

Workplace Ostracism and Creativity among Startup Employees: The Mediating Role of Workplace Loneliness and the Moderating Role of Resilience

Workplace Ostracism dan Kreativitas Pada Karyawan Perusahaan Rintisan: Peran Kesepian Di Tempat Kerja Sebagai Mediator dan Resiliensi Sebagai Moderator

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Abstract

Employee creativity in startups is a crucial factor in fostering creative ideas to adapt to a dynamic work environment. However, workplace social experiences, such as workplace ostracism, can affect employees' psychological well-being, thereby affecting their creativity. This study explored the effect of workplace ostracism affects employee creativity through workplace loneliness and the role of resilience as a moderating variable in the relationship between workplace loneliness and employee creativity. This study was designed using a cross-sectional quantitative approach. The study involved 305 employees working at startups selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected via a self-report questionnaire using a Likert scale and analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 software. The findings suggest that workplace ostracism affects employee creativity through workplace loneliness. In this context, workplace loneliness acts as a mediating variable linking workplace ostracism to employee creativity. Additionally, resilience acts as a moderator in the relationship between workplace loneliness and employee creativity. Employees possessing strong resilience have a diminished adverse effect of loneliness on creativity in contrast to their low-resilience counterparts. These findings underscore the need of cultivating an inclusive workplace and enhance employee resilience in startups to sustain creativity.

Keywords : Workplace Ostracism, Workplace Loneliness, Resilience, Creativity, StartUp Employee

Abstrak

Kreativitas dalam perusahaan rintisan merupakan aspek penting untuk beradaptasi di lingkungan kerja yang dinamis. Namun, pengalaman sosial di tempat kerja seperti *workplace ostracism*, dapat memengaruhi kondisi psikologis karyawan, sehingga berdampak pada kreativitas. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana *workplace ostracism* memengaruhi kreativitas karyawan melalui kesepian di tempat kerja, serta peran resiliensi sebagai variabel moderasi dalam hubungan antara kesepian di tempat kerja dan kreativitas karyawan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif *cross-sectional*. Penelitian ini melibatkan 305 karyawan yang bekerja di perusahaan rintisan yang dipilih melalui teknik *convenience sampling*. Data diperoleh melalui kuesioner *self-report* dengan skala Likert, lalu diolah menggunakan metode *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM) dengan bantuan aplikasi SmartPLS 4. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan *workplace ostracism* memiliki pengaruh terhadap kreativitas karyawan melalui kesepian di tempat kerja. Dalam hal ini, kesepian di tempat kerja berfungsi sebagai variabel mediasi yang menghubungkan *workplace ostracism* dengan kreativitas karyawan. Selain itu, resiliensi berperan sebagai moderator dalam hubungan antara kesepian di tempat kerja dan kreativitas karyawan, dimana karyawan dengan resiliensi tinggi menunjukkan penurunan dampak negatif kesepian terhadap kreativitas dibandingkan mereka yang memiliki resiliensi lebih rendah. Hasil ini menunjukkan pentingnya membangun lingkungan kerja yang inklusif dan penguatan resiliensi karyawan untuk menjaga kreativitas di perusahaan rintisan.

Kata Kunci : Workplace Ostracism, Kesepian, Resiliensi, Kreativitas, Karyawan Perusahaan Rintisan

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INTRODUCTION

In an era of increasingly fierce business competition, employee creativity is essential for surviving in uncertain times and continuing to grow by facing and overcoming various challenges (Yu et al., 2019). Creativity is an employee's ability to generate new and useful ideas, whether in the form of products, services, work practices, production methods, or administrative processes that benefit the organization George & Zhou (2001). According to the Future of Jobs Report survey, 73% of companies state that creativity is one of the top-priority skills needed in today's workplace (World Economic Forum, 2023). This indicates that creativity is a vital asset in supporting an organization's success.

Creativity is a key factor in a company's ability to maintain sustainability and grow in a competitive business environment, particularly for startups. Therefore, employee creativity is a trait that all members across every division of a startup must possess (Syarizka, 2020). Startups are a type of business that faces various challenges, such as uncertainty in dealing with market changes while operating with limited resources (Skala, 2019). Unlike established companies, startups are characterized by a lean organizational structure, a small team size, and a very high level of interdependence among employees in carrying out the company's day-to-day operations (Salamzadeh & Kesim, 2015). This condition highlights the critical role of employees in startups, as the creativity of each individual has a significant impact on organizational sustainability. Furthermore, limited resources, both financial and human, make startups highly dependent on employees' creativity as a competitive capability in responding to business competition (Freeman & Engel, 2007). In Indonesia, the number of startups has grown rapidly, making the country home to the largest startup ecosystem in Southeast Asia in 2025, with a total of 3,144 startups (Nurhanisah, 2025). However, many startups fail to achieve sustainable growth. To date, only approximately 10% of startups in Indonesia have managed to survive (Bestari, 2022). In addition, according to the *Global Innovation Index* (2025), Indonesia ranks 55th globally, indicating that its level of innovation still requires improvement. In efforts to foster innovation, employee creativity has become a crucial factor contributing to organizational sustainability (Lua et al., 2024). Moreover, creative thinking serves as the fundamental basis for generating innovation, making creativity an essential element in the innovation process (Hermina, 2024). Therefore, companies need to carefully examine the various factors that can either support or hinder employees' creative behavior in the workplace.

In reality, the work environment is not always conducive to fostering employee creativity. Creativity is influenced not only by individual factors but also by social relationships, the extent to which employees are accepted in their work environment, and the social support they receive (Zhang et al., 2016). One factor that may hinder employee creativity is workplace ostracism. According to the definition proposed by Ferris et al. (2008) workplace ostracism refers

to a condition in which individuals perceive themselves as being excluded or ignored by their coworkers or supervisors in the workplace. Workplace ostracism can also be understood as a form of workplace violence that occurs within the work environment (Chappell & Martino, 2006). According to a survey conducted by the *International Labour Organization* (2022) nearly one in five workers (17.9%), equivalent to approximately 583 million people, reported experiencing psychological violence in the form of unacceptable behaviors in the workplace. Furthermore, a study by Manninen et al. (2024) found that 73% of employee respondents had experienced workplace ostracism at least once during the previous year. These findings indicate that workplace ostracism is a common phenomenon in the workplace.

Although workplace ostracism is a passive phenomenon, it can have profound psychological consequences for those who experience it. Individuals who are subjected to persistent ostracism have even reported that they would rather experience physical or verbal aggression than be excluded, as such treatment would at least make them feel that their existence is recognized (Sharma & Dhar, 2022). Furthermore, when employees experience workplace ostracism, it hinders their personal and professional development, thereby reducing their creativity in generating new ideas Zhang et al. (2023).

One emotional response that may arise among individuals who experience workplace ostracism is workplace loneliness (Hu et al., 2024). According to Wright et al. (2006) workplace loneliness is a psychological state that occurs when individuals perceive a deficiency in the quality or quantity of their social relationships within the workplace. This suggests that loneliness is not solely related to the frequency of social interactions but also to the extent to which individuals experience emotional closeness and social support in their work environment. When employees experience workplace loneliness, they tend to have lower self-confidence and become more reluctant to take risks by trying new things, which ultimately hinders their creativity (Firoz & Chaudhary, 2022; Peng et al., 2017).

Although workplace loneliness can negatively affect work-related behaviors, including reducing employee creativity, not all individuals respond to such experiences in the same way. Individuals who undergo similar emotional experiences may differ in how they cope with these emotions due to their personal characteristics (Hu et al., 2024). One personal factor that may mitigate the adverse effects of negative experiences is resilience. Resilience serves as a protective mechanism that enables individuals to regulate their emotions and prevent negative responses from emerging (Noya & Huwae, 2025). Campbell & Stein (2007) define resilience as an individual's ability to continue thriving despite experiencing adversity. A study by Dhir et al. (2023) that employees' resilience can buffer the detrimental effects of workplace loneliness on their psychological well-being. Individuals with higher levels of resilience tend to believe that they are capable of controlling and influencing various events

in their lives (Resma & Prastika, 2023). Therefore, resilience may function as a personal resource that enables individuals to cope with adversity while reducing the detrimental impact of workplace loneliness on employee creativity.

This study is grounded in Hobfoll (1989) Conservation of Resources Theory, which posits that individuals are motivated to manage their resources by acquiring, preserving, and enhancing them, including social support, time, energy, and self-esteem. This theory further explains that resource loss is perceived as more psychologically salient and impactful than resource gain. Moreover, individuals with greater resource reserves generally demonstrate greater resilience to potential resource loss and are more effective in acquiring additional resources. In contrast, individuals or organizations with limited resources are more vulnerable to resource depletion and tend to have reduced capacity to obtain new resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). This is related to workplace ostracism, which can lead to a reduction in individuals' social resources. Under such conditions, employees' psychological resources may become depleted, potentially undermining psychological well-being and reducing their ability to generate creative ideas. This, in turn, may trigger workplace loneliness due to insufficient social resources. However, individuals with high resilience tend to be more capable of maintaining their existing resources. Accordingly, even when experiencing workplace loneliness, highly resilient individuals are able to buffer its adverse effects, resulting in a weaker impact on creativity compared to individuals with low resilience.

This study aims to provide an overview of how workplace ostracism can reduce employee creativity through workplace loneliness, and how resilience acts as a buffer in mitigating the negative impact on employee creativity. Although research on the relationship between workplace ostracism and employee creativity has been conducted, most previous studies have focused solely on work-related outcomes such as task resources, creative process engagement, and thriving at work (Kwan et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2023). Meanwhile, research on negative workplace experiences through emotional response mechanisms that affect employee creativity, such as workplace loneliness, remains very limited. In addition, the role of resilience as a potential moderator that mitigates the negative impact of workplace loneliness on employee creativity is currently limited. Given that resilience is also one of the most essential core skills (World Economic Forum, 2025). Thus, resilience can serve as a protective factor in minimizing the negative effects of workplace loneliness.

Previous studies have reported inconsistencies regarding the mechanism underlying the relationship between workplace ostracism and employee creativity. Chenji & Sode (2019) found a direct negative effect of workplace ostracism on employee creativity, whereas Zhang et al. (2023) demonstrated that this relationship operates indirectly through the mediating role of thriving at work. These mixed findings suggest that the underlying mechanism linking workplace ostracism to employee creativity remains

insufficiently understood and warrants further investigation. A clearer understanding of this mechanism is essential for organizations to identify psychological processes that contribute to declines in employee creativity as a consequence of workplace ostracism. Accordingly, this study proposes workplace loneliness as a mediating mechanism explaining how workplace ostracism leads to reduced employee creativity. Specifically, this study examines the effect of workplace ostracism on employee creativity, with workplace loneliness as a mediator and resilience as a moderator among startup employees in Indonesia.

The results of this study indicate that workplace ostracism does not have a direct effect on employee creativity. However, it exerts an indirect effect through workplace loneliness. In addition, resilience was found to moderate the effect of workplace loneliness on employee creativity. These findings contribute to the theoretical literature by clarifying the mediating role of workplace loneliness in explaining the relationship between workplace ostracism and employee creativity, as well as highlighting resilience as a personal resource that can mitigate the negative effects of workplace loneliness on employee creativity in the context of startups in Indonesia. This study further extends Conservation of Resources Theory by explaining how workplace ostracism, as a form of social resource loss, affects employee creativity through workplace loneliness, and how resilience, as a personal resource, can reduce the adverse impact of workplace loneliness on employee creativity. Moreover, the findings provide practical implications for startup organizations to pay greater attention to employees' social relationships and strengthen resilience in order to sustain creativity in a dynamic work environment.

RESEARCH METHODS

The minimum number of participants was determined using G-Power version 3.1 through a priori analysis with an effect size of 0.15, alpha of 0.05, and power of 0.95. The results of the analysis indicated that the minimum number of participants required was 119. Meanwhile, the total number of participants in this study was 305 people. This study employed a quantitative approach to examine the relationships among workplace ostracism, employee creativity, and the mediating role of workplace loneliness in these relationships. Additionally, this study aimed to examine the role of resilience as a moderator in the relationship between workplace loneliness and employee creativity in startups. This study employs a cross-sectional design and focuses on employees of startups in Indonesia as the study population. The data collection method used convenience sampling, which prioritizes samples that are easily accessible, voluntarily willing to participate in the study, and meet the study criteria (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The criteria for respondents in this study are active employees at a startup who have worked for at least six months.

The total number of participants in this study was 305. Research data were collected via an online questionnaire

using Google Forms, which consisted of several sections. The initial section of the questionnaire included research information, an informed consent form used to obtain respondents' voluntary agreement to participate in the study, psychological measurement scales for workplace ostracism, resilience, and workplace loneliness, employee creativity, and demographic information about the respondents. The time required for respondents to complete the questionnaire ranged from 10 to 15 minutes. The questionnaire was distributed online via several social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The data were then analyzed using the SEM-PLS method with the assistance of SmartPLS 4 software.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Employee Creativity

Employee creativity was measured using a self-report instrument from George & Zhou (2001) and modified by Hahn et al. (2015). The instrument consists of 4 (four) items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = 0.843$.

Workplace Ostracism.

Workplace ostracism was measured using an adapted instrument from Ferris et al. (2008), consisting of 10 items. Responses were provided on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The reliability test results showed a coefficient of $\alpha = 0.921$.

Workplace Loneliness

Workplace loneliness was measured using the Workplace Loneliness Scale by Wright et al. (2006), consists of 16 items. Responses were provided on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). The reliability test results showed a value of $\alpha = 0.877$.

Resilience

The resilience variable was measured using the resilience scale developed by Campbell-Sills & Stein (2007) consisting of 10 items. Responses were collected via a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The reliability coefficient for this measurement instrument was $\alpha = 0.809$.

RESULTS

Based on the data collected via Google Forms, a total of 374 participants responded. However, after filtering the data using an attention checker, 69 participants were found to not meet the criteria; thus, the number of participants included in the analysis for this study was 305. The following table shows the distribution of participants' demographic data, including gender, age, education level, and years of work experience.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Data

Participant Characteristics	n	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	123	40%
Female	182	60%
Age		
18 – 24 years	108	36%
25 - 44 years	184	60%
> 45 years	13	4%
Education		
SMA/SMK	122	40%
Diploma (D1 -D3)	22	7%
Bachelor's Degree (D4/S1)	156	51%
Master's Degree (S2)	5	2%
Tenure		
< 1 Year	71	23%
1–3 Years	106	35%
> 3 Years	128	42%

Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4 software. The analysis was conducted in two stages: measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation. During the measurement model evaluation, the validity and reliability of the research instruments were assessed by examining the outer loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and reliability coefficients. Seven indicators of the workplace loneliness construct and four indicators of the resilience construct were removed because they exhibited low outer loading values. Following the removal of these indicators, the remaining items demonstrated outer loading values ranging from 0.648 to 0.850. Thus, all retained indicators satisfied the criterion for convergent validity, with outer loading and AVE values of at least > 0.50 . (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2. Reliability and Convergent Validity Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Workplace Ostracism	0.921	0.934	0.681
Employee Creativity	0.843	0.895	0.585
Workplace Loneliness	0.877	0.901	0.504
Resilience	0.809	0.863	0.513

The table above shows that all variables, namely workplace ostracism, employee creativity, workplace loneliness, and resilience have valid and reliable scales (≥ 0.7). Furthermore, the researcher conducted a structural equation

model analysis to test for relationships among the variables using a t-test.

Before testing the hypotheses, a multicollinearity test was conducted to ensure that there were no overly strong correlations among the variables in the research model. This test was based on a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) threshold of < 10 (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3. Multicollinearity Test

Variables	VIF	Remarks
WO → EC	1.652	No multicollinearity
WO → WL	1.000	
WL → EC	1.889	
RES → EC	1.242	
RES X WL → EC	1.005	

Subsequently, the structural model was evaluated by examining the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the path coefficients. According to (Chin, 1998) R^2 values are generally classified into three categories: substantial (≥ 0.67), moderate (≥ 0.33), and weak (≥ 0.19). The results of the structural model evaluation are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. R Square Test

Variable	R Square	Category
Employee Creativity	0.652	Moderate
Workplace Loneliness	0.393	Moderate

Based on the results in the table, the R^2 value for Employee Creativity of 0.652 falls into the moderate category (≥ 0.33), meaning that workplace ostracism, workplace loneliness, and resilience in the model account for 65.2% of employee creativity, while the remaining 34.8% is explained by factors outside the research model. Furthermore, the R value for workplace loneliness of 0.393 is also classified as moderate, indicating that workplace ostracism accounts for 39.3% of the variation in workplace loneliness explained by the research model, while the remaining 60.7% is influenced by other factors outside the research model.

Subsequently, structural equation modeling was conducted to identify the relationships among the variables in the research model. The analysis was performed using a t-test, in which the t-statistic was compared to the critical t-value (≥ 1.96) at a significance level of ≤ 0.05 (Hair et al., 2019). Path coefficient values provide insight into the direction of the relationships between variables in the model, allowing us to determine whether the effect is positive or negative. Meanwhile, the t-statistic value is used to determine the level of significance.

Table 5. Direct Effects Between Variables

Variable Influence	Path Coefficient	T-statistics	P values	Remarks
WO → EC	0.011	0.259	0.796	Not Significant
WO → WL	0.627	15.550	< 0.01	Significant
WL → EC	-0.493	10.959	< 0.01	Significant
RES x WL → EC	0.139	5.412	< 0.01	Significant

Table 6 Specific Indirect Effects

Variable Influence	Path Coefficient	T-statistics	P values	Remarks
WO → WL → EC	-0.309	8.537	< 0.01	Significant

The table shows the results of the hypothesis tests for each variable in the research model. Based on the results of the direct effect test, workplace ostracism does not have a significant effect on employee creativity ($\beta = 0.011$; $p = 0.796$; $t = 0.259$), therefore, first hypothesis is workplace ostracism has a negative effect on employee creativity is not supported by the research data. However, other results indicate that most variables have a significant effect. The results show that workplace ostracism has a positive and significant relationship with workplace loneliness ($\beta = 0.627$; $p = < 0.01$; $t = 15.550$). Workplace loneliness has a significant negative relationship with employee creativity ($\beta = -0.493$; $p = < 0.01$; $t = 10.959$). The interaction effect between resilience and workplace loneliness also has a significant positive influence on employee creativity ($\beta = 0.139$; $p = < 0.01$; $t = 5.412$).

According to the results of the specific indirect effect test, workplace ostracism significantly negatively impacts employee creativity through workplace loneliness ($\beta = -0.309$; $p < 0.01$; $t = 8.537$). These findings suggest that as employees experience higher levels of workplace ostracism, they also experience increased workplace loneliness, which in turn reduces their creativity. This implies that there is an indirect effect of workplace ostracism on employee creativity, mediated by workplace loneliness, particularly among employees in startup companies.

Based on the analysis of direct and indirect effects, we can conclude that the relationship between workplace ostracism and employee creativity is explained by the mediating role of workplace loneliness. Therefore, second hypothesis, which posits that workplace loneliness mediates the effect of workplace ostracism on employee creativity, is supported. Additionally, the results of the interaction test indicate that resilience moderates the impact of workplace loneliness on employee creativity, thereby supporting third hypothesis in this study.

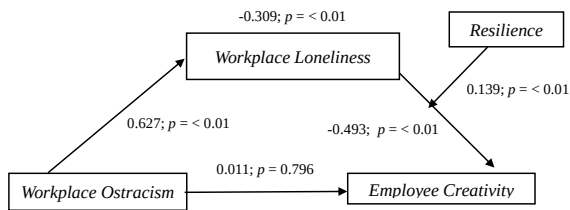


Figure 1. Research Model

Table 7. Conditional Direct Effects

Variable Influence	Path Coefficient	T-statistics	P-values	Remarks
WL→EC (RES at +1 SD)	-0.355	6.758	< 0.01	Significant
WL → EC (RES at Mean)	-0.493	10.959	< 0.01	Significant
WL→EC (RES at -1 SD)	-0.632	12.048	< 0.01	Significant

The table above presents the results of a test examining the direct effect of workplace loneliness on employee creativity across various levels of resilience. Based on the analysis, workplace loneliness has a significant negative effect on employee creativity across all levels of resilience. At the low resilience level, the direct effect is negative and significant ($\beta = -0.632$, $p < 0.01$, t -statistic = 12.048). At the moderate level of resilience, the direct effect is also negative and significant ($\beta = -0.493$, $p < 0.01$, t -statistic = 10.959). Meanwhile, at a high level of resilience (+1 SD), the direct effect remained negative and significant ($\beta = -0.355$, $p < 0.01$, t -statistic = 6.758). These results indicate that the effect of workplace loneliness on employee creativity tends to weaken as the level of resilience increases.

Table 6. Conditional Indirect Effects

Variable Influence	Path Coefficient	T-statistics	P-values	Remarks
WO → WL → EC (RES at +1 SD)	-0.222	6.024	< 0.01	Significant
WO → WL → EC (RES at Mean)	-0.309	8.537	< 0.01	Significant
WO → WL → EC (RES at -1 SD)	-0.396	9.039	< 0.01	Significant

Table 8 presents the results of the indirect effect test at different levels of resilience. The analysis indicates that workplace ostracism significantly impacts employee creativity through workplace loneliness at all levels of resilience. At low resilience levels, the indirect effect is significantly negative ($\beta = -0.396$, $p < 0.01$, t -statistic = 9.039). At moderate resilience levels, the negative effect remains significant but decreases in magnitude ($\beta = -0.309$, $p < 0.01$, t -statistic = 8.537). Similarly, at high resilience levels, the negative effect further diminishes ($\beta = -0.222$, $p < 0.01$, t -statistic = 6.024). These results indicate that the indirect effect of workplace ostracism on employee creativity via workplace loneliness tends to weaken as resilience levels increase. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis, which proposed that resilience moderates the indirect effect of workplace ostracism on employee creativity through workplace loneliness, is supported.

DISCUSSION

Research findings indicate that workplace ostracism does not directly affect employee creativity. However, it does have an indirect effect mediated by workplace loneliness. This suggests that while workplace ostracism itself may not immediately decrease creativity, it can lead to loneliness, which in turn may reduce creative output. Workplace ostracism is characterized by a lack of social support, interpersonal engagement, and recognition within the work environment. This situation diminishes the quality of social relationships among employees. These findings align with previous research by Zhang et al. (2023) which also noted that workplace ostracism impacts employee creativity through mediating factors like thriving at work. In other words, experiences of workplace ostracism can disrupt an employee's sense of well-being and engagement, ultimately contributing to a decline in creativity.

In this study, the mediating role is explained through workplace loneliness as an emotional response arising from workplace ostracism. When interpersonal relationships deteriorate, individuals are more likely to feel isolated and perceive themselves as not being part of the work environment, thereby experiencing loneliness (Silard & Wright, 2020). Employees who experience workplace loneliness tend to lose their sense of connectedness and may even withdraw from social interactions. This diminished sense of connectedness can hinder employees from generating creative ideas that are beneficial to the organization (Anand & Mishra, 2021; Firoz & Chaudhary, 2022). Therefore, the effect of workplace ostracism on employee creativity does not occur directly. Instead, it operates through the internal psychological processes experienced by individuals.

Based on the concepts proposed in the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory by Hobfoll (1989), workplace ostracism can be understood as a form of threat that depletes social resources, such as interpersonal support, connectedness, and recognition in the workplace. When

employees experience ostracism, they lose access to meaningful social interactions, which in turn triggers workplace loneliness. Workplace ostracism is a non-interactive condition in which neither positive nor negative interpersonal interactions occur. As a result, it creates discomfort and poses a greater threat to individuals' fundamental need to feel valued in the workplace (Ferris et al., 2017). From the perspective of COR Theory, this condition reflects resource loss that adversely affects individuals' psychological well-being. The influence of workplace loneliness on employee creativity occurs because psychological resources required to perform tasks demanding creativity are diminished. This finding is consistent with the study by Peng et al. (2017) which reported that when individuals experience workplace loneliness, they tend to have lower self-confidence and doubt their own abilities. Consequently, they become reluctant to engage in creative efforts that involve risk because they fear failure. In addition, the low level of social support perceived by employees who experience loneliness due to a lack of social relationships can reduce cognitive capacity, thereby impairing decision-making and hindering creativity (Murthy, 2017). Under these conditions, employees are more likely to focus on the negative emotions they experience rather than explore new ideas, resulting in a decline in the creative thinking process.

This study found that resilience significantly moderates the relationship between workplace loneliness and employee creativity. Individuals with high resilience are better equipped to handle the emotional stress associated with loneliness, which helps to reduce its negative impact on creativity. In contrast, individuals with low resilience are more susceptible to the adverse effects of loneliness, leading to a greater decline in creativity compared to their more resilient counterparts. This indicates that resilience serves as a buffer, enabling employees to sustain their creative abilities even in an unsupportive social environment.

These findings are consistent with the Conservation of Resources Theory, which posits that individuals with greater resources tend to be better able to preserve their resources and effectively manage the impact of resource loss (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Resilience is a personal resource that helps protect against negative experiences. Resilient individuals typically have better emotional regulation skills, are more adaptable, and tend to stay focused on their goals, even in uncomfortable situations (Polizzi & Lynn, 2021). In this context, resilience as a psychological resource enables individuals to mitigate the impact of workplace loneliness as a form of resource loss, thereby weakening its negative effect on employee creativity. This finding is consistent with the previous research by Kurniasih et al. (2025) which demonstrated that resilience functions as a performance buffer, enabling individuals to maintain work effectiveness despite experiencing high levels of stress. This result is also supported by the study conducted by Aase et al. (2020), which suggests that resilience is understood as the capacity to adapt positively when individuals encounter adverse or unpleasant conditions. Therefore, resilience is an essential

attribute that every individual should possess. In addition, organizations should implement employee resilience development programs, provide support through teamwork, and foster a positive work environment to help employees cope with workplace loneliness (Dhir et al., 2023).

This study has several limitations. First, the use of a cross-sectional design prevents the study from explaining the dynamics of changes in the variables over time. Second, the data were collected using a self-report method, which may introduce social desirability bias. In addition, the participants were limited to employees of startup companies without considering specific industry sectors, and job levels were not identified. Therefore, future research is encouraged to consider the use of experimental or longitudinal designs to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effect of workplace ostracism on employee creativity and the underlying psychological mechanisms. Future studies may also include participants from various industry sectors to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships among workplace ostracism, workplace loneliness, and employee creativity across different organizational contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study found that workplace ostracism has a significant indirect effect on employee creativity through workplace loneliness. The findings indicate that workplace loneliness fully mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and employee creativity. In addition, resilience moderates the relationship between workplace loneliness and employee creativity, indicating that the negative effect of workplace loneliness on creativity is weakened among individuals with higher levels of resilience. These findings suggest that employees who experience workplace ostracism are more likely to feel lonely, which ultimately hinders their creative capacity. However, employees with higher resilience are better able to maintain their creativity despite experiencing workplace loneliness. Therefore, social dynamics in the workplace are not merely a matter of comfort but also have a tangible impact on employees' ability to contribute creatively to the organization. These findings imply that organizations should place greater emphasis on creating an inclusive work environment and fostering social connectedness among employees. Organizations can implement these initiatives by providing inclusive leadership training, team-building programs that strengthen interpersonal relationships, and conducting organizational climate assessments to identify early signs of social exclusion in the workplace. Additionally, organizations need to build employee resilience through stress management training, mentoring programs, and access to psychological support services. These efforts aim not only to maintain employees' psychological well-being but also to ensure they remain capable of contributing creatively to the organization. Enhancing employee creativity should not rely solely on structural incentives or performance targets. Instead, focusing on employees' social and psychological needs can be a more effective and sustainable strategy. By creating a

work environment that prevents social exclusion, reduces workplace loneliness, and fosters resilience, organizations can indirectly promote creativity, engagement, and long-term performance stability among employees.

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ETHICAL APPROVAL

This study received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Psychology under Ethical Clearance No. 253/FPsi.Komite Etik/PDP.04.00/2025 issued on October 23, 2025. The research was conducted in accordance with the applicable ethical principles for research involving human participants. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before they participated in the study.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

TRANSPARENCY OF DATA

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Participant confidentiality has been maintained in accordance with applicable ethical standards.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

The author was solely responsible for the conception and design of the study, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of the findings, manuscript preparation, manuscript revision, and approval of the final version of the manuscript. The supervisor provided academic guidance throughout the research process, reviewed the progress of the study, offered technical support, and critically reviewed the manuscript.

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