

**Exploring the Relationship between Ostracism and Compensatory Consumption
Motivation and the moderating Role of Gender**

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Abstract

Nearly everyone has been confronted with the feeling of being ostracized (i.e., ignored or excluded by others) before, but people tend to cope with this in different ways. In addition to well-researched coping strategies (e.g., antisocial, prosocial, withdrawal), ostracized individuals may engage in compensatory consumption behaviors as a means to cope. Compensatory consumption is a consumer behavior that people often engage in to improve their mood and gain a sense of control. As ostracism is a social stressor, ostracized individuals may engage in compensatory consumption in an attempt to control their mood. This study investigated the relationship between ostracism and compensatory consumption as well as possible moderating effects of gender. In an online survey, participants ($N = 124$) were asked to recall and describe a previous event that made them feel ostracized along with their motivation to engage in compensatory consumption behaviors. The results showed initial support for the hypothesis that feelings of ostracism were positively associated with compensatory consumption motivation. Contrary to the hypothesis that this positive relationship will be stronger for women compared to men, no significant effects of the interaction were found. This suggests that gender (male vs. female) does not significantly moderate the relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption. These findings underline the relevance of coping strategies in response to ostracism that have not yet gained much empirical attention. Both men and women tend to feel more motivated to engage in compensatory consumption as a means to cope with feelings of ostracism.

Keywords: Ostracism, Compensatory Consumption, Coping, Gender

Exploring the Relationship between Ostracism and Compensatory Consumption and the
moderating Role of Gender

Nearly everyone has been confronted with the feeling of being ignored and excluded (i.e., ostracism) by others before. The feeling of isolation can trigger poor emotional well-being and distress in many affected individuals, causing them to seek various coping strategies (Deckx et al., 2018; Williams, 2009). Ostracized individuals normally tend to respond to this in either antisocial, prosocial, or withdrawal behavioral patterns (Ren et al., 2020). While much literature has focused on these three main coping behaviors, other ways of coping (i.e., coping by spending money) remain less researched. For example, ostracized individuals may attempt to compensate for their feelings of loneliness through spending (Mandel et al., 2017). Compensatory consumption is a common coping strategy used to deal with negative moods in day-to-day life (Atalay & Meloy, 2011). But is this coping mechanism also seen in ostracized individuals in an attempt to make up for the disparity in their social lives? And does gender have an impact on this? The present study aims to examine the relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption.

Ostracism—the experience of being ignored or excluded from a social group—seems to be present among all social animals (Williams, 2009) and has appeared across human history in an array of groups, societies, and contexts (Williams & Nida, 2017). Ostracism jeopardizes the fundamental need to belong, self-esteem, control, and meaningful existence (Shrum et al., 2022; Williams & Nida, 2011). When these needs are not met, individuals may face self-discrepancy—a discrepancy between their actual- and ideal self (Mandel et al., 2017)—leading to emotional distress and a need for social acceptance (Shrum et al., 2023). In an attempt to reduce or offset said discrepancies, ostracized individuals seek out various coping strategies. According to

Williams' (2009) temporal need-threat model of ostracism, people respond to feelings of ostracism in three stages; reflexive, reflective, and resignation. In the reflexive stage, ostracized individuals tend to use one of three behavioral patterns: antisocial, prosocial, and withdrawal (Lei et al., 2024). This means that while some individuals may react to ostracism by engaging in prosocial behavior as reconnection attempts, others may respond in antisocial and aggressive acts or even choose to withdraw completely from social interactions. While these behaviors are well-documented (Ren et al., 2020; Sunami et al., 2019), there is still a wide variety of coping strategies beyond antisocial, prosocial, and withdrawal behavior patterns, that require further research. This study aims to expand on existing literature by examining additional coping strategies that have not been thoroughly researched. More specifically, this research will focus on compensatory consumption as a coping strategy, where ostracized individuals compensate for their feelings of isolation by spending money (Mandel et al., 2017). Compensatory consumption is expressed by spending money on (non-essential) items as a means to ease feelings of isolation and loneliness (Mynaříková & Pošta, 2023). By investigating this alternative strategy, this research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how individuals cope with feelings of ostracism and the varying impacts this strategy has on psychological well-being.

Compensatory consumption refers to a variety of goal-oriented coping strategies that people engage in to manage self-discrepancies (Mandel et al., 2023). This is done by purchasing, consuming, and using products or services (Mandel et al., 2023). For the sake of this paper, the term 'compensatory consumption' will be used to indicate any purchase, consumption, or use of services or products driven by the motive to atone for the self-discrepancies that arise in ostracized individuals as a result of feeling ignored and socially excluded. The topic of compensatory consumption has become increasingly important in consumer behavior. In a

symbolism-rich culture, the utilization of material items can serve as an ideal way for self-construction and repair to compensate for psychological deficiencies (Hammad & El-Bassiouny, 2024). Studies suggest that the likelihood of purchasing status or membership signaling products increases when self-discrepancies arise in relation to social contexts (Mandel et al., 2017; Lee & Shrum, 2012). Consumers may view compensatory consumption as an opportunity to boost their self-esteem or social status through specific purchases (i.e., luxury items) (Mandel et al., 2017; Lee & Shrum, 2012). Furthermore, research suggests that emotional distress may increase willingness to spend (Atalay & Meloy, 2011; Lerner et al., 2004). For example, “Retail Therapy”—shopping that is motivated by emotional distress (Rick et al., 2014)—is a consumer behavior that is commonly used by customers in an attempt to control their mood (Atalay & Meloy, 2011). Compensatory consumption offers short-term benefits, such as mood improvement or a sense of control (Rick et al., 2014). Previous research suggests that social exclusion can lead people to sacrifice personal and financial well-being by spending and strategically consuming, in order to achieve improved social well-being (Mead et al., 2011). Drawing from this, it was hypothesized that individuals who experience stronger feelings of ostracism will also report stronger motivations to engage in compensatory consumption (*Hypothesis 1*).

Previous research has provided varied results in terms of gender differences in relation to how they value their purchases. According to previous studies’ results, men tend to be more materialistic than women (Segal & Podoshen, 2013) and report more functional and instrumental-based reasonings behind valuing purchased items while women tend to have symbolic, emotional, and relationship-oriented reasonings (Dittmar, 1989). Additionally, women

report higher shopping enjoyment and shopping confidence while men seem to score higher in convenience and time consciousness (Seock & Bailey, 2008).

Based on the results mentioned above, it is expected that these preexisting gender differences in shopping enjoyment and purchase value reasoning to potentially give rise to an interaction effect of gender and feelings of ostracism on compensatory consumption. Feelings of ostracism could be positively related to compensatory consumption motivation for both men and women (Hypothesis 1), however, given that ostracism is a social stressor, and women tend to have particular emotional and relationship-oriented reasons for valuing their purchased items, it can be argued that women will show a stronger relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation compared to men. Women might exhibit higher motivations to engage in compensatory consumer behaviors in an effort to improve the negative emotional responses instigated by an experience of ostracism.

Therefore, it was hypothesized that both men and women will show a positive relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation, but this relationship will be stronger for women than for men (*Hypothesis 2*).

The present research

The present study intends to answer the question of the relationship between ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation and the possible moderating effects of gender. This will be done by administering survey-based research for which participants recall a personal ostracism event and thereupon answer a set of questions to assess the severity of ostracism and the level of motivation to engage in compensatory consumption afterwards. By understanding the effect of ostracism on compensatory consumer motivation, this paper addresses the gap in literature on the matter of social exclusion and potential consumer behaviors as a means to cope.

It also addresses the potential gender differences that may arise from compensatory consumption specifically as a coping strategy. Overall, this research provides first insights into alternative coping behaviors that people use in real life.

Built upon this, the following paper aims to explore the relationship between ostracism and compensatory consumption behaviors as coping mechanisms in socially excluded and ignored individuals.

Table 1

Summarized Table of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	
<i>H1</i>	Individuals who experience stronger feelings of ostracism will report stronger motivations to engage in compensatory consumption, as reflected by their self-reported desire to purchase (non-essential) material goods.
<i>H2</i>	Men and women will show a positive relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation, but this relationship will be stronger for women than for men.

Method

Participants and power analysis

Participants were recruited through a snowball convenience sampling via social media services such as Instagram, Facebook, or WhatsApp. Data collection took place over a period from November 20th, 2024, to December 9th, 2024. A total of $N = 146$ participants completed the survey. In order to determine which participants' recalled experiences should be excluded from the analysis, a coding procedure was established based on predefined exclusion criteria. These criteria included factors such as not remembering a specific instance in which participants were ostracized, not describing an ostracism experience within the given time frame, not describing an ostracism event that happened to them personally, not describing an ostracism

experience at all, or describing a previous ostracism event in less than 20 words. These exclusion criteria were established to ensure an accurate and detailed recall of a personally relevant ostracism event. Based on these criteria, 17 participants were excluded from the analyses. Two coders independently reviewed each participant's recalled experience and classified it according to these criteria. Additionally, any disagreements in coding were discussed until resolved. To assess inter-rater reliability, Cohen's Kappa was calculated. The Cohen's Kappa was approximately 0.81, indicating a substantial level of agreement between the two raters. $\kappa=0.81$. The interrater reliability was 95.2%. Additionally, 5 more participants were excluded because they used less than 20 words to describe their ostracism event as a general measure of failing to follow the instructions to compose at least five or six sentences. However, both raters agreed to include one case that had sixteen words due to the ostracism experience described being clear enough. Overall, this led to a final sample size of 124 participants (58.1% female, 36.3% male, 4% non-binary, 0.8% trans-man, 0.8% prefer not to say). The average age of the participants was 27.70 years ($SD = 11.18$, range 18-60).

A sensitivity analysis with G*Power was performed to determine the smallest detectable effect size with the given sample size ($N = 124$), an alpha level of 0.05, and a power of 80%. The analysis showed that the study had the power to detect a small to moderate effect size ($f^2 = 0.09$) for the whole model, which corresponds to about 8.3 % of the variance ($R^2 = 0.083$) explained by the predictors of the regression model (ostracism, gender, and the interaction).

Procedure

The study was approved by the Ethics Review Board of Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Participants completed the survey online through Qualtrics (<https://www.qualtrics.com>). After providing informed consent, they were presented with a short

introduction explaining the purpose of the study. Ostracism was defined to the participants as “feeling ignored and excluded”. To add further understanding to this, the participants were provided with a few examples of ostracism; (“Feeling ignored and excluded from social or work gatherings, feeling isolated by peers or colleagues, feeling left out of team/social activities, or feeling overlooked in casual conversations.”). Subsequently, they were instructed to recall and describe a specific occasion of when they last felt ostracized, approximately within the last 2-3 months, and to separately indicate the severity of perceived exclusion and how ignored it made them feel. To guarantee anonymity, the participants were instructed to use made-up names. After describing their personal ostracism experience, the participants were requested to answer questions from the affective coping subset of the Spending as Social and Affective Coping (SSAC) Scale (Edwards, 1993) in relation to said experience. The survey was administered in a single session, and participants were encouraged to answer all questions honestly and thoughtfully. Lastly, participants were asked to state their age and assigned sex at birth. For the latter, they had the option to choose between male, female, transgender-man, transgender-woman, prefer not to say, and other, which could be further elaborated.

Upon answering all questions, the participants had the opportunity to leave comments, questions, or feedback regarding the survey. Additionally, they were presented with a debriefing about the nature of the study and a request not to discuss it with anyone to avoid the risk of biases in the survey’s responses. Lastly, they were offered two contacts for mental support in the case of any uncomfortable or unpleasant feelings emerging during the survey. The participants did not receive any monetary or non-monetary rewards for taking part in the study.

Measures

Feelings of ostracism. Feelings of ostracism were measured based on the average scores of perceived feelings of ostracism caused by the ostracism event that every participant described at the beginning of the survey. Upon describing the event, the participants rated their feelings of exclusion and their feelings of being ignored during the described situation in two separate items on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all, 7 = very much), with higher scores indicating higher levels of feeling excluded and feeling ignored.

Compensatory consumption motivation. The compensatory consumption scale included slightly altered items from the Spending as Social and Affective Coping (SSAC) scale (Rice, A. et al., 2020). The phrase “After an event that made me feel ostracized, ...” was added in front of the actual items, in order to adequately tailor the items to the needed research context. A few example items are: "After an event that made me feel ostracized, I was more likely to buy things", "After an event that made me feel ostracized, I spent money to feel better.", and “After an event that made me feel ostracized, I spent money because I could not tolerate feeling down.”. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Average scores of compensatory consumption were used for the analyses, with higher scores of compensatory consumption indicating stronger motivations to engage in compensatory consumption behaviors.

A reliability analysis was performed to evaluate the compensatory consumption measure's internal consistency. With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.97, the scale demonstrated excellent reliability (Gliem et al., 2003). A list of all used items as well as the results of the internal reliability analysis of the adjusted compensatory consumption scale items can be found in Table 4 in the appendix.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all variables to summarize participant demographics and responses. A hierarchical regression analysis with two blocks was conducted to test the hypothesis that higher levels of ostracism predict increased compensatory consumption motivations. In Block 1 of the regression model, the ostracism variable was measured. In Block 2, the variables gender (“male”, “female”) and the interaction term of ostracism and gender were added to the model to test the hypothesis that the positive relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation will be stronger for women than for men (*Hypothesis 2*). Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS (Version 29.0.2.0) with the critical alpha set at $p < 0.05$. For the sake of testing the potential effects of gender, only men ($n = 45$) and women ($n = 72$) were included in the analyses resulting in a total of $N = 117$ participants.

Results

Descriptive statistics revealed average feelings of being ignored ($M = 5.33$, $SD = 1.555$) and feelings of exclusion ($M = 5.69$, $SD = 1.129$) during the ostracism event that exceeded the midpoint on both ostracism scales. This indicates that on average the participants felt moderately ostracized during the event. The average compensatory consumption score was $M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.29$, indicating low to moderate motivation to spend after the ostracism event.

Main analysis of Ostracism, Gender, and their Interaction on Compensatory Consumption

A hierarchical regression was conducted to examine the relationship between feelings of ostracism, compensatory consumption motivation, and the moderating role of gender. Assumptions of linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence were met. The assumption of normality of residuals was met with minor deviations. However, this is unlikely to severely affect the validity of the results (Knief & Forstmeier, 2021). The assumption of no

multicollinearity for the entire model was violated as indicated by a VIF exceeding 10 for the two predictors, gender and the interaction term, that were added in Block 2. When considering these predictors separately, they did not present any multicollinearity issues. These results are not unexpected given that the categorical variable gender was included and interaction terms are naturally correlated with their component variables (Disatnik & Sivan, 2016).

All results, including the unstandardized and standardized regression coefficients and the significance of both models, can be found in Table 3.

In order to test Hypothesis 1, which proposed that individuals who experience stronger feelings of ostracism will also report stronger motivations to engage in compensatory consumption, Block 1 examined the relationship between compensatory consumption and feelings of ostracism as a main effect. In line with Hypothesis 1, the results revealed a weak to moderate positive correlation between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation ($\beta = 0.246$), with higher levels of ostracism being associated with greater compensatory consumption motivations and behaviors ($t = 2.717, p = .008$). The regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 122) = 7.383, p = .008$, indicating that feelings of ostracism were a significant predictor of compensatory consumption.

In order to test Hypothesis 2 and examine whether gender moderated the relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation in a way that the positive relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption motivations would be stronger for women compared to men, ostracism, gender, and the interaction term were added to the model. For this, the variable gender was re-coded (0 = male, 1 = female) to exclude all other genders that are not male or female as the hypothesis only includes those two genders. The overall model remained significant, $F(3, 113) = 2.893, p = .038$, explaining 7.1% of the

variance in compensatory consumption ($R^2 = 0.071$). After controlling for the number of predictors, the adjusted R^2 was 0.047, indicating a small effect size.

After adding gender and the interaction term to the model, the association between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption was no longer significant ($p = .355$), meaning that Hypothesis 1 was no longer supported. Results for gender as a main effect were not statistically significant ($p = .618$), suggesting that gender alone does not significantly predict compensatory consumption. Contrary to Hypothesis 2, results on the interaction between gender and feelings of ostracism show a statistically non-significant interaction effect ($p = .489$), which indicates that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption (see Table 3).

Table 3

Hierarchical multiple regression: Main Effects and Interaction Term for predicting Compensatory Consumption (n = 117)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R^2
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Step 1						.06
	(Constant)	.794	.591		1.343	.182
	Ostracism_Score	.287	.106	.246	2.717	.008
Step 2						.11
	(Constant)	1.284	.963		1.334	.185
	Ostracism_Score	.168	.181	.144	.929	.355
	Gender_male_female	-.617	1.235	-.236	-.499	.618
	Ostracism_Gender_interaction	.156	.225	.353	.694	.489

a. Dependent Variable: CompConsumption_Score

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation. Prior research on ostracism has focused

primarily on prosocial, antisocial, and withdrawal coping behaviors while ignoring other potential coping strategies that people may use. For instance, the concept of compensatory consumption as a coping mechanism linked to ostracism has presumably not received empirical attention yet. The study's results add to a body of knowledge on coping mechanisms in relation to ostracism as well as research that has previously been done on compensatory consumer behaviors. The study provides a better understanding of the link between ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation.

According to the temporal need-threat model of ostracism by Williams (2009), ostracized individuals typically use one of three behavioral patterns: antisocial, prosocial, and withdrawal (Lei et al., 2024). However, this study's results suggest that ostracized individuals may also feel motivated to engage in compensatory consumption in order to cope with the negative emotions induced by feelings of ostracism.

The main findings of this research provide initial supporting evidence for the first hypothesis which proposed that individuals who experience stronger feelings of ostracism will also report higher motivations to engage in compensatory consumption. However, these expectations were not supported anymore in the second block of the regression analysis in which gender and the interaction term were added to the model. These findings provide useful insights into the general relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption. In order to gain a deeper understanding of this relationship, possible influences of gender as a moderator were explored but the results revealed no significant results. Hence, Hypothesis 2 which expected that the positive relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption motivations would be stronger for women compared to men, was not supported by the results. These results indicate that there is an overall tendency of individuals who experience

feelings of ostracism to feel slightly more motivated to engage in compensatory consumption as a way to cope. However, this association does not appear to be influenced by gender.

The pattern of results for Hypothesis 1—the positive relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption motivations—is consistent with that of previous studies which suggest that emotional distress can increase willingness to spend (Atalay & Meloy, 2011; Lerner et al., 2004) through mood improvement or a sense of control, which can help individuals to cope with the undesirable feelings caused by ostracism (Rick et al., 2014). Specifically in social contexts, a study by Mead et al. (2011) suggested that social exclusion can lead people to spend and consume strategically, in order to improve their social well-being. This pattern also is in line with the present study's results on the overall relationship between ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation. However, consumer strategies within compensatory consumption behaviors would have to be further explored specifically in order to establish direct ties to those results.

Another noteworthy consideration is that there is a clear distinction between compensatory consumption motivation versus actual behavior. While this study focused on compensatory consumption motivation, future research could aim to examine actual behaviors by making use of consumption diaries (Atalay & Meloy, 2011) in which participants note their purchases in relation to their daily experiences over a specific period. Assuming that most people face at least minor instances of ostracism in their daily lives (Büttner et al., 2024), this could provide insights into experiences of ostracism in everyday life as well as planned purchases compared to additional purchases that were made following an ostracism event.

Even though it was hypothesized that the positive relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption motivations would be stronger for women compared

to men, the results turned out to be insignificant. As ostracism is a social stressor, this outcome was unexpected, considering a previous study that suggested a tendency in women to value purchased items based on symbolic, emotional, and relationship-oriented reasonings (Dittmar, 1989). Another study by Seock & Bailey (2008) showed that women report higher shopping enjoyment and shopping confidence compared to men. These findings could lead to the assumption that women use compensatory consumption as a tool to repair their mood based on their tendency to value their purchases according to symbolic and emotional reasonings and shopping as something that is related to enjoyment and confidence. Specifically in social contexts, relationship-oriented reasoning could have been an indicator of women engaging in more compensatory consumption in an attempt to improve the negative emotional responses triggered by an experience of ostracism. Even though no evidence was found of gender acting as a moderator in the relationship between feelings of ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation, it is necessary to address the limitations of this study that could be responsible for the unexpected outcomes.

Limitations and Future Directions

Based on the sensitivity analysis that was conducted prior to the regression analysis, the complete model was expected to add meaningfully to explaining the compensatory consumption variable variance. However, the regression analysis indicated that the Step 2 predictors explained an additional 11% of the variance which was insignificant. The unexpected insignificant result may be accounted for due to the sample size or variability in the data, calling for further investigation. Firstly, a more balanced sample size would have been favorable for this study considering the number of men ($n = 45$) in comparison to women ($n = 72$) partaking in the survey. The difference of 27 more women could be at least partially responsible for the

unexpected statistically insignificant results of gender as a moderator on the relationship between ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation and could affect generalizability. To obtain a balanced representation of both assessed genders, a larger sample size, as well as stratified sampling, could be beneficial. Stratified sampling involves the division of a population into subgroups based on particular demographic categories and then randomly sampling within these subgroups (Morling, 2017, p.188). This could improve the precision of the sample and therefore provide an even number of male and female participants.

An additional limitation of this study is the violated assumption of no multicollinearity between gender and its interaction term (ostracism and gender). However, multicollinearity is not unexpected with interaction terms, especially when categorical predictors—in this case, gender—are included in the interaction term (Disatnik & Sivan, 2016). Nonetheless, future research is needed to confirm this study's findings.

Another limitation that needs to be considered is the new adjustment of the compensatory consumption scale which was derived from the affective coping subset of the Spending as Social and Affective Coping (SSAC) Scale by Edwards (1993). This adjustment was made for the first time. Even though a reliability analysis was performed that demonstrated exceptional reliability within all used items, the attempt to keep the necessary alterations as minimal as possible could have led to different or imprecise interpretations of compensatory consumption as a concept. Along with that, the term “compensatory consumption” was not mentioned and explained prior to the survey questions like it was the case for the term “ostracism”. No examples for compensatory consumption were provided. For example, it was not specified whether purchasing and consuming a coffee after an ostracism event or even booking a weekend trip to a spa resort would also be considered compensatory consumption or just simply purchasing non-essential

items. These examples differ greatly in the nature of compensatory consumption motivation which could have significantly impacted the participants' understanding of the exact meanings and intentions of the questions. Adding examples and providing more clarity on the scope and exact meaning of compensatory consumption could be valuable in this case. Furthermore, the development and validation of a new scale for compensatory consumption motivation could deliver greater measurement precision and enhance concept clarity.

There are additional factors that could be of interest to the research on the relationship between ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation that have not been discussed in this paper, one being personality traits. More specifically, personality traits like high extroversion, narcissistic tendencies, low agreeableness, as well as a low sense of self-efficacy have previously been linked to shopping addiction and have been more prevalent in women compared to men (Uzarska et al., 2023). Additionally, mental states like high anxiety have been linked to the same results (Uzarska et al., 2023). The same study also found that individuals with a shopping addiction, or so-called 'shopping dependent individuals' long for admiration and social interactions. However, due to their low agreeableness and social anxiety, they tend to avoid more social contact and instead turn to shopping as a substitute to experience more positive feelings and affirmations (Uzarska et al., 2023). With ostracism being a social stressor, it could be expected that individuals who struggle with preexisting social anxiety and personality traits like low agreeableness would be more prone to reacting to feelings of ostracism by turning to compensatory consumption instead of engaging in social contact.

Despite all limitations, this study can be seen as groundwork for merging two lines of research on ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation. While ostracism is typically studied in laboratory settings (Büttner et al., 2024), the employment of the recall method in this

study has made it possible to gain an understanding of real-life ostracism events and the following coping behaviors that occur in natural settings. The study's results have enhanced our understanding and knowledge of the relationship between ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation.

Conclusion

While previous studies have thoroughly examined the concepts of compensatory consumption and ostracism, little to no literature is available on the relationship between ostracism and compensatory consumption motivation specifically. This study aimed to provide new insights into this relationship and to serve as a foundation for a new way of approaching the topic of ostracism as well as consumer behaviors that are based on different kinds of emotional distress.

The findings revealed that stronger feelings of ostracism result in slightly higher motivations to engage in compensatory consumption behaviors. These results align with past research that has previously discussed the effects of emotional distress on willingness to spend. In relation to gender as a potential moderator, no significant effects were found, which calls for further investigation on the topic and application of changes in regard to the study's limitations. Future research could implement needed changes to address these limitations and also consider exploring additional factors that have not been researched in this study.

Overall, the study's results highlight the relevance of diverse coping mechanisms in response to ostracism beyond antisocial, prosocial, or withdrawal behavioral patterns. Ostracized individuals may tend to feel more motivated to engage in compensatory consumption as a way to restore their mood, regulate emotions, and make up for psychological deficiencies caused by feelings of ostracism.

APPENDIX

Table 4

Reliability analysis of the adjusted compensatory consumption scale items

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I spent money to distract myself from negative feelings.	2.40	1.514	124
I was more likely to buy things.	2.55	1.439	124
I spent money because I felt hurt.	2.17	1.336	124
I spent money to feel better.	2.56	1.542	124
I spent money because I could not tolerate feeling down.	2.13	1.262	124
I felt lonely and was more likely to buy things.	2.52	1.388	124
Spending money on me helped me avoid thinking about my problems.	2.35	1.414	124

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