AGNIESZKA KONIECZNA

Adolescent exclusionary behavior in the school environment: subtle and not-so-subtle manifestations of ostracism

Introduction

A review of available research suggests that social ostracism is pervasive (Nezlek et al. 2012; Wesselmann et al. 2023). This subtle form of exclusion is practiced in many social contexts, by both individuals and groups, at work (e.g., Robinson et al. 2013), on social media (e.g., Abrams et al. 2011), in interactions with strangers (e.g., Konieczna 2024b; Wesselmann et al. 2012), within families, and in relationships (e.g., Sommer et al. 2001; Zadro et al. 2008).

Despite the great research interest in ostracism (Wesselmann et al. 2023), our understanding of the various sophisticated methods used to implement social exclusion is limited. Instead, more attention has been given to forms of ill-treatment that are more overt and expressive (Freedman et al. 2016; Zadro et al. 2008).

Despite extensive empirical research, there is a lack of analyses that specifically focus on adolescent populations and exclusionary peer interactions within the school social environment. As opposed to increasing knowledge about the effects of ostracism and emotional hurt (e.g., Abrams et al. 2011; Guyer et al. 2014; Korkiamäki 2014; Ruggieri et al. 2013), there is little interest in documenting youth's peer behavior related to ostracism. It is surprising that, so far, there have been only a few studies that have focused on identifying the specific behaviors and words that serve as subtle signals to indicate exclusion or unwelcome feelings towards someone (SunWolf and Leets 2004). This is particularly relevant during adolescence, when belonging becomes crucial, and social behaviors grow more complex (Wainryb et al. 2014).

Therefore, in order to enhance our understanding of how peer ostracism is expressed in the daily social interactions of adolescents in the school setting, this paper conducts a comprehensive review of the literature on the subtle behaviors of adolescents that lead to their peers feeling excluded.

The article addresses the issue of ostracism as a common form of expression and communication in the contemporary social reality of teenagers in schools. It is an attempt to define this deeply disturbing phenomenon, delineate the boundaries between social ostracism and rejection, in the school environment.

From a practical perspective, providing specific details about subtle behaviors can be helpful in identifying and addressing instances of ostracism that may appear innocent, polite, or barely noticeable (Wesselmann et al. 2023; Wiltgren 2023). Such insights can enhance the recognition of harmful behaviors in schools and foster greater willingness to intervene (Canty et al. 2016; Chen et al. 2018).

The subtle exclusionary behaviors documented in this work may also serve as a basis for designing training workshops for professionals and young people. These workshops would focus on developing the ability to use body language, clear gestures, and expressive reactions to enhance interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, they may encourage reflection on the importance of developing more polite and friendly approaches, distancing oneself from peers in the school environment.

This article is organized as follows. First, ostracism will be discussed in terms of its definition and the importance of the school context. A distinction is made between social exclusion and ostracism, and the features that differentiate ostracism from other forms of mistreatment are discussed. Then, a preliminary typology of subtle exclusionary actions used by teenagers in the school community is discussed. Diagnostic methods for detecting ostracism in young people are also described, with an emphasis on the most effective measurement techniques for capturing this elusive phenomenon. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications for educational interventions and future research directions on adolescent ostracizing behavior.

Ostracism versus social exclusion and aggression

Social exclusion is broadly defined as "the experience of being physically or emotionally separated from others" (Riva and Eck 2016, p. IX). Social exclusion can be further divided into rejection and ostracism (e.g., Wesselmann

et al. 2023). Rejection behavior refers to directly letting someone know that they are unwanted, such as clearly stating "I don't like you" or "I don't want to talk to you" or using demeaning language or ridicule (e.g., Konieczna 2024a; Molden et al. 2009; Richman and Leary 2009). Ostracism is a subtle and invisible form of exclusion from meaningful social interactions (Wesselmann et al. 2023). The unique nature of ostracism is the omission of behaviour, that is, avoiding, ignoring, or omitting. Examples of ostracism include being given the silent treatment, not receiving eye contact, uncomfortable silence during interactions, having comments ignored, being forgotten by someone's name, or being left out of important emails (Riva and Eck 2016; Wesselmann et al. 2023).

Because ostracism is often perceived as a mild, non-severe, and harmless form of mistreatment (Riva and Eck 2016), it is important to clarify what distinguishes social ostracism from other constructs of aggression, such as bullying, harassment, or rudeness.

Although many different definitions have been presented, three characteristics identify bullying: the behavior is intended to cause harm, is repeated over time, and there is an imbalance of power (e.g., Thomas et al. 2015). Not all instances of social exclusion are actually considered bullying (Mulvey et al. 2017). Similarly, ostracism does not always have to be aggressive in its intent, but when carried out consciously, in a planned and repetitive manner, it becomes a form of harassment.

It is important to clarify that children experiencing exclusion by their school peers often report peer victimization or intimidation, even if it does not meet the three criteria of bullying (e.g., Canty et al. 2016; Lopez and DuBois 2005). Furthermore, exclusion can still cause harm and suffering, even when perpetrators do not have the motivation to harm or when the level of harmful intentions is low (Kim et al. 2022; Mulvey et al. 2017).

Processes that begin without aggressive intent can still lead to significant harm, as unintended actions may have real consequences (Wiltgren 2023, p. 13). Hence, researchers suggest focusing not on whether ostracism was intentional or whether perpetrators are aware that their behaviors exclude someone, but rather on the harm inflicted.

It has been documented that social exclusion, regardless of its duration or the intent to cause harm, can have profound and harmful effects on emotional and behavioral health (e.g., Abrams et al. 2011; Bowker et al. 2014; Killen et al. 2008), learning difficulties (Buhs et al. 2006), a decline in prosocial behaviors (Coyne et al. 2011), and significantly influence how children perceive themselves (Hawes et al. 2012). Ostracism, even if brief and isolated, is experienced as deeply aversive

because it contradicts the fundamental need for belonging (Richman and Leary 2009). It undermines the individual's sense of significant existence, control, and self-worth (Wesselmann et al. 2023). Prolonged social exclusion increases the risk of depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, and loneliness (e.g., DeWall et al. 2012; Korkiamäki 2014; Niu et al. 2018; O'Reilly et al. 2018).

This form of harm is particularly concerning in the school context. The cumulative experience of being excluded from groups to which a teenager belongs by members of that group can be particularly damaging. Teenagers who are rejected in this way are left without the support of their peer group to help them cope with this rejection (Mulvey et al. 2017). Furthermore, ample evidence has been gathered to show that ostracism is wrongly perceived as less harmful because the consequences for individuals excluded by peer groups are just as detrimental as if they were physically kicked, beaten, or slapped every day (Kim et al. 2022).

The relationship between social exclusion, peer rejection, and bullying is complex. However, it is worth noting that social exclusion also appears in the literature as an important aspect of aggression, known as indirect, social, or relational aggression (Buhs et al. 2010; Card et al. 2008; Underwood et al. 2004; Shaath et al. 2021; Spaans et al. 2019; Wang et al. 2010). Aggression researchers have expanded the concept of relational victimization to include subtle exclusionary behaviors that cause harm or pose threats to group integration (e.g., Asher et al. 2001; James et al. 2010; SunWolf and Leets 2004). Examples of relational victimization include refusal to talk, not being chosen for group activities or games, receiving the silent treatment, exclusion from post-school social gatherings, being left out of social activities, and not being seated close to others (Buhs et al. 2010, p. 178). Additionally, tools and mea-surement methods of aggression include subtle exclusionary behaviors (e.g., Álvarez-García et al. 2016; Betts et al. 2015; Fitzpatrick and Bussey 2011). The Aggression and Victimization Scales from PANIBI (The Positive and Negative Interpersonal Behaviors Inventory) (Lundh et al. 2014) include the behavior of "ignoring someone or treating him/her like they are invisible" (p. 14). Finally, earlier studies that specifically investigated ostracism also categorized it as a type of aggressive behavior and relational transgression (e.g., Card et al. 2008; Dixon 2007; Owens et al. 2000; Shute et al. 2002). It was emphasized that, similar to nonverbal behaviors, ostracism represents a strategy for exerting control over social relationships (Underwood 2004). This paper defines peer ostracism in schools as harmful and socially inappropriate mistreatment.

Peer ostracism and subtle exclusionary behaviors among school adolescents

Although researchers claim that peer exclusion among teenagers can take many forms (Mulvey et al. 2017), there are relatively few detailed descriptions in the literature of what teenagers actually do during social exclusion. Therefore, based on a review of extensive literature, the aim of the analysis was to provide examples of less apparent forms of expression and exclusionary behavior in order to enhance understanding of how ostracism is manifested.

Leading researchers suggest that there are three general forms of ostracism: physical, social, and cyberostracism (Wesselmann et al. 2023). Physical ostracism occurs when the ostracised person is physically distant and separated from others. It can involve abandoning someone and leaving them alone; "exile", "removal from the group", and "isolation" (Konieczna 2019). Social ostracism involves treating someone as invisible, using methods like the cold shoulder or silent treatment (Freedman et al. 2016). Cyberostracism refers to exclusion through communication technology and occurs when someone does not receive messages or comments.

In classrooms, physical ostracism often involves proxemic methods, like maintaining physical distance or avoiding others (Konieczna 2019). Although there are many combinations of body movements, the proxemic elements of peer behaviour have real communicative significance for adolescents. Peer behavior, like grouping in secluded places or fending others off, communicates exclusion (Heinonen and Tainio 2022).

Ignoring has received the most attention in the literature when it comes to social ostracism of adolescents. Ignoring is a key strategy for refusing group inclusion (Sunwolf and Leets 2004). Based on over 600 accounts from adolescents (13–19 years old), behaviours were described in which the presence of a peer was not acknowledged; and engaged in these behaviours with others. Examples include turning one's back, walking away, whispering, not saying hello, inviting others, and avoiding eye contact. Other strategies included verbal forms, more or less overt, with or without justifications for refusal. Students who experienced being ignored reported feeling invisible and left out. They noted that being ignored was a unique form of rejection that was communicated silently and without explanation.

Similarly, children aged 7, 12, and 17 described situations in which they experienced exclusion by their peers, providing perspectives from both the victim's and perpetrator's positions (Wainryb et al. 2014). Coded types of excluding behaviour include denying participation, ignoring, not inviting, and

ditching. The last type, referred to as 'ditching', occurs when a group leaves an interaction partner under the pretext of returning but fails to do so – an intriguing form of deliberate exclusion for someone anticipating an invitation.

Asher, Rose and Gabriel (2001) conducted a year-long study involving observations and recordings of real-life school interactions. Their findings revealed that students employ various strategies to exclude others from participating in play or group activities. The study identified thirty-two different forms of rejection, indicating that, in addition to explicit verbal and physical behaviours (e.g., insulting, ridiculing, commanding, blaming, expressing moral disapproval), rejection can also manifest in more passive forms, such as ignoring and non-verbal denial of access to colleagues or resources. The researchers documented that during early adolescence, individuals tend to exhibit avoidance behaviours towards rejected peers, intentionally avoiding responses and using non-verbal methods, like gestures or gazes, to exclude.

In a qualitative research study conducted by Huntley and Owens (2013), it was discovered that a significant number of adolescent girls aged 14–15 expressed the impact of negative non-verbal communication on their experiences of exclusion from social groups and peer bullying. Common behaviours included eye-rolling, intimidating stares ("death stare" or "daggers"), turning away, and group silence. Research participants also reported the experience of being "cut out of conversations" or encountering a sudden silence within the group when attempting to participate (Huntley and Owens 2013, p. 242).

Similarly, Shute, Owens and Slee (2002), various forms of intense staring and dagger-giving are used to varying degrees to induce feelings of rejection and isolation. "Daggers" involve staring in a threatening manner, giving disapproving looks to disliked people up and down in a disparaging way, using "bitchy looks", giving a raised eyebrow, staring while walking past, or throwing a glance over one's shoulder (Shute et al. 2002, p. 360). Adolescents experienced exclusion through intimidating glares, gossip-inducing looks, and dismissive eye-rolling (Huntley and Owens 2013; Shute et al. 2002). Participants also mentioned engaging in behaviour such as talking unpleasantly about someone passing by. When the group saw a person approaching, they would stop talking but resume the conversation by "speaking loudly enough" before the passing person was completely out of hearing range.

The strategies of ignoring, which involve refraining from communicating with a specific individual, along with non-verbal cues (such as avoiding eye contact and turning away), as well as deliberate exclusion from group activities (such as not selecting them for sports activities), are commonly employed to

exclude others. A more severe manifestation of exclusion through omission is known as "group huddles", where peers intentionally isolate a select few individuals by forming a circle and actively preventing others from joining (Shute et al. 2002, p. 363). Those not part of the group may feel excluded, yet they may also imagine themselves as potential recipients of engaging conversations and humorous exchanges from the group members.

The adolescents in this study also reported instances of complete ostracism, which led some to change schools. Although "expulsion" was rare, deliberate ignoring emerged as a more common strategy (Shute et al. 2002; Owens et al. 2000). When asked about the extent of this treatment, the adolescents surveyed by Shute et al. (2002, p. 364) explained that those who are ignored do not sit alone but are treated as invisible.

While exclusion among adolescents often takes the form of gossiping, breaking promises, devaluing, and speaking loudly enough for passing individuals to hear unflattering comments about others (Owen et al. 2000), researchers emphasize the existence of a subtle range of such behaviour, including passive, non-confrontational, inaction-based actions (Xie et al. 2002). This encompasses the "silent treatment" and the avoidance of certain peers (Coyne et al. 2006). Negative facial expressions and gestures, like dirty looks, rolling eyes, tossing hair, turning away from a peer, collusive looks, taunts from a distance, and avoiding eye contact, are common exclusion tactics (Huntley and Owens 2013; Shute et al. 2002; Underwood et al. 2004).

Other studies have uncovered various tactics employed by Swedish students to socially exclude their peers with a migrant background, which are often characterized as "polite" (Wiltgren 2022, 2023). Despite attending inclusive, high-performing schools, students with a migrant background felt ignored and excluded by peers.

According to the authors, peers express their discomfort and lack of interest in engaging in conversation, despite not exhibiting verbal rudeness or overtly expressing dislike or unwillingness to communicate with them (Wiltgren 2022, p. 452). Peers politely return greetings but rarely initiate contact, often responding with cold or perfunctory replies. Classmates often give brief answers and switch to Swedish to end conversations.

The descriptions provided also suggest that certain adolescents exhibit a tendency to avoid making eye contact with others while passing by or when they return greetings, giving the impression that they do not like greeting someone. Peers may look away and move closer to the wall, avoiding gestures like smiles or eye contact (Wiltgren 2022, p. 448–456).

Interviews with students aged 12 to 18 revealed exclusion in formal and informal interactions, highlighting social integration dynamics (Konieczna 2024c). The analysis focused on behaviors adolescents identified as forms of peer exclusion in the classroom. The motives were grouped into three categories: 1) Avoidance (e.g. Omission of inclusion; Physical distance and moving away; Ignoring), 2) Suspension/removal from the group (Suspension of communication and Removal from the group) and 3) Complete ostracism (Social alienation, Failure to engage in defence, Cessation of corrective actions and Exclusion from access to information, support and group decision making). Participants described strategies like minimizing interactions or maintaining physical distance to avoid relationships. Strategies included avoiding shared spaces, maintaining distance, and moving away during interactions. Avoidance was also observed in the form of a dearth of invitations to joint activities and a failure to include others in the circulation of information and certain resources.

Ignoring involved silence and cold indifference, like avoiding eye contact. A gentler form, "passive speech", involved reduced affirmations and limited information sharing. Excluded peers noticed formal tones, brief answers, and reluctance to interact. Well-liked peers received enthusiasm and support, like applause.

Adolescents participating in the study indicated that instances of being ignored were often accompanied by "impolite" signals of reluctance and irritation. These were mainly expressed through facial expressions and gestures, such as eye-rolling, avoiding eye contact, sarcastic smiles, and significant changes in body posture. Para-verbal signals included sighs, yawning, and furtive ironic smiles.

Suspension/removal involved group exclusion without verbal attacks or explanations. Participants described "not speaking" (suspension of communication) or blocking access to resources (such as homework or copying during quizzes). The silent treatment of the wrongdoer who violated group norms (reporting to teachers, reminding about a quiz, etc.) may not be permanent, but it can be accompanied by non-verbal signals of condemnation, such as accusing glances. In some cases, gossipy and manipulative individuals who had their scheming exposed by a strong leader were subjected to radical degradation, which included disconnection. Punitive group exclusion sometimes led to broader isolation, causing individuals to leave school. As one participant mentioned, such individuals felt like they "didn't have a life in our class".

"Complete exclusion" involves abandonment and avoidance of contact, differing significantly in scale and nature from other forms of exclusion. Participants noted that exclusion targeted low-status individuals, completely removing

them from the reciprocity system. This included exclusion from social activities, information flows, and group decision-making. Clear signals of ostracism include the absence of greetings, not initiating conversations, not being invited to gatherings, and maintaining physical distance. Moreover, many respondents reported the exclusive nature of group activities where inclusion would typically be expected. Excluded individuals noticed others receiving invitations while they were excluded from activities like school projects or charity events.

Exclusion became more apparent when compared to group norms of care and inclusion. Complete exclusion left individuals unprotected from attacks and ridicule. Respondents noted it was risky to support excluded individuals without strong group status.

Students from public schools did not deny that their repertoire extends beyond "polite" forms, but they extensively explained that ceasing communication, inhibiting emotional and verbal reactions, is perceived as "gentle" and less harmful actions. Perpetrators intended to end or minimize interactions and refused to rebuild relationships. Other studies (Konieczna in press) provided insights into the same subtle actions, recognized as acts of doing nothing, this time from the viewpoint of those excluded. The main categories developed based on interview data are ostracism among friends (including four subcategories: Temporary communication separation, Coercion, Harbingers of withdrawal of investment in the relationship, Abandonment, Expulsion from the pack) and ostracizing strategies with high social distance (including four subcategories: Strategies for ignoring requests for inclusion, Total avoidance, Strategies for insulting and destroying, and Expulsion from the peer group). Descriptions included repeated ignoring, abandonment, and terminated relationships. According to the surveyed adolescents, these minimal and silent exclusionary behaviours observed were not only characterized by avoidance and reduced engagement, but also by the expression of distance, hostility, and dominance. They contributed to a lasting deprivation of their social bonds, harm to their self-esteem and reputation, a sense of well-being, forced resignation, and escape by changing schools, and the experience of feeling like an outsider every day. Adolescents experiencing subtle exclusion noticed various non-verbal and less obvious behaviours that were not just acts of politeness withholding but acts of rudeness, attempting to offend the recipient, belittling their importance, ridiculing, and threatening. Adolescents viewed exclusion as degrading and depriving social support. This aligns with the understanding of such behaviors as victimizing and may position persistent ostracism as an abuse (Dixon 2007; Xie et al. 2002).

Additionally, the results suggest that the participants' interpretations were not open to perceiving options other than "intentionally harmful". Excluded individuals perceived peers' intentions as straightforward, despite minimal contextual cues often allowing alternative interpretations. Participants believed exclusion aimed to disregard the recipients, and they acknowledged their active role in this outcome.

It is worth noting that this study not only sheds light on the personal perception of subtle exclusionary behaviours, but also expands the existing typology of passive practices, where a peer is sometimes ignored, and sometimes, ignoring may coexist with silent harassment. Non-verbal microaggressions, though subtle, deny direct communication and inclusion when expected. Exclusion is actualized through a lack of engagement and passivity in the meeting space, such as reserved behavior, minimal responses, maintaining physical distance, absence of gestures of recognition, and non-verbal expressions of disapproval, such as "eye-rolling" signals, subtle hostile looks, and allusive sighs (Konieczna 2019). These practices not only challenge to the sense of belonging but also hinder the acquisition of an identity as a valued group member and result in negative distinctiveness.

It is noteworthy to highlight that recently, there has been a growing number of studies focusing on the phenomenon of passive ostracism facilitated by the Internet and social media. Cyber-ostracism includes forms such as a lack or a small number of feedback, i.e., not responding to shares and messages, such as likes, comments, and shares (Abrams et al. 2011; Allen et al. 2014). It can involve not responding to questions, requests, being deliberately excluded from a group that disseminates crucial information, or displaying disinterest when others cease to observe (Niu et al. 2018). Feelings of abandonment arise when individuals don't receive expected messages from close contacts via SMS, email, or social media. Additionally, these feelings may arise when their friends' lists decrease, and they do not receive invitations to social events (Smith et al. 2017). The experience of being excluded or ignored in online social interactions can also arise from a prompt absence of response or disinterest (Niu et al. 2018). Ostracism occurs when responses are delayed despite 'seen' indicators or when status updates lack feedback (Smith et al. 2017).

Cyber-ostracism is often ambiguous and appears trivial, but its effects can mirror those of social ostracism (e.g., O'Reilly et al. 2018; Popat and Tarrant 2023). Listing online exclusion behaviors is increasingly difficult due to evolving platforms and practices (Canty et al. 2016).

Conclusions

This study delves into the subtle and passive manifestations of exclusionary behaviors prevalent in the daily social interactions of adolescent students within a school environment. Given the limited descriptions of adolescents' rejection behaviors, this paper explores ostracism as a common response. These forms of ostracism contribute to the disintegration of relationships within groups.

Numerous non-verbal behaviors exhibited by adolescent peers not only partially or entirely overlap with recognized forms of ostracism but extend beyond school settings and age groups. For instance, these behaviours involve refraining from selecting a companion for an activity and deliberately omitting an individual from the circulation of information (Nezlek et al. 2012; Zadro et al. 2008).

The subtle exclusionary behaviors discussed in this context among adolescents are also acknowledged by other terms within Asher's et al. (2001) classification of subcategories of social rejection, including abandonment, ignoring, and ceasing all relationships. This spectrum extends to preventing access to various elements, including friends, play activities, toys, and important information. Additional studies have underscored that the dynamics of sharing social information and determining invitations can serve as signals of exclusion (Owens et al. 2000). Students have identified that in addition to observing eye movements and physical gestures indicating superiority, they experience exclusion from engaging in various activities during breaks, leisure time, morning queues in the cafeteria, on the playground, and during physical education classes (Shaath et al. 2021). Moreover, several qualitative studies have identified various behaviours like "setting others against," "huddling" (to make someone feel excluded), and "befriending another person as revenge", functioning to create coalitions and alliances with others (e.g., Coyne et al. 2006; Shute et al. 2002; Huntley and Owens 2013; Underwood 2004). Micro-aggressions, such as throwing "daggers" or giving threatening glances to express dislike and gain popularity, seem to be significant elements of youth culture and have not yet been observed in other settings.

It is important to emphasize that the described social incidents demonstrate that adolescents engage in exclusionary behaviours within the school classroom environment, which tend to be of a persistent but relatively low intensity. They may choose to limit or reduce the intensity of their social interactions with a particular individual or subgroup. In certain cases, it is observed that individuals may experience a partial restriction in their social interactions. This can manifest as exclusion from conversations, joint activities such as going to the playground or having meals together during breaks, and invitations to

events outside of the school environment. Despite limitations, functional collaboration allows for the exchange of support and information.

Participants reported complete ostracism as a severe form of exclusion. The data show that it prevents full integration into the group and has a consensual and chronic dimension. Additionally, it is worth noting that solitary acts and minimal acts were, however, also chronic in nature. For many adolescents, they are recurring and constant challenges, even though in most cases they have not closed the way to integrating with other peers and finding an alternative accepting group to join.

The collected data also suggest that exclusionary behaviours may accumulate. Those individuals engaged in the act of ostracism placed significant emphasis on the overt and public nature of their actions. They saw no reason to conceal their intentions or motives (Konieczna 2024c). They characterized their behaviour as assertive, conspicuous, and even demonstrative. Many episodes involved negative attention despite claims of indifference (Wiltgren 2022). The behaviours associated with ignoring resemble confrontational and direct behaviours described by researchers in the context of relational aggression, reflecting hostility and an active effort to frustrate the person subjected to victimization practices (e.g., Underwood 2004). Young people engage in relationally aggressive behaviours, which not only function to exclude others but also enhance the social standing of the perpetrators and are employed to make others feel uncomfortable (Shute et al. 2002).

Ignoring, as suggested by the results presented in this study, rarely takes the form of the "silent treatment". The implementation of this action is unlikely to be limited to ceasing all signals of affiliation and contact maintenance. The implicit message of disengagement in the interaction is further emphasized by micro-expressions of rude indifference, disapproval, and even disregard (Dixon 2007; Wiltgren 2022). Adolescents may sometimes replace subtle avoidance with overt disapproval. Ostracism serves to end relationships and socially devalue individuals.

Furthermore, adolescents were unlikely to interpret acts of ostracism as a covertly planned manipulation or a complex macro-strategy (Konieczna 2024c). They perceived it as a straightforward and ad hoc disengagement, blocking a pushy antagonist and preventing unwanted confrontational and aversive encounters (Asher et al. 2001; SunWolf and Leets 2004; Wainryb et al. 2014). The primary intention behind these actions is to hinder the initiation of a relationship, break contact, and disconnect from the social network, with little (or sometimes no) interest in resuming contact in the future. Temporary

ostracism suspends interaction briefly, while permanent ostracism reflects enduring disengagement. Avoidance, unlike hostility, is seen as a way to maintain personal comfort (Konieczna 2024c).

Based on the descriptions of exclusionary events, it becomes apparent that ostracizing actions effectively keep a specific member outside the community, even though they may still be part of the formal class group (Huntley and Owens 2013; Konieczna 2019). The disregard and omission directed towards the excluded individual are highlighted in contrast to the lively, enthusiastic, empathetic, and acknowledging social exchanges observed with those in closer circles. Beyond the periphery of these social circles, the ostracized person remains excluded. Exclusion manifests itself through the absence of invitations to peer gatherings, information sharing, and inadequate support. The more individuals engage in ostracism and the broader the social planes it covers, the more "shrunken" the social world available to a particular person becomes.

Many of the behaviours described were found to be closely associated with the social status of the person to whom they were directed, as noted by Shaath et al. (2021), among others. Shute et al. (2002) found that ostracism involved greater reticence when the ostracizer had less power or alternatives. When, on the other hand, he had more power, ignoring had a coercive function (Underwood 2004). Ostracism demonstrated power by controlling its duration or severing relationships.

Research increasingly focuses on exclusion in larger school groups with diverse, long-term relationships. Researchers suggest that the degree of ostracism is influenced by the number of accepting and excluding partners in the group (Sandstrom et al. 2017). Mild ostracism differs in impact depending on group support levels (Salmivalli et al. 2021).

The impact of ostracism varies significantly with the presence of supportive peers. Supportive classmates, even a single ally, reduce the negative effects of exclusion. Groups with more ostracizers shift power dynamics and lead victims to self-blame (Sandstrom et al. 2017).

Therefore, researchers suggest a closer examination of group dynamics during ostracizing actions in the classroom (Killen et al. 2009). It's important to note that not all members of a group inevitably exhibit a cohesive and synchronized approach when engaging in acts of group exclusion. The involvement of individuals engaged in exclusionary activities in recruiting others or manipulating social circles is a significant factor, but the presence of inclusive and non-supportive individuals within the group is equally important. As ob-

served, even passive individuals take a stand against incidents of social exclusion through demonstrated non-engagement (Shute et al. 2002).

Narrative reports clearly indicate that many subtly aggressive non-confrontational actions involve more people (Sandstrom et al. 2017; Shute et al. 2002), or the community becomes a tool of attack (Xie et al. 2002; Konieczna 2019, 2024c). Ostracising actions can be observed by peers and positively reinforced in the context of friendship. Groups strengthen bonds by excluding outsiders, pulling allies away, or celebrating rejection through unity. Loyalty to leaders skilled in exclusion plays a key role. The importance of this type of allied behaviour has also been demonstrated in literature emphasising the role of social incident observers (Salmivalli et al. 2021).

Future research directions

To provide a comprehensive conclusion, it is imperative to address several key issues that may guide future research on the subtle forms of social exclusion.

Developing precise definitions and devising effective measurement tools for ostracism appear to be the primary objectives that require immediate attention. Existing research suggests that being ignored and being left out can be distinct experiences of social exclusion (e.g., Shute et al. 2002). Still, there remains a question regarding the comprehensiveness of the proposed dimensions or categories within ostracism typologies. It is uncertain whether it is better to consider these dimensions collectively or individually. It is crucial to acknowledge that the two core categories of Ignoring and Exclusion by the peer group, although specific and separate, are not orthogonal dimensions of social ostracism. These distinctions are also evident in existing ostracism scales, such as the Ostracism Experience Scale (OES) (Gilman et al. 2013), the Bullying Screening Scale (Saylor et al. 2012), and the Ostracism Scale (Shahzad et al. 2021). Additionally, Ignoring is a separate factor in the Social Peer Rejection Measure (Lev-Wiesel et al. 2006).

The items grouped around the Ignoring Scale seem to fully match the acts of ignoring described in this overwiev (Gilman et al. 2013). However, ignoring seems to be an umbrella term that covers the whole spectrum of forms of behaviour. The Ignoring category includes spreading rumors, avoiding greetings, and treating individuals as invisible (Gilman et al. 2013). In essence, individuals engaging in these behaviors act as though the person being ostracized does not exist (Gilman et al. 2013, p. 324). Other lists may include items such

as ignoring opinions in discussions or treating the person as if they were not a member of the team to identify ostracized individuals (Shahzad et al. 2021).

Furthermore, similar to ignoring, exclusion from group activities is regarded as a central and defining feature of ostracism (Gilman et al. 2013; Saylor et al. 2012; Shahzad et al. 2021). As one of the key subtypes, it encompasses a diverse range of practices, such as being left out and not being included in information crucial for close relationships. Some items related to indicating exclusion, like not being invited to joint meals or meetings outside of school, exclusion from the group, refusal to join the group, and not being selected for the team, appear to be suitable starting points for building and refining measurements, though creating a complete set of practices remains extremely challenging.

It is important to highlight that ostracism scales have been found to be reliable and are considered quite sensitive in detecting even subtle and ambiguous instances of ostracism in real-life situations, as well as the cumulative effects of such experiences. Additionally, the utilization of these scales enables researchers to conduct studies with large sample sizes, thanks to their straightforward construction. Currently, the Ostracism Experience Scale (OES) is an 8-item self-report survey (Gilman et al. 2013), and the Cyber-Ostracism Experience Scale consists of 14 items (Niu et al. 2018).

A key limitation of questionnaires is their inability to fully capture the phenomenon. Researchers use open methods like vignettes, daily diaries, lists, observations, and games like Cyberball (e.g., Abrams et al. 2011; James and Owens 2005; Nezlek et al. 2012; Owens et al. 2000; Underwood et al. 2004; Wiltgren 2022).

It's important to note the constraints of the qualitative research conducted in this study. The study relies on a small sample and self-reports, limiting generalizability and raising concerns about bias and omitted perspectives. Self--reports, rather than real-life behavior assessments, may not reflect actual actions (Buhs et al. 2010; Xie et al. 2002). The conversation centered on specific events that the participants chose to discuss. Self-reports may reflect social desirability bias, with participants hesitant to disclose peer aggression. Selective recall may emphasize intense incidents, overshadowing minor episodes (Sommer et al. 2001). This approach may reinforce tolerance of ostracism or downplay its severity (Feigenberg et al. 2008; Forsberg 2019; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2015; Wainryb et al. 2014; Xie et al. 2002). Additionally, researchers may inadvertently overlook individuals who are perceived as socially accepted by their peers or those who are less likely to disclose sensitive information about

their social belonging, if they solely rely on data such as adolescents' perceptions (Park et al. 2003; Verona et al. 2008).

Future research should clarify when ostracism shifts from social adaptation to victimization (Huntley and Owens 2013; Mulvey et al. 2017; SunWolf and Leets 2004; Underwood 2004; Wainryb et al. 2014). Harmful exclusion may not always meet criteria like repetition, intent, and power imbalance (Salmivalli et al. 2021).

A potential redefinition of ostracism could focus on the concept of "social (in)visibility" as a central analytical construct (Konieczna 2024b). Unlike traditional views that emphasize overt aggression or exclusionary intent, this perspective highlights the subtle and often imperceptible dynamics of being ignored or overlooked. Social (in)visibility underscores the absence of acknowledgment and engagement, manifesting through nonverbal cues, silence, or the lack of expected recognition. This approach reframes ostracism as not only an active form of exclusion but also as a process that fosters social distance and alienation, whether intentional or incidental.

It is important to acknowledge that adolescents experience a profound impact from exclusion, particularly when it takes the form of subtle and often unspoken distancing. This phenomenon warrants significant attention and should be given serious consideration (Popat and Tarrant 2023). Existing scholarly literature also indicates the importance of incorporating perspectives from both ostracized individuals and adolescents involved in exclusion in order to enhance the current understanding of how young people perceive and comprehend ostracism (Wainryb et al. 2014). Due to limited existing research, the emphasis on aggressive aspects, and the exclusive focus on girls (Owens et al. 2000; Shute et al. 2002; Underwood 2004), it is imperative to conduct further analysis in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the implications of ostracism for adolescents. This includes investigating the underlying reasons for ostracism and determining the appropriate actions that schools and parents should take in response.

Research is also required to investigate the perceptions of teachers in relation to the signals they have access to, as compared to students (Chen et al. 2018). Teachers and students differ in awareness of exclusion and victimization (Chen et al. 2018; Demaray et al. 2013; Menesini et al. 2002; Kõiv and Aia-Utsal 2019; Shaath et al. 2021). Teachers often notice only overt and severe exclusion.

Limited avenues for resistance and opposition are available to students when faced with instances of ostracism, as teachers appear to be unaware of the exclusion, justify it, and sometimes even hold the excluded students respon-

sible for their own exclusion (Wiltgren 2023). According to previous studies, there is a consensus among students and teachers when it comes to defining "violence" and identifying severe instances of physical bullying (Menesini et al. 2002). However, it has been observed that teachers, similar to parents, often underestimate the extent to which children experience victimization (Demaray et al. 2013). Additionally, they appear to be less attentive to the less visible and indirect forms of victimization, such as exclusion and cyberbullying (Menesini et al. 2002; Shaath et al. 2021; Wiltgren 2022).

Rejecting exclusion is easy if it is not perceived as a form of genuine aggression (Wiltgren 2022). It has been argued that the persistence of behaviour is likely to continue if it goes unchallenged and unpunished (Underwood 2004). This is particularly true when there is a general acceptance of the behavior and a belief that it should be tolerated (O'Reilly et al. 2018).

Research findings indicate that school programs aimed at addressing relational aggression have shown limited effectiveness (Dailey et al. 2015; Leadbetter 2010). Additionally, teachers often express a sense of unpreparedness when confronted with these challenges. Schools and teacher training must address subtle exclusion patterns.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrams D., Weick M., Thomas D., Colbe H., Franklin K.M. (2011), *On-line ostracism affects children differently from adolescents and adults*, "British Journal of Developmental Psychology", 29(1), 110–123, doi:10.1348/026151010X494089.

Allen K.A., Ryan T., Gray D.L., McInerney D.M., Waters L. (2014), *Social media use and social connectedness in adolescents: The positives and the potential pitfalls*, "Australian Educational and Developmental Psychologist", 31(1), 18–31, doi:10.1017/edp.2014.2.

Álvarez-García D., Barreiro-Collazo A., Núñez J.C., Dobarro A. (2016), *Validity and Reliability of the Cyber-aggression Questionnaire for Adolescents (CYBA)*, "The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context", 8, 69–77, doi:10.1016/j.ejpal.2016.02.003.

Asher S.R., Rose A.J., Gabriel S.W. (2001), *Peer rejection in everyday life*, in: M.R. Leary (ed.), *Interpersonal rejection* (p. 105–142), New York: Oxford University Press.

Betts L.R., Houston J.E., Steer O.L. (2015), *Development of the Multidimensional Peer Victimization Scale-Revised (MPVS-R) and the Multidimensional Peer Bullying Scale (MPVS-RB)*, "Journal of Genetic Psychology", 176(1–2), 93–109, doi:10.1080/00221325.2015.1007915.

Bowker J.C., Adams R.E., Fredstrom B.K., Gilman R. (2014), *Experiences of being ignored by peers during late adolescence: Linkages to psychological maladjustment*, "Merrill-Palmer Quarterly", 60(3), 328–354, doi:10.13110/merrpalmquar1982.60.3.0328.

Buhs E.S., Ladd G.W., Herald S.L. (2006), *Peer exclusion and victimization: Processes that mediate the relation between peer group rejection and children's classroom engagement and achievement?*, "Journal of Educational Psychology", 98, 1–13, doi:10.1037/0022-0663.98.1.1.

Buhs E.S., McGinley M., Toland M.D. (2010), *Overt and relational victimization in Latinos and European Americans: Measurement equivalence across ethnicity, gender, and grade level in early adolescent groups*, "The Journal of Early Adolescence", 30(1), 171–197, doi:10.1177/0272431609350923B.

Canty J., Stubbe M.H., Steers D., Collings S.C. (2016), *The trouble with bullying – deconstructing the conventional definition of bullying for a child-centred investigation into children's use of social media*, "Children and Society", 30(1), 48–58, doi:10.1111/chso.12103.

Card N.A., Stucky B.D., Sawalani G.M., Little T.D. (2008), *Direct and indirect aggression during childhood and adolescence: A meta-analytic review of gender differences, intercorrelations, and relations to maladjustment*, "Child Development", 79(5), 1185–1229, doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2008.01184.x.

Chen L., Wang L., Sung Y. (2018), *Teachers' recognition of school bullying according to background variables and type of bullying*, "ECPS – Educational Cultural and Psychological Studies", 18, doi:10.7358/ecps-2018-018-chen.

Coyne S.M., Archer J., Eslea M. (2006), *"We're not friends anymore! Unless...": The frequency and harmfulness of indirect, relational, and social aggression*, "Aggressive Behavior", 32(4), 294–307, doi:10.1002/ab.20126.

Coyne S.M., Gundersen N., Nelson D.A., Stockdale L. (2011), *Adolescents' prosocial responses to ostracism: An experimental study*, "Journal of Social Psychology", 151(5), 657–661, doi:10.1080/00224545.2010.522625.

Crothers L.M., Field J.E., Kolbert J.B. (2005), *Navigating power, control, and being nice: Aggression in adolescent girls' friendships*, "Journal of Counseling and Development", 83(3), 349–360, doi:10.1002/j.1556-6678.2005.tb00354.x.

Dailey A.L., Frey A.J., Walker H.M. (2015), *Relational aggression in school settings: Definition, development, strategies and implications*, "Children and Schools", 37(2), 79–88, doi:10.1093/cs/cdv003.

Demaray M.K., Malecki C.K., Secord S.M., Lyell K.M. (2013), *Agreement among students', teachers', and parents' perceptions of victimization by bullying*, "Children and Youth Services Review", 35(12), 2091–2100, doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.10.018.

DeWall C.N., Gilman R., Sharif V., Carboni I., Rice K.G. (2012), *Left out, sluggardly, and blue: Low self-control mediates the relationship between ostracism and depres-*

sion, "Personality and Individual Differences", 53(7), 832–837, doi:10.1016/j.paid.2012.05.025.

Dixon R. (2007), *Ostracism: One of the many causes of bullying in groups?*, "Journal of School Violence", 6(3), 3–26, doi:10.1300/ J202v06n0302.

Feigenberg L.F., King M.S., Barr D.J., Selman R.L. (2008), *Belonging to and exclusion from the peer group in schools: Influences on adolescents' moral choices*, "Journal of Moral Education", 37(2), 165–184, doi:10.1080/03057240802009306.

Fitzpatrick S., Bussey K. (2011), *The development of the Social Bullying Involvement Scales*, "Aggressive Behavior", 37(2), 177–192, doi:10.1002/ab.20379.

Forsberg C. (2019), *The contextual definition of harm: 11-to 15-year-olds' perspectives on social incidents and bullying*, "Journal of Youth Studies", 22(10), 1378–1392, doi:10.1080/13676261.2019.1580351.

Freedman G., Williams K.D., Beer J.S. (2016), *Softening the blow of social exclusion: The responsive theory of social exclusion*, "Frontiers in Psychology", 7, article 1570, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01570.

Gilman R., Carter-Sowell A., DeWall C.N., Adams R.E., Carboni I. (2013), *Validation of the ostracism experience scale for adolescents*, "Psychological Assessment", 25(2), 319–330, doi:10.1037/a0030913.

Guyer A.E., Caouette J.D., Lee C.C., Ruiz S.K. (2014), *Will they like me? Adolescents' emotional responses to peer evaluation*, "International Journal of Behavioral Development", 38(2), 155–163, doi:10.1177/0165025413515627.

Hawes D., Zadro L., Fink E., Richardson R., O'Moore K., Griffiths B., Dadds M., Williams K. (2012), *The effects of peer ostracism on children's cognitive processes*, "European Journal of Developmental Psychology", 9(5), 599–613, doi:10.1080/17405629.2011.638815.

Heinonen P., Tainio L. (2022), *Intercorporeal construction of we-ness in classroom interaction*, "Human Studies", 1–24, doi:10.1007/s10746-022-09659-x.

Huntley J., Owens L. (2013), *Collaborative conversations: Adolescent girls' own strategies for managing conflict within their friendship groups*, "International Journal of Adolescence and Youth", 18(4), 236–247, doi:10.1080/02673843.2012.690933.

James D., Flynn A., Lawlor M., Courtney P., Murphy N., Henry B. (2010), *A friend in deed? Can adolescent girls be taught to understand relational bullying?*, "Child Abuse Review", 20(6), 439–454, doi:10.1002/car.1120.

James V.H., Owens L.D. (2005), *"They turned around like I wasn't there": An analysis of teenage girls' letters about their peer conflicts*, "School Psychology International", 26(1), 71–88, doi:10.1177/0143034305050895.

Killen M., Rutland A., Jampol N. (2008), *Social exclusion in childhood and adolescence*, in: K.H. Rubin, W. Bukowski, B. Laursen (eds.), *Handbook of peer relationships, interactions, and groups* (p. 249–266), New York: Guilford.

Kim A.Y., Rose C.A., Hopkins S., Mc Cree N., Romero M. (2022), *Survey of secondary youth on relational aggression: Impact of bullying, social status, and atti-*

tudes, "Preventing School Failure", 66(3), 285–295, doi:10.1080/1045988X. 2022.2070589.

Kõiv K., Aia-Utsal M. (2019), *Social pedagogues' definitions of three types of bullying*, in: P. Besedová, N. Heinrichová, J. Ondráková (eds.), *ICEEPSY 2019: Education and Educational Psychology, vol. 72. European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences* (p. 1–15), Future Academy.

Konieczna A. (in press), *Peer ostracism from the perspective of adolescents experiencing exclusion in a classroom peer environment*, "Colloqium".

Konieczna A. (2019), *„Nasza klasa". Społeczne zachowania przestrzenne i reguły dystansu w społeczności klas szkolnych*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo APS.

Konieczna A. (2024a), *Criteria for selecting preferred and avoided partners for teamwork in the classroom and their contextual variability: An adolescent perspective*, "e-mentor", 4(106), 4–12, doi:10.15219/em106.1674.

Konieczna A. (2024b), *The experience of social (in)visibility in narratives about ostracism*, "Communications", doi:10.1515/commun-2023-0153.

Konieczna A. (2024c), *"Zero interaction", ignoring and acts of omission in the school ecology: Peer ostracism from the perspective of involved adolescents*, "Social Psychology of Education", doi:10.1007/s11218-024-09926-y.

Korkiamäki R. (2014), *Rethinking loneliness – A qualitative study about adolescents' experiences of being an outsider in peer group*, "Open Journal of Depression", 3(4), 125–135, doi:10.4236/ojd.2014.34016.

Leadbetter B. (2010), *Can we see it? Can we stop it? Lessons learned from community-university research collaborations about relational aggression*, "School Psychology Review", 39(4), 588–593, doi:10.1080/02796015.2010.12087743.

Leets L., Sunwolf (2005), *Adolescent rules for social exclusion: When is it fair to exclude someone else?*, "Journal of Moral Education", 34(3), 343–362, doi:10.1080/03057240500211618.

Lev-Wiesel R., Nuttman-Shwartz O., Sternberg R. (2006), *Peer rejection during adolescence: Psychological long-term effects – a brief report*, "Journal of Loss and Trauma", 11(2), 131–142, doi:10.1080/15325020500409200.

Lundh L.G., Daukantaité D., Wångby M. (2014), *Direct and indirect aggression and victimization in adolescents – Associations with the development of psychological difficulties*, "BMC Psychology", 2(1), 43, doi:10.1186/s40359-014-0043-2.

Menesini E., Fonzi A., Smith P.K. (2002), *Attribution of meanings to terms related to bullying: A comparison between teacher's and pupil's perspectives in Italy*, "European Journal of Psychology of Education", 17(4), 393–406, doi:10.1007/ BF03173593.

Molden D.C., Lucas G.M., Gardner W.L., Dean K., Knowles M.L. (2009), *Motivations for prevention or promotion following social exclusion: Being rejected versus being ignored*, "Journal of Personality and Social Psychology", 96(2), 415–431, doi:10.1037/a0012958.

Mulvey L.K., Boswell C., Zheng J. (2017), *Causes and consequences of social exclusion and peer rejection among children and adolescents*, "Report on Emotional and Behavioral Disorders in Youth", 17(3), 71–75.

Nezlek J.B., Wesselmann E.D., Wheeler L., Williams K.D. (2012), *Ostracism in everyday life*, "Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice", 16(2), 91–104, doi:10.1037/a0028029.

Niu G.F., Zhou Z.K., Sun X., Yu F., Xie X., Liu Q., Lian S.L. (2018), *Cyber-ostracism and its relation to depression among Chinese adolescents: The moderating role of optimism*, "Personality and Individual Differences", 123, 105–109, doi:10.1016/j.paid.2017.10.032.

O'Reilly M., Dogra N., Whiteman N., Hughes J., Eruyar S., Reilly P. (2018), *Is social media bad for mental health and wellbeing? Exploring the perspectives of adolescents*, "Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry", 23(4), 601–613, doi:10.1177/1359104518775154.

Park Y., Killen M., Crystal D.S., Watanabe H. (2003), *Korean, Japanese, and U.S. students' judgments about peer exclusion: Evidence for diversity*, "International Journal of Behavioral Development", 27(6), 555–565, doi:10.1080/01650250344000217.

Popat A., Tarrant C. (2023), *Exploring adolescents' perspectives on social media and mental health and well-being – A qualitative literature review*, "Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry", 28(1), 323–337, doi:10.1177/13591045221092884.

Richman S.L., Leary M.R. (2009), *Reactions to discrimination, stigmatization, ostracism, and other forms of interpersonal rejection: A multimotive model*, "Psychological Review", 116(2), 365–383, doi:10.1037/a0015250.

Riva P., Eck J. (2016), *The many faces of social exclusion*, in: P. Riva, J. Eck (eds.), *Social exclusion: Psychological approaches to understanding and reducing its impact* (s. IX–XV), Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Robinson S.L., O'Reilly J., Wang W. (2013), *Invisible at work: An integrated model of workplace ostracism*, "Journal of Management", 39(1), 203–231, doi:10.1177/0149206312466141.

Ruggieri S., Bendixen M., Gabriel U., Alsaker F. (2013), *The impact of ostracism on the well-being of early adolescents*, "Swiss Journal of Psychology", 72(2), 103–109, doi:10.1024//1421-0185/a000103.

Salmivalli C., Laninga W.L., Malamut S.T., Garandeau C.F. (2021), *Bullying prevention in adolescence: Solutions and new challenges from the past decade*, "Journal of Research on Adolescence", 31(4), 1023–1046, doi:10.1111/jora.12688.

Sandstrom M.J., Deutz M.H.F., Lansu T.A.M., van Noorden T.H.J., Karremans J.C., Cillessen A.H.N. (2017), *Unanimous versus partial rejection: How the number of excluders influences the impact of ostracism in children*, "Aggressive Behavior", 43(2), 190–203, doi:10.1002/ab.21674.

Saylor C.F., Nida S.A., Williams K.D., Taylor L.A., Smyth W., Twyman K.A., et al. (2012), *Bullying and Ostracism Screening Scales (BOSS): Development and applications*, "Children's Health Care", 41(4), 322–343, doi:10.1080/02739615. 2012.720962.

Shaath M., Sleem H., Sulayeh Y., Saifi A.G., Ishtayah H., Hamayel O. (2021), *School bullying from multiple perspectives: A qualitative study*, "Education in the Knowledge Society (EKS)", 22, article e23953, doi:10.14201/eks.23953.

Shahzad B., Aqeel M., Naseer H., Khan M.A., Fawad N., Tahreem A. (2021), *Psychometric development and validation of ostracism experience scale (OES): Across sample of young adults from Pakistan*, "International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare", 15(3), 257–275, doi:10.1108/IJHRH-12-2020-0125.

Shute R., Owens L., Slee P. (2002), *"You just stare at them and give them daggers": Nonverbal expressions of social aggression in teenage girls*, "International Journal of Adolescence and Youth", 10(4), 353–372, doi:10.1080/02673843.2002. 9747911.

Smith R., Morgan J., Monks C. (2017), *Students' perceptions of the effect of social media ostracism on wellbeing*, "Computers in Human Behaviour", 68, 276–285, doi:10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.041.

Sommer K.L., Williams K.D., Ciarocco N.J., Baumeister R.F. (2001), *When silence speaks louder than words: Explorations into the intrapsychic and interpersonal consequences of social ostracism*, "Basic and Applied Social Psychology", 23(4), 225–243, doi:10.1207/S15324834BASP2304_1.

Spaans J.P., Will G.J., van Hoorn J., Güroğlu B. (2019), *Turning a blind eye? Punishment of friends and unfamiliar peers after observed exclusion in adolescence*, "Journal of Research on Adolescence", 29(2), 508–522.

Suárez-Orozco C., Casanova S., Martin M., Katsiaficas D., Cuellar V., Smith N.A., Dias S.I. (2015), *Toxic rain in class: Classroom interpersonal microaggressions*, "Educational Researcher", 44(3), 151–160, doi:10.3102/0013189X155803.

Sunwolf, Leets L. (2004), *Being left out: Rejecting outsiders and communicating group boundaries in childhood and adolescent peer groups*, "Journal of Applied Communication Research", 32(3), 195–223, doi:10.1080/0090988042000240149.

Thomas H.J., Connor J.P., Scott J.G. (2015), *Integrating traditional bullying and cyberbullying: Challenges of definition and measurement in adolescents – a review*, "Educational Psychology Review", 27, 135–152, doi:10.1007/s10648-014-9261-7.

Verona E., Sadeh N., Case S.M., Reed A., Bhattacharjee A. (2008), *Self-reported use of different forms of aggression in late adolescence and emerging adulthood*, "Assessment", 15(4), 493–510, doi:10.1177/1073191108318250.

Underwood M.K. (2004), *Glares of contempt, eye rolls of disgust and turning away to exclude: Non-verbal forms of social aggression among girls*, "Feminism and Psychology", 14(3), 371–375, doi:10.1177/0959353504044637.

Underwood M.K., Scott B.L., Galperin M.B., Bjornstad G.J., Sexton A.M. (2004), *An observational study of social exclusion under varied conditions: Gender and developmental differences*, "Child Development", 75, 1538–1555, doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2004.00756.x.

Wainryb C., Komolova M., Brehl B. (2014), *Children's narrative accounts and judgments of their own peer-exclusion experiences*, "Merrill-Palmer Quarterly", 60(4), 461–490, doi:10.13110/merrpalmquar1982.60.4.0461.

Wang J., Iannotti R.J., Luk J.W., Nansel T.R. (2010), *Co-occurrence of victimization from five subtypes of bullying: Physical, verbal, social exclusion, spreading rumors, and cyber*, "Journal of Pediatric Psychology", 35(10), 1103–1112, doi:10.1093/jpepsy/jsq048.

Wesselmann E.D., Bradley E., Taggart R.S., Williams K.D. (2023), *Exploring social exclusion: Where we are and where we're going*, "Social and Personality Psychology Compass", 17(1), article e12714, doi:10.1111/spc3.12714.

Wesselmann E.D., Cardoso F.D., Slater S., Williams K.D. (2012), *To be looked at as though air: Civil attention matters*, "Psychological Science", 23(2), 166–168, doi:10.1177/0956797611427921.

Wiltgren L.K. (2022), *Polite exclusion: High-performing immigrant students experience of peer exclusion*, "Race Ethnicity and Education", 25(3), 443–459, doi:10.1080/13613324.2020.1718083.

Wiltgren L.K. (2023), *"So incredibly equal": How polite exclusion becomes invisible in the classroom*, "British Journal of Sociology of Education", 44(3), 435–451, doi:10.1080/01425692.2023.2164844.

Xie H., Swift D.J., Cairns B.D., Cairns R.B. (2002), *Aggressive behaviors in social interaction and developmental adaptation: A narrative analysis of interpersonal conflicts during early adolescence*, "Social Development", 11(2), 205–224, doi:10.1111/1467-9507.00195.

Zadro L., Arriaga X.B., Williams K.D. (2008), *Relational ostracism*, in: J.P. Forgas, J. Fitness (eds.), *Social relationships: Cognitive, affective and motivational processes* (p. 305–320). England, London: Psychology Press.

SUMMARY

The analyses conducted in this study offer a comprehensive depiction of a wide range of both subtle and less subtle manifestations of peer exclusion that are prevalent among children and adolescents in school settings. The attention has primarily been directed towards less obvious passive exclusionary behavior, which is characterized by inaction and a lack of involvement in social interactions. This type of behavior is commonly referred to as ostracism. These subtle, silent, and invisible manifestations of exclusion are less perceptible than overt rejection and harassment, rendering them

difficult to recognize and effectively tackle. Given that adolescent students devote a significant amount of their time to the school environment, the impact of being avoided, ignored, and excluded from social activities and essential communication is of utmost importance to their overall welfare. While ostracism is often perceived as being less harmful, acceptable, and socially inappropriate than bullying, teasing, or rudeness, it is imperative to acknowledge the victimizing nature of ostracism, avoid minimizing its detrimental consequences, and actively oppose these covert methods of creating distance. The implications of school interventions, as well as suggestions for future research, are presented in the study.

STRESZCZENIE

Niniejszy artykuł zawiera opis całego spektrum subtelnych, jak i mniej subtelnych form wykluczenia rówieśniczego funkcjonujących wśród szkolnej młodzieży. W szczególności zwrócono uwagę na mniej oczywiste pasywne działania wyłączające, które cechuje bierność i brak zaangażowania się w interakcje, definiowane jako ostracyzm. Drobne, „milczące", niewidoczne formy wykluczenia są mniej uchwytne niż odrzucenie i nękanie, w konsekwencji stają się trudne do zidentyfikowania i rozwiązania. Ponieważ nastoletni uczniowie spędzają znaczną ilość czasu w szkole, to doświadczenie bycia unikanym, ignorowanym i pomijanym z działań społecznych i z ważnej komunikacji odgrywa istotną rolę w ich dobrym samopoczuciu. Choć ostracyzm często postrzegany jest jako niegroźny, akceptowalny i mniej społecznie niewłaściwy niż nękanie, obrażanie czy nieuprzejmość, to istnieje potrzeba uznania wiktymizacyjnych aspektów ostracyzmu, niebagatelizowania jego szkodliwych skutków i sprzeciwienia się tym subtelnym formom dystansowania się. W pracy pokazano implikacje dla interwencji szkolnych oraz sugestie dotyczące przyszłych badań.

Agnieszka Konieczna – Akademia Pedagogiki Specjalnej