidence interval with 10,000 bootstrap
513 replications to gauge the significance of the indirect paths. A confidence interval that does
514 not straddle zero indicates a significant indirect effect. The structural model showed a good
515 fit to the data as indicated by the relevant indices: $\chi^2 (477) = 696.619, p < 0.01, \chi^2/df = 1.46,$
516 $CFI = 0.973, TLI = 0.971, IFI = 0.974, RMSEA [90\% CI] = 0.038 [0.032, 0.044]$ and $SRMR =$
517 0.048 . It also explained respectively 10.8%, 15.8%, and 1.3% of the variance in
518 psychological distress, turnover intention, and work engagement. Workplace ostracism was
519 significantly associated with psychological distress ($\beta = 0.287, t = 4.612, p < 0.001$), which in
520 turn was significantly associated with turnover intention ($\beta = 0.398, t = 6.069, p < 0.001$) but
521 not with work engagement ($\beta = -0.114, t = -1.905, p = 0.057$) as depicted in Figure 1.
522 Psychological distress did not appear to mediate the relationship between workplace
523 ostracism and work engagement because the indirect effect failed to be significantly different
524 from zero ($ab = -0.045, SE_{boot} = 0.027, 95\% BC CI [-0.105, 0.000]$). Thus Hypothesis 1 was
525 not supported. On the contrary, the indirect effect of workplace ostracism on turnover
526 intention via psychological distress was significantly different from zero ($ab = 0.142, SE_{boot} =$
527 $0.037, 95\% BC CI [0.077, 0.223]$), providing support for Hypothesis 2. A post hoc analysis
528 did not reveal any significant change in the estimated paths when demographic variables

529 were controlled for, however, only education was significantly associated with psychological
530 distress ($\gamma_{\text{edu}} = 0.16, t = 2.84, p < 0.01$)

531 [Insert Figure 1 here]

532 **4.3. Test of moderation hypotheses**

533 Hierarchical moderated regressions were estimated to test hypotheses 3 and 4 (see Table 5).

534 Workplace ostracism, resilience, and perceived external employability were initially mean-

535 centered before calculating the product term for each proposed moderating effect. The

536 interaction term workplace ostracism*resilience (Model 3) was significant ($\beta = 0.19, t =$

537 $3.675, p < 0.001$) and explained a significant 3.7% increase in the total variance of work

538 engagement ($R^2 = 0.17, F(1, 317) = 21.624, p < 0.001$) above and beyond the main effects.

539 This interaction term also indicated a small effect size (Cohen's $f^2 = 0.04$). Overall, the results

540 supported Hypothesis 3. Contrary to our expectation, the interaction term of workplace

541 ostracism*perceived external employability (Model 6) failed to be significant ($\beta = 0.081,$

542 *n.s.*). Thus, H6 was not supported.

543 Next, we probed the significant interaction effect with the Johnson-Neyman technique

544 (Johnson & Neyman, 1936) using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2018). This

545 procedure "solves for the values of M for which the effect of X on Y becomes or ceases to be

546 significant" (Carden, Holtzman, & Strube, 2017, p. 2) and is less arbitrary than the

547 conventional pick-a-point approach (Carden et al., 2017; Hayes, 2018). As depicted in Figure

548 2, two regions of significance of the effect of workplace ostracism on work engagement

549 emerged at the values of (1) resilience ≤ 3.06 ($\beta = -0.13, t = -1.967, p = 0.05, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.26,$

550 $0.00]$) and (2) resilience ≥ 4.49 ($\beta = 0.20, t = 1.967, p = 0.05, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.00, 0.40]$). Precisely,

551 workplace ostracism was associated with lower work engagement at a medium to a low level

552 of resilience (i.e., resilience ≤ 3.06). In contrast, it was associated with higher work

553 engagement at a relatively higher level of resilience (i.e., resilience \geq 4.49). No significant
554 effect was identified at the resilience level between 3.08 and 4.48.

555 [Insert Table 5 here]

556 [Insert Figure 2 here]

557 **5. Discussion**

558 Under the framework of the Conservation of Resource theory and the Job Demands-
559 Resources model, the foremost objective of the present study was to shed light on possible
560 mechanisms and conditions elucidating the effect of workplace ostracism on employee's work
561 engagement and turnover intention. The results obtained from a field study data provided
562 mixed support to the hypotheses.

563 First, the empirical evidence suggested that workplace ostracism significantly
564 inhibited employee work engagement and increased quitting intentions. That is, workplace
565 ostracism is a relational stressor that depletes feelings of belongingness. In response to this
566 threat, an ostracized employee develops withdrawal cognitions and attitudes that act as a
567 defensive mechanism against further exhaustion of emotional resources, which are already
568 being depleted to offset the resulting emotional imbalance. It is congruent with the COR
569 theory's core tenet of resources retention and protection (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, &
570 Westman, 2018), and previous findings (Howard et al., 2020; Hsieh & Karatepe, 2019; Leung
571 et al., 2011; Turkoglu & Dalgic, 2019; Zheng et al., 2016).

572 Second, the findings also suggest that workplace ostracism stimulates turnover
573 intention through the mediating effect of psychological distress. That is, the state of
574 emptiness arising from ostracism's uncontrolled emotional and psychological demands is a
575 factual facilitator of quitting intentions. Carpenter & Berry (2014) argued that employees

576 would ultimately resort to this alternative when they feel emotionally sapped off. In this same
577 vein, recent studies empirically sustained this argument as they found that ostracism
578 facilitated psychological distress (Waldeck, Tyndall, Riva, & Chmiel, 2017), but also
579 occupational stress, which in turn subsequently determined nonattendance and turnover
580 intention (Hsieh & Karatepe, 2019; Vui-Yee & Yen-Hwa, 2019).

581 In contrast to our expectations, the findings from our sample did not support the
582 mediating role of psychological distress in the relationship between workplace ostracism and
583 work engagement. It was in part due to the non-significant influence of psychological distress
584 on employee work engagement at the 95% confidence level. We argued that feelings of
585 dysphoria, anxiety, and loss of confidence could undermine their engagement at work, owing
586 to anterior research highlighting that job induced stressors such as hindrance stressors (e.g.,
587 Olugbade & Karatepe, 2019) and abusive supervisor (e.g., Lyu, Zhu, Zhong, & Hu, 2016)
588 hindered employees' engagement. It is perhaps because as an outcome of stress (Bourbonnais,
589 Comeau, Vezina, & Dion, 1998; Regehr, LeBlanc, Barath, Balch, & Birze, 2013),
590 psychological distress connotes a state of mental illness or ill-being that could desensitize
591 employees from engaging in their job, due in fact to limited or depleted psychological
592 resources. However, one may still need some resources to invest even to exhibit job attitudes
593 like work (dis)engagement, while it may not necessarily be the case for (withdrawal)
594 intentions. This may hence explain the contrasting mediation results involving turnover
595 intention and work engagement.

596 Moreover, the findings supported the moderating impact of resilience on the
597 relationship between ostracism and work engagement. Specifically, the results suggest that as
598 they experience more ostracism, less resilient employees are more vulnerable to the stress toll
599 which significantly cripples their engagement. On the contrary, employees with greater

600 resilience appear to be thriving as they are even more engaged even as workplace ostracism
601 increases. As recommended by the conservation of resources (COR) theory, those with higher
602 resources and psychological capital can better mitigate the loss of their resources and bounce
603 back from stressful events (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Thus, employees benefiting from a
604 more significant resilience capital reported an improved engagement in their jobs despite
605 stressful work conditions, in contrast to employees with weaker resilience. This is because
606 more resilient people effectively withstand and control resources loss, and can strive in the
607 face of adversity (Hsu et al., 2013; Waldeck et al., 2015).

608 The workplace ostracism literature indicates that workplace ostracism may also lead
609 to positive outcomes from employees, specifically when they attempt to regain social
610 acceptance by showing more compliance towards the group (Mao et al., 2018). It appears that
611 resilient employees, thanks to their great supply of such idiosyncratic resources, can better
612 repress the overload of stress to exhibit greater engagement. Perhaps this tendency may not
613 just be due to dispositional attributes, but also an active process to regain acknowledgment,
614 acceptance, and integration from other group members.

615 Finally, we proposed external employability as the moderator that strengthens the
616 effect of ostracism on turnover intention. This was rooted in the premise that external
617 employability would amplify an ostracized employee's intention to seek a less cumbersome
618 position outside the organization to prevent further psychological distress. In contrast to this
619 sentiment, external employability in the current study did not appear to inflate the intention to
620 quit significantly. This is because the nefarious effect of social exclusion and the resulting ill-
621 being is sufficient enough to trigger turnover intention (DiPietro, Moreo, & Cain, 2020),
622 regardless of whether one can secure another position elsewhere. In fact, because turnover is
623 quasi-prevalent in the hospitality industry (Bani-Melhem, Quratulain, & Al-Hawari, 2019;

624 Self, Gordon, & Ghosh, 2020), employees relative ease of mobility seems therefore to hold a
625 minor role in urging quitting intentions from ostracized employees.

626 **5.1.Theoretical implications**

627 The current study fills the scanty literature investigating the effect of ostracism on work
628 engagement and turnover intention in the hospitality industry. To date, only Leung et al.
629 (2011) examined the relationship between ostracism on work engagement in the Chinese
630 hospitality context, while the effect of ostracism on turnover intention has been severely
631 overlooked. Further, it unravels the significant role of psychological distress in the process of
632 an ostracized employee's quitting intentions. Thus, drawing on the COR and JD-R theories
633 and based on the empirical findings, our study revealed that ostracism depletes personal
634 resources causing psychological distress and turnover intention. It also decreases work
635 engagement among employees since the pain experienced by ostracism or social exclusion is
636 equivalent to physical pain (William, 2011) and severely undermines the motivation to
637 perform above standards.

638 Second, the present study highlights the role of individual differences regarding their
639 responses to psychological stressors. The study postulated that resilience curbs the nefarious
640 role of ostracism on work engagement, congruent with the COR (Hobfoll et al., 2018) and
641 JD-R (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007) theory. It appears that workplace ostracism may be more of
642 a hindrance stressor that prompts low engagement from less resilient employees. In contrast,
643 it seems to be a challenge stressor for employees with a greater resilience capital that instead
644 stimulates their engagement at work. In this sense, hospitality management scholars (e.g.
645 Karatepe, Beirami, Bouzari, & Safavi, 2014; Karatepe et al., 2018) have underscored that
646 contrary to hindrance stressors, challenge stressors tend to enhance hotel employees
647 engagement. The present study, therefore, provides another perspective to ascertain the dual

648 negative and positive influence of workplace ostracism on employee job attitudes. Resilience
649 appears to be one of the factors that determine the direction of the influence of workplace
650 ostracism on work engagement. It would be of prime importance to extant workplace
651 ostracism literature that this tendency is further investigated not only on work engagement
652 (for confirmation) but also on various job attitudes, behaviors, and performance.

653 **5.2. Practical implications**

654 This study provides significant implications for human resource (HR) managers. HR experts
655 may need to adopt policies to prevent ostracism and create a secure environment for
656 employees so that they will not leave their job or show reduced work engagement. First,
657 proactive measures may best control the flourishing of workplace ostracism, which is covert
658 and subtle and challenging to frontally address by managers. For example, open and
659 unconstrained communication channels between the personal and the management that
660 allows ostracism targets to report acts of mistreatment. Doing this will allow victims to
661 relieve themselves from a heavy emotional burden, but also understand if possible the reasons
662 for their exclusion. Subsequently, enable employers to maintain partial control over this sort
663 of noxious and latent organizational dynamics that contribute to targets rumination, distress,
664 and eventually may put the organization at risk of losing (potentially talented) employees,
665 and incur costs related to turnover. In the hospitality industry, it is more cost-effective to
666 retain employees in their existing jobs and keep experienced employees than to recruit and
667 train new ones (Robinson et al., 2013). Employee retention also helps to maintain service
668 standards and promotes the loyalty of guests who like to be served by specific employees.

669 The current results highlight the significance of personal resource like resilience in
670 mitigating the negative effect of ostracism on work engagement, as resilient employees are
671 more prone to maintain (or increase) their level of engagement at work when being ostracized

672 in contrast to low resilience employees who observe a significant drop in work engagement.
673 It appears more necessary than ever before, that constant personal development workshops
674 and training plans be designed for employees, to help them handle and control stressful
675 events. Resilience, but also other psychological factors, and coping mechanism are
676 particularly critical for service employees who face stressors from colleagues, customers,
677 work attributes daily. Training employees to be aware of these attributes and how to
678 appropriately exploit them can help both employers and employees to mitigate the negative
679 consequence of workplace ostracism, but also all forms of hindrance stressors.

680 Hsieh and Karatepe (2019) underscored that some hotels' management in Taiwan
681 usually holds yearly incentive trips for their workforce to acknowledge and appreciate their
682 contribution to the organization. Such practices if implemented consistently may enhance a
683 friendly and inclusive climate, and instigate an esprit de corps among group members. This
684 sort of group climate in turn can alleviate the likelihood of exclusion or mistreatment, and the
685 resulting psychological strains that arouse withdrawal cognitions and afflict employees' work
686 engagement and job performance.

687 **5.3.Limitations and future research**

688 There are several noteworthy shortcomings inherent to this study that can provide avenues for
689 future research. The conceptual approach and level of analysis of workplace ostracism in our
690 study were at the individual level, irrespective of their job category (e.g. receptionists,
691 waiters, housekeepers, kitchen staff). However, these jobs are heterogeneous by nature and
692 eventually subject relevant employees to varying intensity of stress exposure. This argument
693 is backed by Faulkner & Patiar (1997) who found that in comparison to front-office staff,
694 housekeeping staff undergoes lesser stress. Future research would provide a significant
695 contribution to the workplace ostracism literature by examining if a difference arises in the
696 relationship between workplace ostracism and work engagement or any other endogenous

697 variable. In this vein too, the proposed research model was exclusive to the construct of
698 interest and overlooked other possible exogenous and endogenous variables related to work
699 engagement and turnover intention. Moreover, other factors of psychological capital, such as
700 self-efficacy and optimism, should be tested as possible mediators or moderators of
701 workplace ostracism and its consequences. Thus, we recommend future studies to include
702 these in their theoretical models to extend our understandings of how these variables are
703 interrelated with the variables proposed in this study.

704 Another limitation in this study is the focus on four- and five-star hotel full-time
705 employees, making the findings prone to cautious generalizability. Howard et al. (2020)
706 reported that part-time employees reported more ostracism than full-time employees. Thus,
707 we call on further investigations to include part-time staffers and more generally, explore the
708 studied relationships in other sectors of the hospitality and other industries. Moreover, the
709 current study applied a cross-sectional design to collect data; this approach does not allow for
710 the provision of causal inferences. A longitudinal study design is needed to evaluate the
711 causal inferences of the variables' relationships. Future research might also consider the way
712 that perpetrators choose their victims, and also study the victims' characteristics and
713 personalities, which trigger the ostracizing behavior from perpetrators. Furthermore, future
714 studies could observe ostracizers' characteristics to see which kinds of individuals are more
715 motivated to engage in this behavior over others.

716

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1090

1091 **Table 1.** Respondents' demographic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	195	60.7
Female	126	39.3
Marital status		
Single	194	60.4
Married	127	39.6
Age		
18 – 27	117	36.4
28 – 37	135	42.1
38 – 47	48	15.0
48+	21	6.5
Organizational Tenure		
Less than 2 years	57	17.8
3 – 6 years	224	69.8
7 – 10 years	33	10.3
More than 10 years	7	2.2
Position		
Waiter	138	43.0
Housekeeping	43	13.4
Kitchen	75	23.4
Reception	28	8.7
Security	37	11.5
Education level		
Up to primary school	49	15.3
Secondary/high school	124	38.6
Some college education	94	29.3
Bachelor degree or higher	54	16.8

1092 *Note:* $N = 321$. 'Some college education' refers to undergraduate years of education that include a non-

1093 completion of a Bachelor degree, achievement of an Associate degree or a Higher Education Diploma.

1094

1095 **Table 2.** Confirmatory factor analysis results

Constructs and items	SFL	<i>t</i>	AVE	CR	α
Ostracism			0.64	0.95	0.95
Others ignored you at work	0.682	1			
Others left the area when you entered	0.721	11.974			
My greetings have gone unanswered at work	0.799	13.126			
I involuntarily sat alone in a crowded lunchroom at work	0.841	13.756			
Others avoided me at work	0.854	13.903			
I noticed others would not look at me at work	0.853	13.896			
Others at work shut me out of the conversation	0.844	13.796			
Others refused to talk to me at work	0.817	13.392			
Others at work treated me as if I weren't there	0.779	12.843			
Others at work did not invite me or ask me if I wanted anything when they went out for a coffee break	0.781	12.877			
Resilience			0.69	0.92	0.92
When I have a setback at work, I have trouble recovering from it, moving on (<i>R</i>)	-	-			
I usually manage difficulties one way or another at work	0.75	1			
I can be “on my own,” so to speak, at work if I have to	0.823	15.109			
I usually take stressful things at work in stride	0.841	15.477			
I can get through difficult times at work because I’ve experienced difficulty before	0.869	16.04			
I feel I can handle many things at a time at this job	0.855	15.762			
Work engagement			0.68	0.95	0.95
At my work, I feel that I am bursting with energy ^v	0.767	1			
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous ^v	0.889	17.441			
I am enthusiastic about my job ^d	0.858	16.657			
My job inspires me ^d	0.832	16.09			
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work ^v	0.805	15.438			
I feel happy when I am working intensely ^a	0.847	16.436			
I am proud of the work that I do ^d	0.81	15.594			
I am immersed in my work ^a	0.775	14.758			
I get carried away when I’m working ^a	0.83	13.946			
Psychological distress			0.58	0.93	0.94
Suddenly scared for no reason.	0.692	1			
Feeling fearful.	0.748	15.611			
Faintness, dizziness, or weakness.	0.811	13.335			
Feeling tense or keyed up.	0.838	13.729			
Blaming yourself for things.	0.76	12.592			
Difficulty in falling asleep or staying asleep.	0.796	13.132			
Feeling blue.	0.651	10.883			

Feeling of worthlessness.	0.784	12.905			
Feeling everything is an effort.	0.81	13.29			
Feeling hopeless about future.	0.712	11.853			
Turnover intention			0.64	0.84	0.84
As soon as I can find a better job, I will leave this hotel.	0.821	1			
I am actively looking for a job at another hotel.	0.856	14.482			
I am seriously thinking of quitting my job.	0.718	12.966			
Perceived employability			0.56	0.79	0.77
I could easily retrain to make myself more employable elsewhere	0.634	1			
I have a good knowledge of opportunities for me outside of this organization even if they are quite different to what I do now	-	-			
If I needed to, I could easily get another job like mine in a similar organization	0.655	9.847			
I could easily get a similar job to mine in almost any organization	0.924	9.235			
Anyone with my level of skills and knowledge, and similar job and organizational experience, will be highly sought after by employers	-	-			
I could get any job, anywhere, so long as my skills and experience were reasonably relevant	-	-			

1096 *Note:* SFL = standardized factor loadings significant at $p < 0.001$, AVE = average variance extracted, CR =
1097 composite reliability; (-) item dropped during confirmatory factor analysis, (R) = reverse-coded; ^a denotes
1098 absorption, ^d denote dedication, ^v denote vigor.
1099

Table 3. Descriptive statistics, correlations, and discriminant validity

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Ostracism	2.72	1.01	0.799					
2. Resilience	3.38	1.06	-0.129*	0.828				
3. Work engagement	3.99	1.28	-0.122*	0.391***	0.824			
4. Psychological distress	2.90	0.78	0.285***	-0.078	-0.111 [†]	0.762		
5. Perceived employability	2.34	0.77	-0.040	-0.023	-0.019	-0.152*	0.749	
6. Turnover intention	3.51	1.09	0.181**	-0.092	-0.059	0.396***	-0.016	0.801

Note: $N = 321$. [†] $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. AVE square roots are reported on the diagonal.

Table 4. Measurement model comparison

Competing models	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δ df	χ^2 /df	CFI	IFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]	Model comparison
Model 1. Measurement model (6 correlated factor)	1025.01	711	-	-	1.442	0.968	0.968	0.965	0.042	0.037 [0.032, 0.042]	-
Model 2. 4-factor model (TOI+EE, WE+RES)	2242.31	720	1217.3	9	3.114	0.844	0.844	0.831	0.085	0.081 [0.077, 0.085]	1 and 2
Model 3. Single factor model	5602.07	726	4577.06	15	7.716	0.500	0.503	0.463	0.212	0.145 [0.141, 0.148]	1 and 3

Note: $\Delta\chi^2$ significant at $p < 0.05$. TOI = turnover intention, EMP = employability, WE = work engagement, RES = resilience

Table 5. Moderated regression results

	Work engagement			Turnover intention		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Workplace ostracism	-0.117*	-0.070	-0.045	0.165**	0.167**	0.107
Resilience		0.351***	0.372***			
Perceived external employability					0.017	0.016
Workplace ostracism x Resilience			0.190***			
Workplace ostracism x EXTERNAL EMPLOYABILITY						0.081
<i>F</i>	4.413*	24.71***	21.96***	8.964**	4.515*	3.343*
<i>R</i> ²	0.014	0.135	0.17	0.027	0.028	0.031
ΔR^2	-	0.121	0.035	-	0.001	0.003

Note: *N* = 321. **p* < 0.05; ***p* < 0.01; ****p* < 0.001. Standardized coefficients (β) are reported.

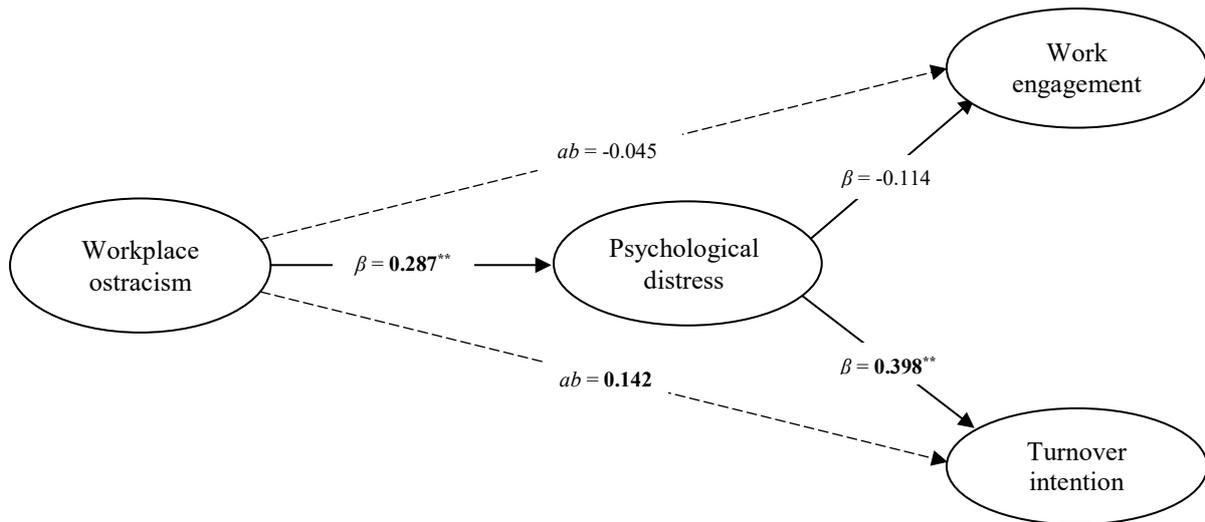


Figure 1. Structural model. Plain lines indicate direct paths, dashed lines indicate indirect paths; significant parameters are in bold; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

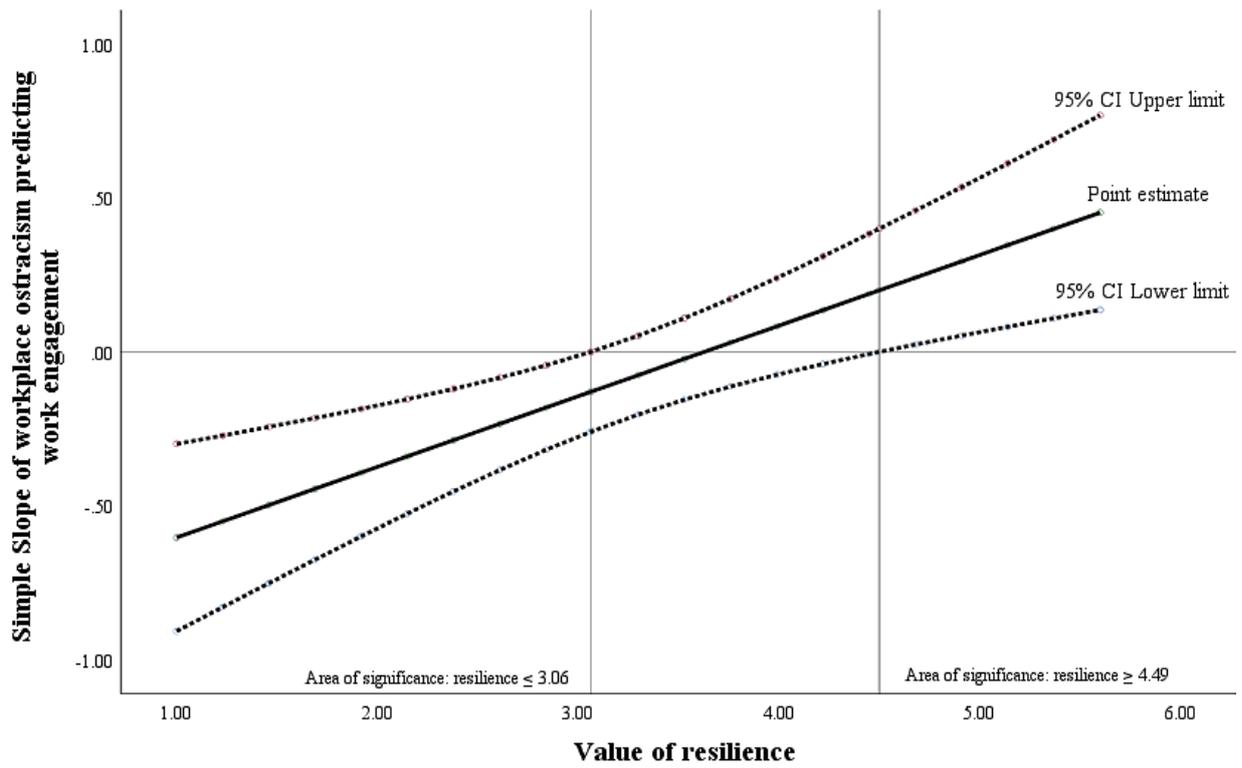


Figure 2. The effect of workplace ostracism on work engagement is significant at relative low and high level of resilience.