



Linking Workplace Exclusion with Employees' Intention to Leave with the Mediating and Moderating Role of Self-esteem

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave with the mediating and moderating role of self-esteem. Data was collected from 200 white-collar employees working in durable consumer goods industry in Türkiye. Results showed that workplace exclusion is positively related to intention to leave and negatively related to self-esteem. Self-esteem is negatively related to intention to leave. Additionally, it was found that self-esteem has not a mediation function. Self-esteem plays a significant role as a function of moderation between workplace exclusion and intention to leave. Practice of our findings and implications for the research are discussed in this study.

Keywords: Workplace Exclusion, Ostracism, Self-esteem, Intention to Leave

Jel Sınıflandırması: M54

İş Yerinde Dışlanma ve Çalışanların İşten Ayrılma Niyetinin İlişkilendirilmesi ile Benlik Saygısının Aracı ve Düzenleyici Rolü

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, iş yerinde dışlanma ve işten ayrılma niyeti arasındaki ilişkiyi benlik saygısının aracı ve düzenleyici rolü ile incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Veriler, Türkiye'de dayanıklı tüketim malları sektöründe çalışan 200 beyaz yakalı çalışandan toplanmıştır. Sonuçlar, iş yerinde dışlanmanın işten ayrılma niyetiyle pozitif, benlik saygısıyla negatif ilişkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Benlik saygısı, işten ayrılma niyeti ile negatif ilişkilidir. Ayrıca, benlik saygısının aracılık işlevine sahip olmadığı bulunmuştur. Benlik saygısı, iş yerinde dışlanma ve işten ayrılma niyeti arasında düzenleyici bir işlev olarak önemli bir rol oynar. Bulgularımızın uygulaması ve araştırmanın çıkarımları bu çalışmada tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: İş Yerinde Dışlanma, Uzaklaştırma, Benlik Saygısı, İşten Ayrılma Niyeti

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human asset is very critical for companies to ensure competitiveness at the local and global markets (Hitlan & Noel, 2009). Employees' inclusiveness feelings are very important and valuable for companies while these positive feelings lead to job satisfaction, productivity, commitment, and psychological wellness (Mor Barak & Levin, 2002).

One of the ways of human motivation is to gain new resources and protect their resources based on the conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Resources can be anything that people value (Hobfoll, 1988; 1989). Job security, autonomy, reinforcement, social support, participation in decision making, rewards, self-esteem, self efficacy, emotional intelligence, and friendly workplace climates are some of psychological resources (Halbesleben et al., 2014). The value of resources is related with personal experiences (Halbesleben et al., 2014). While workplace exclusion is a kind of resource loss, it causes to depression (Kessler, Turner, & House, 1988), burnout (Shirom, 1989) and other physiological outcomes (Melamed et al., 2006).

Workplace exclusion is about employees' rejection feelings by other employees at the organization (Ferris et al., 2008). It is an irritating and painful experience (Haldorai et al., 2020). While workplace exclusion is the result of a toxic work environment, it negatively affects employees' outcomes (Anjum et al., 2022). Workplace exclusion leads to so much negative feelings like anxiety, sadness, jealousy, and guilt (Leary, Koch & Hechenbleikner, 2001). Working exclusion leads to decrease in propensity helping to other employees (Wu et al., 2016) and increase turnover intention (Turkoglu & Dalgic, 2019). Regarding the exclusion feelings towards the current job, employees begin to think quitting their current job and looks for another option (Robinson & Beesley, 2010).

Self-esteem is about feeling of individual self worth (Crocker & Major, 1989). High self-esteem is related with wellness and satisfied feelings in many aspects of life (Lee, 2013). Low self-esteem causes lots of social and personal problems (Lee, 2013). When belongingness feelings of employees are threatened, they try to gain meaningfulness and self-esteem (Williams, 2007). Recognition supports self-esteem of employees, and employees who have high self-esteem will develop belongingness towards the organization (Shin et al., 2022).

Intention to leave also called as turnover intention is about individuals' probability to leave their organization soon (Vandenberg & Nelson, 1999). Intention to leave is the predictor of actual turnover (Moore, 2000). Engaged employees' intention to leave are lower while they exhibit more positive work behavior (Jyoti & Dimple, 2021). Retaining human asset is very critical for today's organizations while educating an employee is costly and takes a long time. Nowadays employee retention is one of most important problems of employers (Boswell et al., 2008).

To date, relatively little research has been done on workplace exclusion and its related outcome such as intention to leave (Hitlan, et al., 2006). The current study aims to examine the impact of workplace exclusion on employees' intention to leave with the mediating and moderating role of self-esteem. The main objective of this research is to broaden the knowledge of these concepts and analyses the relationships between them empirically. This study aims to find answers to below research questions:

1. What is the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave?
2. What is the relationship between workplace exclusion and self-esteem?
3. What is the relationship between self-esteem and intention to leave?
4. Does self-esteem play a mediating role in the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave?
5. Does self-esteem play a moderating role in the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave?

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. Workplace Exclusion

“Workplace exclusion” will be used as an umbrella term relevant to ostracism which refers to the act of being ignored or excluded (Jones et al., 2020; Leung et al., 2011). Workplace exclusion/ostracism is about an individual or a group isolating, ignoring, or minimizing another individual’s communication opportunities at work (Ferris et al., 2008). It is about employees’ alienation, separation, rejection, ignorance, ostracism feelings by other people at the workplace (Hitlan & Noel, 2009; Ferris et al., 2008). Withholding required information, avoiding from communicating and eye-contact, silent treatment, not being included to common gatherings, prohibited from invitation are some examples of workplace exclusion (Zheng et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2015; Mahfooz et al., 2017). Research indicates that employees’ exclusion feelings at workplace are irritating (Hitlan & Noel, 2009). Workplace exclusion is a kind of social disrespect towards excluded individual (Singh & Srivastava, 2021). It is a sign of absence of acceptable behavior in social relations at workplace (Ferris et al., 2008).

Workplace exclusion is related with reduced satisfaction, reduced well-being, and reduced performance of employees (Baumeister, Smart & Boden, 1996). There are detrimental results of workplace exclusion (Scott, Restubog & Zagenczyk, 2013). According to psychological research studies, exclusion feelings and physical pain activates the same areas at the brain (Eisenberger, Lieberman & Williams, 2003). Workplace exclusion threatens belongingness, self-esteem, meaningfulness, and individual control (Williams, 2001 & 2007) and affects employees’ psychology and behavior (Bedi & Skowronski, 2014). Workplace exclusion also diminishes cooperation and synergy among employees (Özer & Günlük 2010). When employees experience exclusion, their turnover intention increases (Scott & Duffy, 2015; Ferris et al., 2008).

The consequences of workplace exclusion can be explained based on the conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The conservation of resource theory helps to understand the relations between workplace exclusion and its subsequent outcomes (Xia, et al., 2018). Workplace exclusion decreases employees’ physical and emotional resources and thus will influence work outcomes such as intention to leave and performance based on the conservation of resource theory (Xia et al., 2018).

2.2. Intention to Leave

Intention to leave is about an employee’s deliberately readiness to pull back from an organization (Price, 2001). It can also be defined as “individual’s own expected probability of permanently quitting the organization in the near future” (Gouthier & Rhein, 2011). It demonstrates the pre-final stage of an employee’s leaving an organization (Dai et al., 2018). Workplace exclusion can be starting point which results with intention to leave (Carpenter & Berry 2017). Managers must understand the factors that lead employees to quitting in order to keep talented employees, reduce cost and decrease turnover rates (Dinger et al., 2011). According to the conservation of resource theory, absence or loss of resources are reasons for strain (Srivastava & Bajpai, 2019). If employees feel lack of emotional and physical resources, they engagement level decreases and intention to leave increases (Srivastava & Bajpai, 2019).

2.3. Workplace Exclusion and Intention to Leave

Research studies indicate that workplace exclusion increases employees’ turnover intention (Howard et al., 2020). Workplace exclusion is a stress factor that threatens employees’ social resources (Zheng et al., 2016). According to the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002), employees who think their social resources are threatened begin to struggle to protect these resources and try to prevent depletion of these resources. Employees who feel workplace exclusion think that they are threatened with losing their social resources (Zheng et al., 2016).

When employees think that their social resources are depleted, they begin to think to leave their organization to avoid more damage (Singh & Srivastava, 2021). Any damage and threat to resources enhances stress (Hobfoll, 2001) and increases intention to leave (Bani-Melhem, 2020). Individual feelings regarding to exclusion leads to a desire to leave the organization (Chen & Wang, 2019).

Workplace exclusion damages employees' job efficiency (Wu et al., 2011) and increases negative work outcomes (Turkoglu & Dalgic, 2019). Workplace exclusion has a direct impact on employees' wellness, behaviors, and actual turnover (Mahfooz et al., 2017). Workplace exclusion is positively related with intention to leave (Zheng et al., 2016; Berthelsen et al., 2011). According to a survey study, employees who felt workplace exclusion left their workplace (Fox & Stallworth, 2005). Additionally, another research study demonstrates that exposure to workplace exclusion increases employees' intention to leave (Glambek et al., 2014). When employees feel workplace exclusion, they evaluate their working conditions as difficult and decides voluntarily to leave (Berthelsen et al., 2011). When employees face with workplace exclusion, they emotionally detach from their organization which leads to intention to leave. (Zheng et al., 2016). These arguments can be formulated in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Workplace exclusion has a positive effect on employees' intention to leave.

2.4. Self-esteem

Self-esteem can be defined as a personal sense of worth (Chen et al., 2016). It is about how individuals accepts and respects themselves and values their individual worth (Lou et al., 2010). An employees' self-esteem which is affected from employees' organizational experiences is determinative to understand organizational behavior (Tetteh et al., 2019). Some employees can make an assesment regarding to their competence and value based on their supervisors, colleagues, subordinates at the organization (Chen et al., 2016). An employee perceps his/her worthiness, meaningfulness and effectiveness within the organization according to self-esteem level (Constantini et al., 2019; Bao et al., 2015). Employees who have high level of self-esteem consider themselves as worthy and valuable at the workplace (Bowling et al., 2010). Self-esteem has many positive outcomes such as organizational commitment, work engagement and job satisfaction (Nwanzu and Babalola, 2019; Greenhaus & Badin, 1974). Employees with low level of self-esteem are more sensitive to mood changes and emotional responses which caused by maladaptive behaviors and psychological problems (Waters & Moore, 2002). Self-esteem can be better understood with the integration of the conservation of resource theory (Howard, 2019). Self-esteem is affected from personal resources and environmental factors according to the conservation of resource theory (Howard, 2019). Self-esteem of employees is negatively affected when their personal resources are unstable and lack based on the conservation of resource theory (Halbesleben et al., 2014).

2.5. Workplace Exclusion and Self-esteem

Workplace exclusion (ostracism) damages an individuals' ability to establish and continue a positive relationship (Tavakoli et al., 2014 in Takhsha et al., 2020). While exclusion destroys interpersonal relationships, it is a threat for employees' self-esteem (Peng and Zeng, 2017). Excluded employee begins to be seen as a low-value employee in the eyes of others at the organization (Leung et al., 2011). An employee with a high self-esteem evaluates himself/herself as a high valueable organizational member (Takhsha et al., 2020) whereas an employee with a low self-esteem perceives his or her suitability for workplace inclusion is low (Leary & Baumeister, 2000) and doubts about his or her value in social relationships (Anthony et al., 2007). If an employee fullfills her or his belonging need at the workplace, self-esteem increases and if an employee does not fullfill her or his belonging need, self-esteem decreases (Lee, 2013). Self-esteem can be the result of exclusion and unfulfilled belongingness needs (Anthony et al., 2007). There is a significant correlation between acceptance conditions and self-esteem (Anthony et al.,

2007). Workplace exclusion decreases the level of self-esteem (Walasek et al., 2015). There is a reciprocal relationship between self-esteem and workplace exclusion (Pierce& Gardner, 2004; Chen et al., 2004). An employee evaluates his/her interactions with colleagues, leaders, managers, and subordinates as a signal of his/her worth and value at the organization (Bowling et al., 2010). Self-esteem is affected positively when an employee perceives his/her value and worth at the organization (Chen et al., 2016). Based on the above arguments, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2: Workplace exclusion has a negative effect on self-esteem.

2.6. Self-esteem and Intention to Leave

Employees can think of leaving, search for another job in the process of intention to leave (Carmeli & Weisberg, 2006). Intention to leave is a predictor of actual leaving (Lambert et al., 2001). Managers have to understand the factors that cause employees' intention to leave to reduce turnover costs and decrease turnover rates (Dinger et al., 2011).

Self-esteem gives employees feelings of worth or value (Payne, 2007). Employees with self-esteem has positive self perception about their competence, importance, worthiness, effectiveness, meaningfulness with their organization (Chan et al., 2013). Employees with low level self-esteem will react more to external conditions (Pierce et al., 1993).

Employees who perceive themselves as competent and valuable do not have intention to leave compared to ones who perceive themselves as less competent and valuable (Ahmad & Begum, 2020). There is a negative relation between self-esteem and intention to leave (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Employees who perceive and believe that their organizations value and give importance to them tend to demonstrate low levels of intention to leave (Lee, 2013). High self-esteem is related with reduced intention to leave (Moore, 2002). Research studies demonstrate that there is a negative relation between self-esteem and intention to leave (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). The following hypothesis can be generated that:

Hypothesis 3: Self-esteem has a negative effect on intention to leave.

2.7. The Mediating and Moderating Role of Self-esteem

Individuals with high self-esteem rely on their competencies and abilities to perform a task and care less about the work environment while individuals with low self-esteem rely more on the work environment compared to their competencies (Schuler, 1977). Individuals with low self-esteem are more sensitive to external environmental factors and will react more vigorously than individuals with high self-esteem (Brockner, 1988).

Employees who have high level of self-esteem will react fewer to the negative cues than the employees who have low level of self-esteem (Ahmad & Begum, 2020). Workplace exclusion is one of these negative cues. Employees with low level of self-esteem can not cope with these negative cues like workplace exclusion and feel more psychological stress which results with intention to leave (Ahmad & Begum, 2020). Workplace exclusion gives employees lack of acceptance message which threatens individual self-esteem (Peng and Zeng, 2017), and might have consequences as intention to leave (Howard et al., 2020). Self-esteem could be a moderator in the association between workplace exclusion and turnover intention.

Research studies state that self-evaluations such as self-esteem can be mediating mechanism between workplace exclusion and behavioral outcomes (Williams, 2007). Self-esteem fully mediates the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave (Li, Zhang, 2019). Intention to leave can be one of these outcomes. Self-esteem can mediate workplace exclusion and intention to leave because employees behave in ways which are consistent within their self perceptions (Heider, 1958). While self-esteem is affected from how an employee perceives his or her organizational worth, self-esteem can mediate the relation between workplace exclusion and intention to leave (Chung, Yang, 2017).

Workplace exclusion is a universal and social phenomenon and exists in various groups. It is a kind of violence at the workplace. Employees who have strong self-esteem feel that they are valuable, meaningful, important, and efficient in the organization. Employees with low self-esteem are prone to self denial (Li, Zhang, 2019).

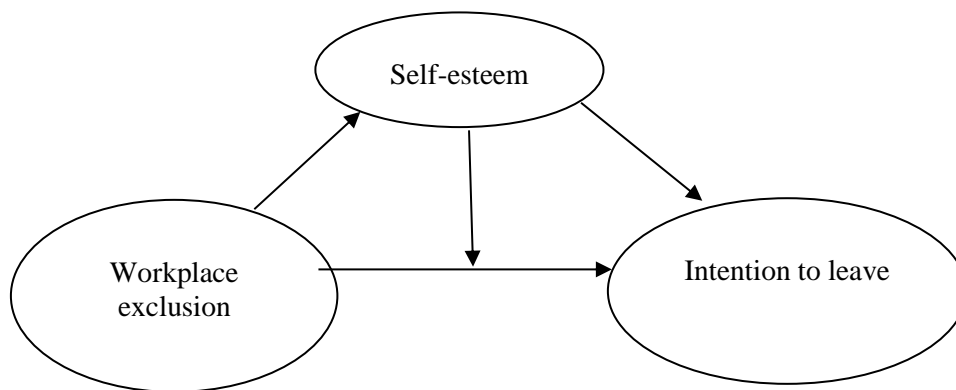
Research demonstrates that workplace exclusion leads to employees' counterproductive behavior and there is a negative correlation between workplace exclusion and self-esteem (Li, Zhang, 2019). Self-esteem has a negative impact on employees' counterproductive behaviors and negative attitudes (Li, Zhang, 2019). Employees who have low self-esteem feel negative emotions when they work. Thus, their concentration will be affected negatively, and employees' work rhythm will be easily disrupted. Employees' enthusiasm will be diminished over time within these negative feelings. Employees will not be able to complete their tasks in the long run. Regarding to decrease in trust and goodwill, employees' intention to leave and the probability to be exposed to workplace exclusion will be increased (Li, Zhang, 2019). Based on the above discussion we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 4: Self-esteem has a mediating role in the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave.

Hypothesis 5: Self-esteem has a moderating role in the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave.

There are five hypotheses to be tested. Figure-1 shows the moderated mediation process model that combines both mediation and moderation variables simultaneously. We test empirically that self-esteem variable whether it has a mediation or moderation function between workplace exclusion and intention to leave.

Figure 1. The research model



3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Measures

Workplace exclusion was measured by the Workplace Ostracism Scale developed by Ferris et al. (2008). It measures with a single dimension and includes thirteen items. A 6-point response scale was used for workplace exclusion, ranging from “never” (1) to “always” (6). Cronbach’s Alpha for this scale was found as .947.

Self-esteem was measured by the Self-esteem Scale developed by Rosenberg (1965). The scale is unidimensional. The scale has ten items that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. A 6-point Likert scale was used for self-esteem

scale, ranging from “totally agree” (6) to “totally disagree” (1). Cronbach’s Alpha value of self-esteem was found as .827.

Intention to leave was measured by subscale from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins and Klesh, 1979). It has three items measuring individuals’ intention to leave their work. A 6-point Likert scale was used for self-efficacy, ranging from “totally agree” (6) to “totally disagree” (1). Cronbach’s Alpha for this scale was found as .959. Reliability analyses of the three variables are all acceptable (alpha>.70)

3.2. Data Collection

This survey study was conducted from March to April 2019 in Istanbul, Türkiye. Convenience sampling technique was used in this study. White-collar employees including team leaders and middle level managers actively working in durable consumer goods industry participated to the study. Questionnaires of the study were collected via both online and hardcopy. 660 questionnaires were distributed and a total of 200 valid questionnaires were collected from the participants. The response rate was 30.3%. This total sample was consisted of 52% males and 48% females. 54% of the participants were married and 46% of them were single. Nearly half of the participants (46.5%) were aged between 25 and 34. Majority of the participants (71.5%) had a bachelor’s or higher degree. 45% of the participants had job experience for more than ten years. Table 1 exhibits the descriptive statistics of the sample that includes gender, marital status, education, age, and experience.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Sample (N=200)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Gender</i>			<i>Age</i>		
Female	96	48	<25	26	13
Male	104	52	25-34	93	46.5
<i>Marital Status</i>			35-44	68	34
Married	108	54	45-54	13	6.5
Single	92	46	<i>Experience (years)</i>		
<i>Education</i>			1-5	59	29.5
High school	57	28.5	6-10	51	25.5
Bachelor’s degree	97	48.5	11-15	36	18
Master’s degree	40	20	16-20	37	18.5
Doctorate	6	3	>21	17	8.5

4. RESULTS

The collected data was recorded in SPSS program for the analysis of data. Exploratory factor analyses were conducted to find the factor structures of each scale used in this study (See Table 2). 13 items of workplace exclusion scale were entered into factor analysis. Item 11 stating that “You have been included in conversations at work (reverse coded)” was left out of the analysis due to the low corrected-item total correlation value that was recorded as .176 below .30. This item was removed from the scale and remaining 12 items loaded on a single factor explaining 66.3% of the total variance. The factor structure is compatible with the original scale. Results are shown in Table 2. Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was found as .938 which is quite above the accepted value. This result marked the homogeneous structure of the variables and the result of Bartlett Test (Sig.: .000, Chi-Square: 2195.734, df: .66) showed that the variables were suitable for factor analysis.

Ten items of self-esteem scale were entered into factor analysis. Item 8 stating that “I wish I could have more respect for myself (reverse coded)” was left out of the analysis due to the low

corrected-item total correlation value that was recorded as .196. KMO was found as .793. This result marked the homogeneous structure of the variables and the result of Bartlett Test (Sig.: .000, Chi-Square: 581.730, df:36) indicated that the variables are suitable for factor analysis. Results showed that nine items loaded on two factors that is different from the unidimensional original scale. Second factor of self-esteem is composed of the reverse coded items. One factor explains 42.6% and the other factor explains 13.5% of the total variance.

As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, items of intention to leave scale loaded on a single factor as it was in the original scale. Reliability analyses of this variable are also acceptable (Cronbach’s alpha: .959, KMO: .734, Bartlett significance: .000, Chi-square: 700.955).

Table 2. Factor Analyses

<i>Workplace Exclusion (WE) (Cronbach’s alpha: 0.947)</i>	<i>Factor Loadings</i>
Workplace Exclusion, % variance: 66.367, alpha: 0.947	
WE items 8,5,4,6,9,7,1,12,3,10,2,13	.889 .888 .881 .880 .861 .854 .814 .805 .803 .794 .744 .474
<i>Self-Esteem (SE) (Cronbach’s alpha: 0.827)</i>	<i>Factor Loadings</i>
Factor 1: Self-Esteem I, % variance:42.685.798, alpha:0.798	
SE items 3,4,1,7,10	.807 .801 .694 .662 .579
Factor 2: Self-esteem II, % variance:13.591, alpha: 0.720	
SE items 9,6,5,2	.789 .742 .671 .630
<i>Intention to Leave (ITL) (Cronbach’s alpha: 0.959)</i>	<i>Factor Loadings</i>
Intention to Leave % variance: 92.401, alpha: 0.959	
ITL items 2,3,1	.978 .959 .946

Results of the correlation analyses among the study variables and the regression analyses are shown in below tables 3 and 4, respectively. Workplace exclusion is significantly and negatively related to self-esteem and positively related to intention to leave. Hypothesis 1 stating that “Workplace exclusion has a positive effect on employees’ intention to leave” and Hypothesis 2 stating that “Workplace exclusion has a negative effect on self-esteem” are supported. Results of this analysis also revealed that self-esteem is significantly and negatively related to employees’ intention to leave. Thus, Hypothesis 3 stating that “Self-esteem has a negative effect on intention to leave” is supported.

Table 3. Correlations

<i>Variable</i>		<i>WE</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>ITL</i>
Workplace Exclusion (WE)	Sig. (2-tailed)	1	-.297**	.439**
	Pearson Correlation		.000	.000
Self-Esteem (SE)	Sig. (2-tailed)	-.297**	1	-.246
	Pearson Correlation	.000		.000
Intention to Leave (ITL)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.439**	-.246**	1
	Pearson Correlation	.000	.000	

Note. N=200

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The next stage was to test the mediating hypothesis that we followed the method outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). First step of the hierarchical regression analysis shows that there is a significant relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave ($\beta = .439, p = .000$). Secondly, workplace exclusion is found to be negatively related to self-esteem ($\beta = -.297, p = .000$). Thirdly, there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and intention to leave ($\beta = -$

.246, $p = .000$). In the fourth step of the analysis, the results indicated that the relationship between self-esteem and intention to leave was not still significant when workplace exclusion and self-esteem were both entered the model ($\beta = -.127, p > .05$). A p-value of 0.058 is considered to be on the border of statistical significance. Additionally, we used the Sobel test. Based on the results of the Sobel test (Test statistic: 1.748; Std. Error: 0.040; p-value: 0.080), it can be seen that self-esteem does not serve as a mediation variable in the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave. Mediation analyses were also tested using the bootstrapping method in the SPSS macro-program (PROCESS v4.2 by Andrew F. Hayes). Research shows that bootstrap method is more conceptually appropriate, powerful, and recommended (Caron, 2019). The results of this bootstrap method depicted that there is not a fully mediating effect (indirect effect = 0.71, BootLLCI = -.006, BootULCI = .169). These results do not support Hypothesis 4, indicating mediation has occurred.

We also tested the moderating effect of self-esteem on the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave. When the moderator is included into the model with the inclusion of the interaction term, model's fit also increased. The results of the hierarchical regression analysis revealed that self-esteem moderates the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 stating that "Self-esteem has a moderating role in the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave." is supported. As a result of this study, employees' perception of workplace exclusion on turnover intention is not significantly mediated but significantly moderated by self-esteem.

Table 4. Regression Analyses between WE, SE, and ITL

<i>Intention to Leave (ITL)</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>p value*</i>
Workplace Exclusion (WE)	.439	6.882	.000
R: .439; Adj R ² = .189; F: 47.362; p: .000 (*) One-tailed t-test significance			
<i>Self-Esteem (SE)</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>p value*</i>
Workplace Exclusion	-.297	-4.383	.000
R: .297; Adj R ² = .084; F: 19.214; p: .000 (*) One-tailed t-test significance			
<i>Intention to Leave (ITL)</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>p value*</i>
Self-Esteem	-.246	-3.575	.000
R: .246; Adj R ² = .056; F: 12.782; p: .000 (*) One-tailed t-test significance			
<i>Intention to Leave</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>p value*</i>
Workplace Exclusion	.402	6.047	.000
Self-Esteem	-.127	-1.909	.058
R: .456; Adj R ² = .200; F: 25.819; p: .000 (*) One-tailed t-test significance			
<i>Intention to Leave</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>p value*</i>
Workplace Exclusion	.468	6.331	.000
Self-Esteem	-.139	-2.103	.037
Workplace Exclusion * Self-Esteem	-.144	-1.983	.049
R: .473; Adj R ² = .211; F: 18.780; p: .000 (*) One-tailed t-test significance			

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study is to examine how workplace exclusion relates to employees' intention to leave with the mediating and moderating effect of self-esteem. Workplace exclusion is considered as an individual or group perception that they are ignored, rejected, or ostracized by other individual or group within their workplace (Hitlan & Noel, 2009). Workplace exclusion has been a painful, irritating, and universal phenomenon at the workplace. It is important to understand the consequences of workplace exclusion which intention to leave is one of them (Scott & Duffy, 2015). Workplace exclusion is also a threat for employees' self-esteem (Peng and Zeng, 2017).

Our findings suggest five main conclusions. First, consistent with previous studies (e.g., Howard et al., 2020; Mahfooz et al., 2017; Zheng et al., 2016; Fox & Stallworth, 2005; Scott & Duffy, 2015; Ferris et al., 2008) we found a positive relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave. Similarly, O'Reilly & Robinson (2009) found that ostracism has a negative effect on belongingness that links to lower performance and higher withdrawal. Workplace ostracism significantly impacts employees and leads to job stress and turnover intention (Vui-Yee & Yen-Hwa, 2020).

Employees who feel exclusion from supervisors and coworkers at the workplace may respond in such ways and intention to leave is one of these responses (Hitlan & Noel, 2009). Excluded employees are less emotionally detached to their organization and has more intention to leave (Hitlan et al., 2006). Workplace ostracism has adverse impacts on employees, their relationships, and organizations (Sharma and Dhar, 2022). Effective strategies are needed to reduce the positive relationship between workplace exclusion and turnover intention. Managers need to follow up relations among employees. If there is a signal of workplace exclusion, managers must solve the problem and prevent it. It is the responsibility of managers to provide a respectful and supportive communication among employees.

If employees have belongingness feelings toward their workplaces, they feel that they are accepted at the workplace (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Managers can apply belonging-related motivations to decrease workplace exclusion (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Managers can assist employees closely who feel workplace exclusion (William, 2007). Managers can increase recognition of employees in the workplace to increase belongingness feelings and to decrease workplace exclusion (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Managers can implement support programs and trainings about belongingness to increase interaction opportunities among employees which decrease workplace exclusion (Ozcelik & Barsade, 2018). Managers can create environments which facilitate employees' belonging (Kwan et al., 2021). Managers can receive trainings to recognize signals of workplace exclusion. It is critical for managers to understand who have been excluded and who participate in exclusion behavior at the workplace.

Second, our findings indicate that there is a negative association between workplace exclusion and self-esteem. If employees feel that they are valued, respected, trusted by their organization, they feel more self-esteem (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). These positive feelings (respect, trust, value) send employees signal regarding to their self worth and competence and affects their self-esteem. All forms of exclusion that is ostracism, rejection, and others, would cause emotional distress and make people feel bad in their work. Many theoretical frameworks (e.g., Coopersmith, 1967) have proposed that self-esteem would change as a result of social exclusion and rejection (Blackhart et al., 2009).

Organizations and managers can increase employees' self-esteem by decreasing workplace exclusion. Enhancing employees' self-esteem is a potential power for organizations and managers. Managers and organizations can formulate strategies that enhance employees' self-respect and self-esteem. Managers must give more attention to employees with low self-esteem because these kinds of employees do not know how to cope with workplace exclusion. Therefore, managers firstly must prevent workplace exclusion and support these kinds of employees to increase their productivity and motivation.

Employees' self-esteem is affected by managers' behaviors. Individualized leadership is one of ways of increasing employees' self-esteem (Mumford et al., 2000). Organizational environmental structures such as job, technology, work design influence employees' self-esteem. If managers control these social environments very tightly, this leads to lower employees' self-esteem (Korman, 1971). If managers allow employee involvement, this leads to increase employees' self-esteem (Korman, 1971). When managers increase regulatory behaviors with changing in work environment structures, employees feel that they are not valued. Thus,

employees' self-esteem is negatively affected (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Managers have to give self regulation opportunities to employees because the absence of these opportunities decrease employees self-esteem. Employees begin to think that they are not trusted, and they question their competence (Norman & Gardner & Pierce, 2013). Managers have to give more autonomy to employees in self control, self direction, decision making, involvement to increase employees' self-esteem (Elloy, 2005). Managers additionally have to reward deserved employees to increase their self-esteem (De Cremer et al., 2005). Managers have to be supportive instead of authoritarian style to increase employees' self-esteem (Wang et al., 2010).

Third, self-esteem has a negative relation with employees' intention to leave according to the results of this study. When employees have a low level of self-esteem, this increases their turnover intention. Employees who are ignored in their workplace have lower self-esteem that significantly influence their intention to leave the organization. When employees are excluded from activities in workplace, they have lower motivation to engage in organizational performance that also leads to damage their self-esteem, which in turn leads to turnover intention. Fourth, results of the statistical significance tests appeared to indicate that self-esteem did not mediate the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave. Based on the results of this study, the relationship between workplace exclusion and employees' turnover intention should not be explained fully by self-esteem.

Lastly, this study also proved that self-esteem did moderate the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave. According to the findings of this study, employees with low self-esteem are more inclined to negative reaction such as intention to leave when they are confronted with workplace exclusion. Therefore, self-esteem can mitigate the negative conclusions of workplace exclusion and moderates the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave. While employees with high self-esteem rely more on their skills and competencies, they will less suffer while facing difficult situations like workplace exclusion (Mossholder et al. 1981). When the level of self-esteem is high, the linkage between work exclusion and employees' intention to leave is likely to be reduced.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

One of the main weaknesses of the current study is that the several impacts of variables were not measured. Workplace exclusion is a broad construct that includes subtypes (Spector et al., 2006). These subtypes were not examined in this study. Social (ignored by others) and physical exclusion (physically left by others) separation can be made and future research may include some other exclusion forms. Additionally, at the future research antecedents and consequences of workplace exclusion can be added to the study to gain a deep understanding of workplace exclusion. Future research may also include dark side of self-esteem such as narcissism. Existing measures of self-esteem does not include counterproductive forms.

Another limitation of this study relates to the sample that was specific to employees working in durable consumer goods industry in Türkiye. Future research about workplace exclusion can include samples from different locations and sectors. Future research may also focus on a specific sector such as health sector or tourism. Another limitation is the limited number of 200 participants in this study. The more people that participate, the better the research study is.

Statement of Support and Appreciation

No external support has been received during the conduct of this study.

Researchers' Contribution Rate Statement

The authors contributed equally to the study.

Conflict of Interest Statement

We don't have any conflict of interest declaration as the authors of the study.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

All the rules stated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were strictly considered at every stage of this research. None of the actions specified under the heading "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics" of the directive has not been carried out. During the writing process of this study, the citations were made in accordance with the ethical rules and a bibliography was created. The study was subjected to plagiarism control.

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