

The Moderating Role of Need for Affiliation in Relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Pro-Social Behaviour in Sri Lankan IT Industry

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Abstract

The IT sector in Sri Lanka has emerged as a pivotal element in enhancing national economic development, however, the heightened expectation for performance, swift technological progressions, and norms of virtual communication can concurrently lead to interpersonal difficulties, encompassing subtle instances of social exclusion. Workplace ostracism has emerged as a significant social stressor influencing both emotional well-being and behaviour. While most studies emphasize its negative effects, this research explores the potential of ostracism to stimulate pro-social behaviour (PSB), among employees. Based on the Temporal Need-Threat Model of Ostracism, this study examines how the need for affiliation (NA) influences the association between workplace ostracism (WO) and pro-social behaviour within the IT sector in Sri Lanka. Data was gathered through a convenience sample comprising 142 full-time employees engaged in IT enterprises in Sri Lanka. A systematic questionnaire employing pre-validated metrics was utilised for assessment, and data analysis was performed utilising SPSS version 24. The findings indicated a notable positive correlation between WO and PSB ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$), signifying that certain employees may react to social exclusion by adopting more cooperative or altruistic behaviours. Furthermore, NA demonstrated a robust positive correlation with PSB ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, the interaction between WO and NA was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.04$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$), indicating that individuals with a pronounced need for affiliation are more likely to exhibit PSB under conditions of ostracism. These findings extend the Temporal Need-Threat Model by clarifying how affiliation needs shape responses to workplace ostracism. The study advances workplace behaviour theory by highlighting relational differences and urges IT organisations to foster inclusivity and address interpersonal motives to reduce ostracism and promote pro-social behaviour.

Keywords: need for affiliation, pro-social behaviour, Sri Lankan IT industry, temporal need-threat model, workplace ostracism