

Does campus ostracism stimulate college students' impulsive buying? The roles of negative emotions and self-efficacy

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Abstract: This study investigated the mediating role of negative emotions and the moderating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between student campus ostracism and impulsive buying. A three-wave online survey was conducted, with 401 college students from a university in East China (35.9% male and 64.1% female, 54.6% first year and 45.4% second year). The students completed measures of campus ostracism, negative emotions, self-efficacy, and impulsive buying. Linear regression analysis results show that campus ostracism was associated with impulsive buying. Negative emotions mediated the relationship between campus ostracism and impulsive buying for higher impulsive buying. Self-efficacy mitigated the campus ostracism effects on impulsive buying via negative emotions, to be lower with higher self-efficacy. These results suggest that the Need-Threat Temporal Model and Conservation of Resources Theory can be applied to campus ostracism and college students' impulsive, as ostracism exacerbates negative emotional states, while self-efficacy functions as a resilience factor, alleviating this adverse pathway. These findings indicate a need for student counselling and development services aimed at alleviating college students' campus ostracism and impulsive buying tendencies.

Keywords: Campus ostracism; negative emotions; self-efficacy; impulsive buying

Introduction

College students navigate complex social spaces, some positive and others negative. Of the negative experiences include campus ostracism, a form of social exclusion (Xiong et al., 2022). Campus ostracism exerts a range of adverse outcomes among students, including externalizing behavioral problems and challenges in social adjustment (Zhang et al., 2022). Students are also consumers of a wide variety of products, and their campus life experiences may predispose them to impulsive buying, perhaps as part of venting their frustrations (Ahn & Jookyung, 2022). They generally depend on financial support from their parents, and inadequate regulation of impulsive buying may not only disrupt their academic pursuits and daily lives but also generate long-term adverse implications for their families and future career development. However, not all students reporting campus ostracism respond in the same way to the related frustrations. Much would depend on their self-efficacy, how they manage negative emotions, and also predisposition to impulsive buying. We could not find studies that examined these relationships in a student population.

Campus ostracism and impulsive buying

Campus ostracism is associated with behavioral patterns including difficulties in social adjustment (Zhang et al., 2022), internet addiction (Arslan & Coskun, 2022), depression (Niu et al., 2023), and even suicidal ideation (Zhang et al., 2021). By thwarting students' basic needs for affection, belongingness, and interpersonal connection, campus ostracism may lead individuals to engage in impulsive consumption-characterized by irrationality and diminished self-control- as a compensatory mechanism

(Mark et al., 2018). As a type of unregulated purchasing behavior, impulsive buying can generate temporary feelings of pleasure and gratification, acting as a coping mechanism to relieve psychological distress caused by adverse experiences (Xiao & Nicholson, 2013). Accordingly, when college students encounter social exclusion on campus, they may be more prone to impulsive buying in an attempt to compensate for unmet belongingness and relational needs (Luo et al., 2021). Existing research has indicated that individuals experiencing social exclusion are more likely to engage in impulsive buying (Luo et al., 2021).

The mediating role of negative emotions

Negative emotions refer to the unpleasant feelings and states experienced by individuals when their needs remain unmet (Luo et al., 2021), predisposing them to anger, frustration, anxiety, disgust, fear, sadness, or surprise (Xie & Peng, 2018). Negative emotion experiences are associated with impulsive buying among consumers (Golalizadeh et al., 2023). Specifically, when exposed to campus ostracism, students perceive intense negative cues from the social environment, such as feelings of rejection, isolation, and failure to establish normative interpersonal relationships (Rao et al., 2026). These negative emotions increase the probability of irrational consumption choices, thereby promoting impulsive buying (Golalizadeh et al., 2023).

Through consumption behavior, students experiencing negative emotions obtain a sense of gratification and pleasure, which temporarily relieves their psychological distress (Mark et al., 2018). Previous empirical studies have indicated that negative emotions play a mediating role in the relationship between campus ostracism and impulsive buying (Luo et al., 2021).



The moderating role of self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's comprehensive evaluation of their own capabilities and confidence, representing a salient and stable cognitive belief about oneself (Bandura, 1982). Individuals with higher self-efficacy exhibit greater confidence and are more likely to proactively address challenges and setbacks, believing in their ability to resolve problems and overcome difficulties (Bandura, 1982).

Previous research has demonstrated that self-efficacy, as a positive psychological resource, can alleviate negative emotions, anxiety, work-related stress, and other adverse psychological states (Jentsch et al., 2023; Kaufmann et al., 2022). Students with high self-efficacy are better equipped to alleviate the negative emotions from campus ostracism, thereby reducing the likelihood of impulsive buying. Conversely, students with low self-efficacy lack confidence in their abilities and tend to question their competence. In such cases, campus ostracism may exacerbate their feelings of helplessness and uncertainty about how to navigate their difficulties, resulting in a weaker moderating effect of low self-efficacy in the association between campus ostracism and negative emotion, and consequently, in subsequent impulsive buying.

Theoretical basis

Drawing on Conservation of Resources Theory, this study proposes that in the pathway of campus ostracism → negative emotion → impulsive buying, self-efficacy may act as a buffer that weakens the effect of campus ostracism on negative emotions and, in turn, on impulsive buying. Specifically, college students with higher self-efficacy are more likely to maintain positive self-perceptions and evaluations. When confronted with campus ostracism, they are less likely to feel discouraged and are more inclined to adopt a proactive approach, effectively managing interpersonal relationships and regulating their emotions.

The Need-Threat Temporal Model posits that the frustration of an individual's basic psychological needs motivates them to engage in compensatory behaviors aimed at need fulfillment (Williams, 2009). Campus ostracism denotes the experience in which individuals are rejected or excluded by peers, thereby thwarting their needs for belongingness and social identification, as well as impairing their capacity to form meaningful social bonds (Liu & Guo, 2024). According to the Need-Threat Temporal Model, campus ostracism may drive college students to engage in impulsive buying as a compensatory strategy to alleviate the psychological distress caused by such exclusion.

Goal of the study

Although existing studies have explored the impacts of campus ostracism and identified its significant adverse effects on students, empirical research focusing on the influence of campus ostracism on college students remains scarce, and the relationship between campus ostracism and impulsive buying among this population remains unclear. This study is guided in an integrated framework of the Need-Threat Temporal Model and Conservation of Resources Theory to investigate the mediating

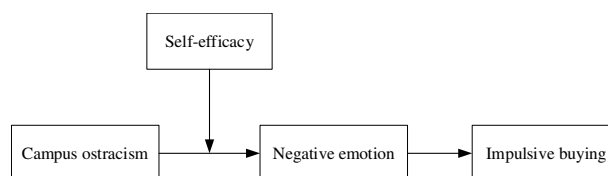


Figure 1. Theoretical model

role of negative emotions and the moderating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between campus ostracism and impulsive buying. Figure 1 presents our theoretical model as a basis for hypothesis testing. The research hypotheses are proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Campus ostracism is associated with impulsive buying.

Hypothesis 2: Negative emotions mediate the relationship between campus ostracism and impulsive buying, increasing impulsive buying.

Hypothesis 3: Self-efficacy moderates the relationship between campus ostracism and negative emotions, such that the effect of campus ostracism on negative emotions is attenuated under conditions of high self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 4: Self-efficacy moderates the indirect effect of campus ostracism on impulsive buying through negative emotions, such that the indirect effect is attenuated under conditions of high self-efficacy.

Methods

Participants and setting

The participants of this study consisted of 401 students from eastern China. Among them, 35.9% (144 participants) were male, and 64.1% (257 individuals) were female. The mean age was 18.45 years with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.50 (note. This mean age was calculated by assigning 18 years old to first-year students and 19 years old to second-year students). In term of majors, 22.69% of the participants majored in Logistics Management, 25.94% in Business Administration, 26.18% in Marketing, and 25.19% in Retail Management. In addition, all participants lived on campus.

Measures

The measures used in this study were all from existing literature. They were on a seven-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

Campus ostracism. The 10-item scale of workplace ostracism was adopted to measure campus ostracism experienced by college students in school. The situation is limited to the campus. We modified the guide word of the items to “your classmates”. A sample item is “Your classmates refused to talk to you in your study or daily lives”. Higher scores on campus ostracism indicate a more severe experience of campus exclusion. The Cronbach's alpha for campus ostracism from this scale in the present study is 0.92.

Negative emotions. We used an 8-item scale to measure students' negative emotions. These emotions included “jittery, ashamed, nervous, hostile, guilty, angry, dejected, and sad”. Higher scores on negative emotion mean a greater level of negative emotion. The alpha coefficient for

the negative emotion of this scale in this study is 0.90, demonstrating good reliability.

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy was measured using a 10-item scale from Schwarzer et al. (1997). A sample item is: "I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough." High scores on self-efficacy indicate a stronger sense of self-efficacy. The scale's Cronbach's alpha of self-efficacy in this study was 0.91.

Impulsive buying. Impulsive buying was evaluated utilizing the 3-item scale from He et al. (2018). One sample item is "I buy things I did not plan to buy." High scores on impulsive buying indicate a high probability of impulsive buying. The scale's Cronbach's alpha for impulsive buying is 0.88 in this study.

Control variables. We controlled for gender, growth environment, and college admission type. Prior studies noted that gender always impacts impulsive buying (Xiao & Nicholson, 2013). Accordingly, in this study, we controlled student gender (coded as 1 = male, 2 = female), growth environment (assessed by place of origin, coded as 1 = rural area, 2 = town, 3 = city), and college admission type (evaluated by whether students voluntarily choose their current university and major, coded as 1 = voluntarily choose the university and major, 2 = transferred to the university, 3 = transferred to the major).

Procedure

This study collected data through anonymous questionnaires and did not involve any sensitive personal information. The researcher provided a detailed introduction of the study to the participants. All respondents participated voluntarily after being fully informed about the study and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Data collection was on three occasions. At Time 1, students reported their experiences of campus ostracism and self-efficacy. At Time 2, students assessed their negative emotions. At Time 3, students reported their impulsive buying, with 495 questionnaires distributed. The students completed the surveys via Wen Juan Xing, an online survey platform. After matching responses across the three time points, 401 valid questionnaires were obtained in this study.

Data analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS to conduct correlation analysis among the four key variables and assess the reliability of the measurement scales. Common method bias (CMB) was examined via Harman's single-factor test. Additionally, MPLUS was utilized to evaluate the validity of the key variables. To test the mediating effects, the Bootstrap method with 5000 resampling iterations was adopted. Furthermore, the proposed hypotheses were tested and validated using the PROCESS macro in SPSS.

Confirmatory factor analysis

To assess the discriminant validity of the measured variables, this study performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The four variables in the study were combined into alternative models, including a three-factor model (M1), a two-factor model (M2), and a single-factor model (M3). Each of these models was subjected to CFA, and their

fit indices were compared with those of the four-factor model. As shown in Table 1, the four-factor model (M0, $\chi^2 = 1122.77$, $df = 458$, $RMSEA = 0.06$, $SRMR = 0.05$, $CFI = 0.89$, $TLI = 0.88$) demonstrated superior fit indices. Moreover, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of campus ostracism is 0.63, AVE of negative emotions is 0.57, AVE of self-efficacy is 0.58, and AVE of impulsive buying is 0.81. AVE of each variable is greater than 0.5. These results exhibit better discriminant validity of the constructs.

Common method basis assessment

This study employed a self-reporting method for data collection, which may introduce common method bias. To address this concern, Harman's single-factor test was conducted (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The results revealed that all items corresponding to the four variables in the model loaded onto five distinct factors, collectively accounting for 65.60% of the total variance. Notably, the first factor explained 25.82% of the variance, which is below the threshold of 40%, indicating that common method bias is not a significant issue in this study and is unlikely to compromise the validity of the hypothesis testing results (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients for the variables examined. The data reveal that campus ostracism is significantly and positively correlated with negative emotions ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$) and impulsive buying ($r = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$), while exhibiting a significant negative correlation with self-efficacy ($r = -0.10$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, negative emotions demonstrate a significant positive correlation with impulsive buying ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$) and a significant negative correlation with self-efficacy ($r = -0.19$, $p < 0.01$). In contrast, the relationship between self-efficacy and impulsive buying is not significant ($r = 0.00$, $p > 0.05$).

Campus ostracism and impulsive buying

This study posits that campus ostracism has a significant positive effect on students' impulsive buying (Hypothesis 1). As shown in Model 3 of Table 3, campus ostracism is significantly and positively associated with impulsive buying ($b = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.06$) while controlling students' gender, growth environment, and types of college admission, thereby supporting Hypothesis 1.

Negative emotion as a mediator

Hypothesis 2 proposes that students' negative emotions mediate the effect of campus ostracism on their impulsive buying. Using the SPSS PROCESS macro, a bootstrap analysis with 5000 resampling iterations was conducted. The results indicate that the path coefficient between campus ostracism and negative emotions is significantly positive ($b = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.12$) (see Model 1 in Table 3) while controlling students' gender, growth environment, and types of college admission, and the

Table 1. CFA results for the predicting discriminant validity of main variables

Descriptions	χ^2	d.f.	$\Delta\chi^2 (\Delta df)$	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Four-factor model (M0)	1122.77	458		0.06	0.89	0.88	0.05
Three-factor model (M1)	2235.08	461	1112.31 (3)	0.10	0.70	0.68	0.13
Two-factor model (M2)	2761.96	463	1639.19 (5)	0.11	0.62	0.59	0.14
One-factor model (M3)	4310.31	464	3187.54 (6)	0.14	0.36	0.32	0.20

Note. $N = 401$. M0 = Campus ostracism Negative emotion, Self-efficacy, Impulsive buying; M1 = Campus ostracism + Negative emotion, Self-efficacy, Impulsive buying; M2 = Campus ostracism + Negative emotion, Self-efficacy + Impulsive buying; M3 = Campus ostracism + Negative emotion + Self-efficacy + Impulsive buying.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and correlations

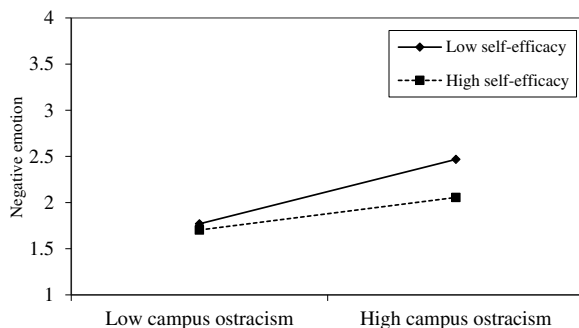
Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1 Campus ostracism	1.70	0.79			
2 Negative emotion	1.93	0.81	0.32**		
3 Self-efficacy	4.74	0.86	-0.10*	-0.19**	
4 Impulsive buying	3.36	1.32	0.18**	0.22**	0.00

Note. $N = 401$. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. The results of hypotheses test

Variables	Negative emotion				Impulsive buying			
	Model1		Model2		Model3		Model4	
	Est.	S.E.	Est.	S.E.	Est.	S.E.	Est.	S.E.
Intercept	1.38**	0.20	1.93**	0.05	2.12**	0.34	1.69**	0.35
Gender	0.03	0.08	0.01	0.08	0.14*	0.14	0.13	0.13
Growth environment1	-0.09	0.11	-0.07	0.11	0.44*	0.19	0.47**	0.19
Growth environment2	-0.09	0.11	-0.06	0.11	0.47**	0.18	0.50**	0.17
Type1	0.17	0.09	0.14	0.09	0.22	0.16	0.17	0.16
Type2	-0.07	0.15	-0.00	0.15	0.41	0.26	0.43	0.26
Campus ostracism	0.32**	0.05	0.32**	0.17	0.33**	0.09	0.24**	0.09
Negative emotion							0.31**	0.08
Self-efficacy			-0.13**	0.04				
Campus ostracism * Self-efficacy			-0.12**	0.05				
R ²	0.12		0.15		0.06		0.09	
ΔR^2			0.03				0.03	

Note. $N = 401$. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$. Est. = Estimate; S.E. = Standard Error.

**Figure 2.** Moderating effects of self-efficacy

coefficient between negative emotions and impulsive buying is also significantly positive ($b = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.09$) (see Model 4 in Table 3). Model 4 further shows that the direct relationship between campus ostracism and

impulsive buying remains significantly positive ($b = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.09$). The indirect effect of campus ostracism on impulsive buying through negative emotions is also significantly positive, with an indirect effect of $b = 0.10$ and a confidence interval of [0.0343, 0.1880], which does not include zero. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

Self-efficacy as a moderator

Hypothesis 3 posits that self-efficacy negatively moderates the positive relationship between campus ostracism and negative emotions. When we test Hypothesis 3, students' gender, growth environment, and types of college admission are controlled. Model 2 in Table 3 demonstrates that the interaction term between self-efficacy and campus ostracism has a significant negative effect on students' negative emotions ($b = -0.12$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.15$). To

Table 4. The results of the moderated indirect effect

Campus ostracism (X)→Negative emotion (M)→Impulsive buying (Y)			
Descriptions	Indirect effects	SE	Indirect effects via mediator [95%CI]
High self-efficacy (+1 S.D.)	0.066	0.862	[0.0196, 0.1590]
Self-efficacy (Mean)	0.099	0	[0.0392, 0.1762]
Low self-efficacy (−1 S.D.)	0.132	0.862	[0.0639, 0.2381]
Moderated mediation effect	−0.038	0.022	[−0.0862, −0.0003]

Note. $N = 401$.

further illustrate this moderating effect, a graphical representation of the interaction was generated (see Figure 2). Under conditions of low self-efficacy (one standard deviation below the mean), the relationship between campus ostracism and negative emotions is significantly positive ($b = 0.43$, $t = 6.72$, $p < 0.01$). Conversely, under conditions of high self-efficacy (one standard deviation above the mean), the relationship between campus ostracism and negative emotions remains significantly positive but is weaker ($b = 0.22$, $t = 3.36$, $p < 0.01$). In summary, the positive relationship between campus ostracism and negative emotions is negatively moderated by students' self-efficacy, such that this relationship is weaker for students with higher self-efficacy. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Moderated mediation of self-efficacy

Hypothesis 4 proposes that self-efficacy negatively moderates the indirect effect of campus ostracism on impulsive buying through negative emotions. This study tested Hypothesis 4 using the moderated mediation approach outlined by Edwards and Lambert (2007). The results (see Table 4) indicate that under conditions of high self-efficacy, the indirect effect of campus ostracism on impulsive buying through negative emotions is 0.07, with a 95% confidence interval of [0.0196, 0.1590], which does not include zero, confirming the significance of the indirect effect. Under conditions of low self-efficacy, the indirect effect is 0.13, with a 95% confidence interval of [0.0639, 0.2381], which also excludes zero, indicating a significant indirect effect. Furthermore, the moderated mediation effect is −0.038, with a 95% confidence interval of [−0.0862, −0.0003], which does not include zero, demonstrating significant moderation. Thus, Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Discussion

This study found that campus ostracism is significantly positively associated with college students' impulsive buying. However, the effect size of this relationship is modest. This result likely reflects that there may be other factors exerting a stronger influence on impulsive buying, such as atmosphere cues (Mamuaya & Pandowo, 2018). Additionally, this finding is consistent with the Need-Threat Temporal Model, which posits that the frustration of individuals' basic psychological needs prompts them to engage in compensatory behaviors (Williams, 2009). Specifically, when college students experience campus ostracism and fail to gain group acceptance, their needs for belongingness and social interaction are thwarted. In

this context, these unmet needs may trigger them to seek substitutes to compensate for the adverse impacts of campus ostracism. Impulsive buying serves as an imperative compensatory behavior (Williams, 2009), as it offsets the resource depletion resulting from campus ostracism. This finding also aligns with the research of Luo et al. (2021), which indicates that the higher the degree of social exclusion, the greater the likelihood of impulsive buying among college students.

Furthermore, this study finds that negative emotions play a mediating role in the association between campus ostracism and impulsive buying. This finding can be interpreted from the perspective of the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) and Need-Threat Temporal Model. According to COR Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), campus ostracism depletes college students' psychological resources, triggers negative emotions, and subsequently pushes them to seek alternative resources through impulsive buying to replenish those depleted by campus ostracism. From the perspective of the Need-Threat Temporal Model (Williams, 2009), campus ostracism frustrates college students' need for belongingness, which in turn elicits negative emotions appear and contributes to impulsive buying as a compensatory strategy for their unmet needs. This mediating effect reveals an underlying mechanism through which campus ostracism increases college students' impulsive buying through negative emotions.

Additionally, this study finds that college students' self-efficacy buffers the effect of campus ostracism on negative emotions and further weakens the indirect effect of campus ostracism on impulsive buying via negative emotions. This result is consistent with COR Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which posits that when individuals experience resource loss, the replenishment of new resources is conducive to mitigating their psychological tension and stress. Specifically, self-efficacy buffers the effect of campus ostracism on negative emotions, and further on impulsive buying. College students with high self-efficacy exhibit greater confidence in their ability to solve problems and surmount difficulties, enabling them to confront campus ostracism more positively. This proactive coping style significantly reduces their experience of negative emotions and, consequently, lowers the likelihood of engaging in impulsive buying. In contrast, college students with low self-efficacy lack confidence in their capabilities, often fail to respond proactively to challenges, and tend to doubt their capacity to overcome difficulties. As a result, when exposed to campus ostracism, their negative emotions are not significantly alleviated, and the buffering effect on

impulsive buying is less pronounced. This finding conveys the vital role of college students' self-efficacy, as a positive psychological resource, in mitigating the adverse consequence of campus ostracism.

Research and practice implications

In light of the findings, this study offers several tentative research and practice implications. For research implications, this study demonstrates that the stronger the negative emotions, the higher the likelihood of impulsive buying among college students. This finding gives us a clue to the importance of emotional management in educational institutions. Studies are needed to develop interventions to reduce social seclusion related impulsive buying among students. Such interventions should be framed on emotional regulation for alleviating negative emotions and preventing negative behaviors such as impulsive buying.

For practice implications, this study finds that campus ostracism can significantly predict impulsive buying among college students, highlighting the necessity for educational institutions to pay attention to the phenomenon of campus ostracism and incorporate corresponding measures into their daily management practices. Given that campus ostracism is often difficult to detect, schools should establish diversified channels to gather information regarding students' experiences of exclusion. For example, implementing a regular one-on-one communication system between class advisors (or counselors) and students can facilitate the timely identification of campus ostracism instances. Additionally, class advisors (or counselors) should maintain consistent communication with course instructors to monitor students' emotional states through their interactions and report any abnormal emotional changes. Furthermore, schools provide targeted psychological support for students who have experienced ostracism to alleviate their psychological distress and negative emotions, thereby reducing the likelihood of negative behaviors (Zhang et al., 2022). Class advisors (or counselors) can also organize class activities to increase opportunities for interaction and communication among students, helping to bridge interpersonal gaps and reduce exclusionary behaviors. Moreover, this finding suggests that parents should pay attention to their children's daily consumption patterns, taking abnormal spending as an indicator of potential campus ostracism, so as to implement timely interventions and prevent the situation from escalating.

Limitations and future research directions

This study has the following limitations in terms of research methods and theoretical framework. First, participants were a convenience sample from a business college, which limits the generalizability of the findings and warrants further testing. In addition, with self-report data, participants are susceptible to unknown social desirability effects. Although a three-wave time method was employed to collect data in this study, the results cannot establish causal relationships between the variables. Future studies could adopt experimental methods to explore causality more rigorously.

Conclusions

This study constructed a moderated mediation model to examine the relationship between campus ostracism and impulsive buying, where negative emotions function as a mediator and self-efficacy acts as a moderator. The results indicate that campus ostracism significantly predicts impulsive buying among college students, with negative emotions exerting an underlying mediating effect. Furthermore, self-efficacy operates as a buffer that mitigates the adverse effects of campus ostracism on negative emotions and, consequently, on impulsive buying. These findings highlight the detrimental consequences of campus ostracism (i.e., the generation of negative emotions and the occurrence of impulsive buying) and identify a potential approach to mitigate these adverse outcomes (i.e., enhancing self-efficacy). This study argues that campus ostracism deserves attention, and it also provides valuable perspectives for intervening in campus ostracism to create a healthier school environment.

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Availability of Data and Materials: The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ethics Approval: This study collected data through anonymous questionnaires and did not involve any sensitive personal information. The researcher provided a detailed introduction of the study to the participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents could withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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