



11-9-2019

Workplace Ostracism and Employee Reactions among University Teachers in Pakistan

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Recommended APA Citation

Fatima, T., Bilal, A., & Imran, M. K. (2019). Workplace Ostracism and Employee Reactions among University Teachers in Pakistan. *The Qualitative Report*, 24(11), 2759-2777. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2019.4002>

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Abstract

This study investigated the positive and negative behavioral outcomes resulting from the pragmatic and psychological impacts of workplace ostracism experienced by university teachers in Pakistan. Using a qualitative and phenomenological approach, the data were gathered from 20 ostracized teachers working in public and private sector higher educational institutions in Pakistan. The results revealed that participants faced both the psychological and pragmatic impacts of workplace ostracism. Most of the ostracized teachers indicated positive behavioral outcomes due to being collectivist and placing a high value on social relations. Ostracized teachers used resource investment strategies by improving in-role and extra-role performance that reflect their re-inclusion expectations and less chronic prevalence of workplace ostracism. But participants showed their intention to engage in negative behaviors such as withdrawal, decreased performance, and resignation if they constantly face ostracism in future. The results of this study can be used by the university administration to develop an inclusive and non-discriminatory culture and policies to minimize the occurrence of workplace ostracism.

Keywords

Higher Educational Institutions, Workplace Ostracism, Psychological Impacts, Pragmatic Impacts, Positive Behavioral Outcomes, Negative Behavioral Outcomes, Teachers, Phenomenology

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Workplace Ostracism and Employee Reactions among University Teachers in Pakistan

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This study investigated the positive and negative behavioral outcomes resulting from the pragmatic and psychological impacts of workplace ostracism experienced by university teachers in Pakistan. Using a qualitative and phenomenological approach, the data were gathered from 20 ostracized teachers working in public and private sector higher educational institutions in Pakistan. The results revealed that participants faced both the psychological and pragmatic impacts of workplace ostracism. Most of the ostracized teachers indicated positive behavioral outcomes due to being collectivist and placing a high value on social relations. Ostracized teachers used resource investment strategies by improving in-role and extra-role performance that reflect their re-inclusion expectations and less chronic prevalence of workplace ostracism. But participants showed their intention to engage in negative behaviors such as withdrawal, decreased performance, and resignation if they constantly face ostracism in future. The results of this study can be used by the university administration to develop an inclusive and non-discriminatory culture and policies to minimize the occurrence of workplace ostracism. Keywords: Higher Educational Institutions, Workplace Ostracism, Psychological Impacts, Pragmatic Impacts, Positive Behavioral Outcomes, Negative Behavioral Outcomes, Teachers, Phenomenology

Introduction

In the last decade, the concept of workplace mistreatment became the center of attention in management research in general and specifically in Pakistan (Bibi, Karim, & Din, 2013; Razzaghian & Ghani, 2014). Visible mistreatments such as harassment, bullying, injustice, abuse, and incivility were found to have a myriad of psychological and work-related impacts on the performance of employees (Fogg, 2008; Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Perrewe, Halbesleben, & Rosen, 2015). In spite of the research attention being given to vivid mistreatments, it is only recently that more subtle yet more detrimental interpersonal mistreatments have gained attention of researchers globally (Balliet & Ferris, 2013; Jones, Arena, Nittrouer, Alonso, & Lindsey, 2017; Schneider, Wesselmann, & DeSouza, 2017; Zhao, Peng, & Sheard, 2013) as well as in Pakistan (Bashir & Nadeem, 2019; Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018). One instance of such distinct mistreatment termed as workplace ostracism has become an emergent issue in the recent management literature (Robinson, O'Reilly, & Wang, 2013). Workplace ostracism is indulgence in relatively subtle behaviors that cause isolation

or disconnection of people by means of omission of socially expected actions. Thus, it creates a perception of being ignored by colleagues in an organization (Williams, 2009). Workplace ostracism is found to have stronger psychological and work-related outcomes as compared to visible abuse such as harassment (O'Reilly, Robinson, Berdahl, & Banki, 2014).

Such behaviors are highly impactful in collectivist nations where social bonding and ties are highly valued. Powell, Francesco, and Ling (2009) stated that in collectivist cultures, close and cohesive assertions with social groups are emphasized. In such case exclusion from the social group can inhibit employee performance to a greater extent as cultural aspects play an important part in dealing with the issues and phenomena of business organizations and resolution of issues at the workplace (Shamim & Abbasi, 2012). The impacts of ostracism or social rejection, in general, are sequential in nature and vary according to context and time (DeWall, 2013; Robinson et al., 2013; Williams, 2009). Workplace ostracism has been predominantly investigated through quantitative inquiries. Such as, O'Reilly et al. (2014) compared the impact of workplace ostracism and harassment and found ostracism to be more negatively linked to employee outcomes. Gkorezis and Bellou (2016) investigated the impact of workplace ostracism on information exchange through the mediating role of self-serving behavior. Gkorezis, Panagiotou, and Theodorou, (2016) found that workplace ostracism impacts employee silence through the mediating role of organizational identification. In Pakistan, the relationship of workplace ostracism with job performance, stress, and turnover intention were examined through the moderating role of psychological capital in the service sector (Haq, 2014). Workplace ostracism was linked to interpersonal deviance and counterproductive behavior (Fatima, 2017; Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018), emotional exhaustion (Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2017), turnover intention (Mahfooz, Arshad, Nisar, Ikram, & Azeem, 2017), fear of negative evaluation (Fatima, 2017), silence (Jahanzeb, Fatima, & Malik, 2018) and proactive customer service (Bashir & Nadeem, 2019).

More recently the concept of ostracism has been examined in academia when Zimmerman, Carter-Sowell, and Xu (2016) found female faculty to be more ostracized in university settings in terms of social ostracism. In Pakistan, two studies focused on the construct of workplace ostracism in HEIs where it was found to lead towards counterproductive behaviors and silence (Fatima, Ilyas, Rehman, & Imran, 2017; Nasir, Khaliq, & Rehman, 2017). It is evident that most of the research on workplace ostracism is overshadowed by empirical investigations. Moreover, there is still a gap in the literature to examine the temporal and contextual factors that determine diverse employee reactions to ostracism that is, in which cases employees behave prosocial, anti-social or withdraw? The situation-dependent nature of workplace ostracism (Williams, 2009) makes in-depth qualitative investigation worth undertaking to gain comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon (Liu & Xia, 2016; Waldeck, Tyndall, & Chmiel, 2015) in specific settings of HEIs (Zimmerman et al., 2016) specifically in Pakistan (Fatima et al., 2017). Miller et al. (2019) indicated increased incidents of workplace mistreatment (i.e., bullying and violence) that are influencing the career and lives of academics. They emphasize use of qualitative insights for further probing the issue of mistreatments in HEIs. Extending this conception this study aimed to investigate the issue of workplace ostracism in HEIs of Pakistan through qualitative insights by investigating the consequences of workplace ostracism in light of contextual factors. This study sheds light on the unique responses of faculty members to the experiences of workplace ostracism that sets the stage for policymakers to address this issue as per the requirements and nature of HEIs in addition to contributing to workplace ostracism literature in academic settings.

Literature Review

According to Williams (1997; 2009) ostracism occurs when a person is excluded, overlooked, or ignored by members of a social group. Although ostracism occurs in all settings yet its occurrence in organizational settings has recently gained attention (Hitlan, Kelly, Schepman, Schneider, & Zárate, 2006). Thus, workplace ostracism is referred to as the omission of socially expected acts and ignoring attitudes by an individual or group targeted toward another individual or group in organizational settings (Robinson et al., 2013). It has been found to be a precursor of multiple detrimental psychological consequences. One of these outcomes is threatened needs, particularly the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Richman & Leary, 2009; Williams, 1997). Furthermore, three other needs are found to be threatened by being ostracized that is, self-esteem, control and meaningful existence (Williams, 1997). When needs are threatened, the victims try to fortify them immediately, but if ostracism persists, the resources of the victim are depleted making him helpless and ultimately they withdraw (Williams, 2009).

Furthermore, ostracism also evokes negative emotions. These emotions include sadness (Buckley, Winkel, & Leary, 2004), hurt (Leary, Springer, Negel, Ansell, & Evans, 1998), fear (Chow, Tiedens, & Govan, 2008; Zadro, Williams, & Richardson, 2004) shyness (Chow et al., 2008) emotional disturbance, job dissatisfaction, and anxiety (Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008; Hitlan et al., 2006; O'Reilly & Robinson, 2009). Apart from the psychological consequences of workplace ostracism, it also results in work-related outcomes. Pragmatic impacts of ostracism occur due to depletion of work-related resources that arise from being associated with other people in the workplace i.e., information, advice, and support (Jones, Carter-Sowell, Kelly, & Williams, 2009; Jones & Kelly, 2010). It has been revealed by different research studies that individuals gain power from the possession of resources and more particularly from one's social associations and access to the data, along with having access to power (Dutton, Roberts, & Bednar, 2010; Ellison, Vitak, Gray, & Lampe, 2014; Pfeffer, 1981). The ostracized individuals are excluded from formal advice networks (Sparrowe, Liden, Wayne, & Kraimer, 2001) and informal friendship networks at the workplace that cause deprivation of important, work-related information, advice and social support (Kuipers, 1999). Conservation of resource theory states that individuals need social, informational and physical resources to perform their job. When these resources are depleted the individuals try to conserve their existing resources and they reduce their performance level. Social connections are an important source of these resources when the employees have fewer resources their performance is reduced (Hobfoll, 2011). So, we argue that loss of resources, that is, access to important information, suggestions related to work, opportunity to have influence, association with colleagues, and peer support reduces an ostracized employee's ability to work to their full potential.

Both the psychological and pragmatic effects of ostracism lead toward behavioral outcomes. Robinson et al. (2013) have given an integrated model of consequences of workplace ostracism; in which its positive work-related outcomes (task performance and contextual performance) and negative work-related outcomes (workplace deviance and withdrawal) are explained due to the psychological and pragmatic impacts. Once, an individual is denied from a social connection the resources obtained from a formal advice network and informal friendship network are missed. Ultimately, it results in poor employee performance (in-role as well as extra-role). Social connections and support are a precursor for employee performance (Jones, et al., 2009) and hindrance in these networks declines the in-role as well as the extra-role working of employees (Ellison et al., 2014; Sparrowe et al., 2001). Apart from affecting performance, workplace ostracism is also a predecessor of

negative behavioral outcomes that is, withdrawal, (O'Reilly & Robinson, 2009) and aggression (Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001).

Psychological and pragmatic impacts of workplace ostracism along with their subsequent behavioral outcomes can be different in the short and long term depending on contextual factors. The Temporal Need-Threat Model (TNTM) explains how individuals go through various stages when they face ostracism, the first step is the detection of ostracism that occurs in the minimal stage, in reflexive stage victims experience pain and four fundamental needs are affected (i.e., belongingness, self-esteem, meaningful presence and control). In the reflective stage, the individuals will try to fortify those needs but if the ostracism persists, they will withdraw in the last stage known as the resignation stage (Williams, 2009). This could further be explained in light of the multi-motive model of responses to rejection that explains three potential outcomes of being ostracized. Depending upon the time frame and contextual factors, the immediate responses are always negative like hurt feelings, sadness, depression, etc. and longer run responses can be categorized as antisocial, socially avoidant and pro-social (Richman & Leary, 2009).

Until now, few empirical studies have examined workplace ostracism in academic settings. Zimmerman et al. (2016) indicated the female faculty experience more workplace ostracism in academia, and social exclusion is more prevalent than information exclusion. In Pakistan, workplace ostracism was linked to silence through the role of threatened needs in public sector universities (Fatima et al., 2017). Workplace ostracism was linked to counterproductive behaviors through the mediating role of stress and the moderating role of psychological capital in public and private universities in Lahore (Nasir et al., 2017). Hence, the purpose of this study was to extend the existing research on subtle interpersonal mistreatments. Our study sheds light on the lived experiences of workplace ostracism faced by teaching faculty in a collectivist cultural context where the importance of interpersonal association is paramount. We employed an in-depth qualitative approach to unveil the unique temporal and sequential nature of the consequences of workplace ostracism in the higher education sector.

Role of Researchers

Three researchers conducted this study (Fatima, T., Bilal, A. R., & Imran, M. K.). Fatima, T. was the major investigator who was actively involved in all stages of the research process. Bilal, A. R, and Imran, M. K acted as supporting authors in writing the manuscript and cross-coding of results. Fatima, T. is a Ph.D. scholar in Business Administration at Superior University, Pakistan and has three years' experience as a teaching faculty in public and private sector universities of Pakistan. Bilal, A. R is Ph.D. (Management) from UTM, Malaysia. He is currently an Associate Professor and Head of Postgraduate Studies (Faculty of Business) at Sohar University Oman. He has been served as an Associate Professor in various public and private universities for several years. Imran, M. K is a Ph.D. scholar in Business Administration and a visiting faculty member at The Islamia University, Bahawalpur. Having considerable work experience and observation of exclusionary work environments in HEIs of Pakistan, along with the theoretical contribution in ostracism research (Bilal, Fatima, & Akoorie, 2017; Fatima et al., 2017) caused our interest in conducting qualitative research in HEIs of Pakistan. We aimed to improve the understanding of workplace ostracism in for potential minimization and prevention of the adverse impacts ostracism is having on the faculty of HEIs in collectivist Pakistani culture.

Method

Research Approach and Design

Type of research design and inquiry

Inductive approach and interpretivism are suitable for the investigations that are context-dependent (Madill, Jordan, & Shirley, 2000) and based on subjective experiences of participants (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The *Epistemological Stance* of interpretivism focuses on subjectivity of knowledge and while the *Ontological Stance* focuses on the fact that the nature of reality differs across persons (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research approach enables the understanding of shared beliefs of participants' lived experiences and allows to get a deeper insight into the research phenomena as suggested by Creswell, Hanson, Plano, and Morales (2007). Specifically, the phenomenological design is suitable for understanding the lived experiences of participants (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2013). The aim of this study is the exploring the outcomes of workplace ostracism in Pakistani HEIs based on the experiences of ostracized faculty members. Workplace ostracism is a context-dependent phenomenon and its outcomes are shaped by the subjective experiences of participants and unique national and organizational cultural values (Madill et al., 2000; Robinson et al., 2013). Therefore, we used a qualitative phenomenological approach based on interpretivism and inductive reasoning. Moreover, we used thematic analysis to capture the themes present in interview transcripts regarding the consequences of workplace ostracism in HEIs of Pakistan.

Population and sampling

Participants

Our study participants were teachers serving in HEIs (higher education institutions) of Pakistan. The participants were from both public and private sector universities, diverse levels, age groups, and both genders to ensure heterogeneity in the sample. The sample size was chosen as per the recommendations of Yang (2008) that deem 15-20 interviews appropriate for this specific qualitative inquiry. The sampling criteria were as follows: (a) must have experienced workplace ostracism; (b) Teacher of public or private sector HEIs of Pakistan; and (c) Minimum tenure of 1 year so that the participant has the understanding of the workplace dynamics to reflect on ostracism experiences.

Sampling

The study was exploratory in nature and its aim was to uncover the unique consequences of workplace ostracism in teaching faculty members of Pakistani HEIs. The nature of this inquiry lends itself to a more purposive sampling design rather than a random selection of samples. Secondly, it is a prevalent method to solicit participation by respondent-driven methods in case of stigmatized and hidden population, that also lacks availability of records (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004). Thus, snowball sampling was used according to the exploratory nature of the study and characteristics of participants (Bryman & Bell, 2015). We created qualifying criteria based on the conceptualization of workplace ostracism given by Ferris et al. (2008). It included questions like, "Do you ever feel excluded or ignored in formal and informal social interactions?", "Is your opinion invited in formal and informal matters?" and, "Do you see your membership as being a part of dominant in-group in your department?" .Based on personal contacts this information was floated in the faculty

groups of 2 public sectors and 2 private universities in Lahore (hub of universities in Pakistan) along with stating a brief purpose of this investigation. Initially, 8 individuals responded and also gave their consent for participation in the study. These nominees were requested to use their social contacts to the extent of these criteria or to personally nominate any other faculty member who has a similar experience. Finally, the study sample was comprised of 20 teachers who identified themselves as feeling ostracized and working in HEIs of Pakistan.

The demographic profile of participants indicated there were 7 female and 13 male faculty members, their age ranged from 26 to 57 years, experience ranged from 1 to 21 years, 55% of interviewees were lecturers, 25% were assistant professors, 15% were associate professor, and 5% were professors, 20% were Masters, 25% were PhD and 55% were M.Phil., 55% of the teachers were from public sector and 45% were from private sector HEIs. These demographics indicate that ostracism was prevalent in all levels, all age groups and teachers of different educational qualifications.

Data Collection

In our study, qualitative semi-structured interviews were used in order to gain an in-depth insight into the outcomes of workplace ostracism in the teachers of public and private sector Pakistani HEIs (Interview protocol is attached in Appendix A). Each participant was interviewed once, and the interviews were guided by the recommendations of McCracken (1988). Long interview framework was followed that enables the categorization of participants' interview conversations and serve as the basis for subsequent thematic analysis. The interview protocol was informed by an extensive literature review containing questions about the psychological and pragmatic impacts of workplace ostracism (Ferris et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2013; Williams, 2009). The interview guide was reviewed in order to establish its credibility by 3 academics and 2 researchers adept in qualitative research. The interview guide was subjected to subsequent pilot tests and questions were revised as per the panel suggestions and pilot test results. For the pilot test, the interviews were conducted from 3 faculty members at the start and upon getting an adequate response the rest of the participants were interviewed. The interviews spanned from 20-40 minutes, similar to the earlier qualitative research on workplace ostracism carried by (Waldeck et al., 2015). This method appropriately allowed the participants to express their views freely and discuss aspects that were personally meaningful to them (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In order to establish rapport and trust with the respondents, mini and grand tour questions were used. The grand questions were used to ask about the general experience and mini-tour questions were asked about the specific experiences (see Appendix A). This, on one hand, ensured that the participants remain on track and on another hand it keeps the researcher much unobtrusive as possible (McCracken, 1988).

Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and entered into the NVivo 11 Plus software. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative responses. Thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6). The output of individual utterances and conversations were analyzed to develop categories, patterns, and themes in which similarities, as well as the uniqueness of individual accounts, was ensured. After familiarization with the data, initial coding was done and after that, the main themes were identified. The themes were reviewed to incorporate the emerging ideas and final themes were developed. Lastly, data were content

analyzed to find out the frequency of each theme. Moreover, the conceptual map was created based on the major themes (parent themes) and sub-themes (child themes) based and their relationships to graphically represent the findings through NVivo 11.

Due care was taken in the analysis of data by incorporating, thoroughness, honesty, and integrity. Comprehensive treatment of data was done by avoiding anecdotes and eliminating deviant patterns. Due care was taken in maintaining transparency and reflection of true participants' experiences rather biased interpretation based on researchers' own thoughts, i.e., the researchers didn't add any consequence of ostracism that was not mentioned by respondents. The transcriptions were validated from each participant to ensure that nothing is missed or misrepresented. The interview analysis done by the first author was validated by the independent coding of the other two authors (who were not involved in conducting interviews). A detailed meeting was held to make the findings consistent with the settlement of minor discrepancies. Moreover, few deviant themes emerged that were deleted i.e., only one participant indicated being numb as a reaction of ostracism. The themes were refined until they reflected the opinion of the majority of participants. This enabled to ensure that the results were reliable, valid (Mason, 2002), clear (Richards, 2009), fair and free of unnecessary bias because they were grounded in the actual views of the respondents.

Results

The results are based on interviews conducted from 20 respondents who narrated their diverse experiences of workplace ostracism in academic settings. They shed light on its negative psychological and pragmatic consequences, shaping their subsequent behavior as per temporal and contextual factors. Three major themes emerged: impacts of workplace ostracism, behavioral outcomes, and the difference in impacts and outcomes due to time period and contextual factors. The results of the matrix coding query showing the relative strength of each theme and sub-theme are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Matrix Coding Query Results

| | A: Behavioral Outcomes | B: Negative | C: Positive | D: Difference (temporal and contextual) | E: Impact of Ostracism | F: Pragmatic Impacts | G : Noninclusion in Advice Networks | H : Noninclusion in Friendship Networks | I: Psychological Impacts | J: Negative Emotions | K: Threatened Needs |
|-----|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---|------------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| P 1 | 14 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 14 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| P 2 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 17 | 11 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| P 3 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 18 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 12 | 9 | 3 |
| P 4 | 12 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 19 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 11 | 9 | 2 |
| P 5 | 10 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 20 | 10 | 3 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 2 |
| P 6 | 12 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 23 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 14 | 12 | 2 |
| P 7 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 22 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 15 | 11 | 4 |
| P 8 | 13 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 16 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 3 |
| P 9 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 16 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 12 | 9 | 3 |
| P10 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 19 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 14 | 9 | 5 |
| P11 | 12 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 17 | 12 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| P12 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 22 | 12 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 1 |
| P13 | 11 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 19 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 7 | 4 |
| P14 | 10 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 22 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 13 | 10 | 3 |
| P15 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 24 | 13 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 9 | 2 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----|----|-----|----|-----|-----|----|----|-----|-----|----|
| P16 | 13 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 25 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 16 | 13 | 3 |
| P 17 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 22 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 17 | 12 | 5 |
| P 18 | 17 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 19 | 11 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 3 |
| P19 | 12 | 2 | 11 | 9 | 22 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 16 | 12 | 4 |
| P20 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 17 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 11 | 7 | 6 |
| Total | 205 | 93 | 113 | 66 | 393 | 167 | 69 | 98 | 226 | 169 | 59 |

Notes: Represents the respective frequencies of Main themes and sub-themes as calculated from running "Matrix Coding Query" in NVivo 11 Plus

Impacts of Workplace Ostracism

In this section, the pragmatic (work-related) and psychological reactions to workplace ostracism shown by the teachers of HEIs in Pakistan are outlined.

Psychological Impacts

Two kinds of psychological reactions to workplace ostracism were traced that is, threatened needs and negative emotions.

Threatened needs. Ostracized teachers in HEIs indicated threatening of four fundamental needs amongst which the need to belong and meaningful existence was mentioned the most.

..... it feels that I don't belong to this department or people serving here, I feel deprived of social connections, and it's a basic need (P2).

...but also, I feel being nonvaluable for this department... not being a worthy part of the department is a very bad feeling for an educated person (P9).

The responses of participants indicate that being ostracized causes loss of social connections due to which the belonging needs are not fulfilled. Moreover, being ignored and excluded caused the ostracized teachers to feel worthless and decreased their sense of meaningful existence.

Negative Emotions. According to teachers, after experiencing episodes of ostracism they suffered from stress, depression, sadness and sometimes they had a feeling of aggression too. As elaborated by one teacher:

...sometimes I become depressed and get silent and other times I respond aggressively (P12).

It is indicated that the response to workplace ostracism is usually in the form of depression but in some cases, the reaction was aggressive as well.

Pragmatic Impacts

Pragmatic impacts of workplace ostracism included the work-related consequences in addition to the psychological sufferings. These included lack of inclusion in formal and informal networks, information exclusion and deprivation of voice. As the participants elaborated:

Formal channels exist and informal exists too but my inclusion in both, particularly informal is to a very less extent (P8).

They don't give me the chance to speak; they keep on exchanging views themselves. Whenever I give some innovative ideas or any suggestion or any kind of participation they will just not respond to it (P7).

Apart from suffering negative emotions, the participants reported that they felt a lack of inclusion in formal and informal organizational networks, they were not included in conversations and their opinions were not invited and appreciated. An interesting theme emerged that participants said that sometimes they were invited in formal meetings, but they were signaled clearly that they were unwanted. They are treated as they were non-existent by ignoring to invite their opinion. Furthermore, exclusion from informal networks was more evident. Participants responded that they were not provided relevant information and advice that could have helped them in performing better. As stated by the participants, they were also not given adequate chances to speak in meetings or conversations and their people turn a deaf ear to their ideas.

Behavioral Outcomes

Behavioral outcomes included positive or/and negative behaviors as a result of the impacts of workplace ostracism. Participants indicated positive as well as negative outcomes.

Negative Behavioral Outcomes

The negative behavioral outcomes indicate the behaviors of ostracized teachers that undermined their work-related performance or other helping behaviors towards university and colleagues. It was indicated that ostracized teachers indicated a reduction in their task as well as contextual performance. As it was reported:

...definitely I am not able to teach the class and perform my duties with full motivation and effort (P1).

As far as my work and my teaching is concerned I am very much devoted but now I refrain from the contributions and other behaviors that are outside my core job duties (P12).

Some respondents reported their inability to teach well after being ostracized and others said that though they performed their assigned job duties well, they avoided extra favors and efforts. It indicated that being ostracized impacted overall performance on the job.

Positive Behavioral Outcomes

The positive behavioral outcomes were the positive response of ostracized teachers that enhanced their work-related and helping attitudes for the wellbeing of the university and their peers. Some of the ostracized teachers reported positive behavioral outcomes as they said that they increased their effort after being ostracized. As respondents reported:

.... The next day when I come after such an event, my performance becomes better IT'S MULTIPLIED ... It's multiplied 100 times. I think that my

improved competency and performance will make my place in this department (P8).

I fear if I don't perform well they will negatively evaluate me (P17).

The positive behavior of participants was in pursuit of increasing their worth in the department so that they are no more ostracized. Another reason behind the improvement in performance was the fear of being further ostracized based on poor performance.

Overall, the participants reported a decrease in task-related performance and contextual performance while, others reported their task performance did not suffer, but their contextual performance was reduced. Another trend was an indulgence in making their educational career and performance better.

The difference in Impacts and Outcomes

The responses to workplace ostracism vary as per the contextual factors and time period.

Temporal Difference

With respect to the time period, it was found that immediate reaction to workplace ostracism was always negative. The responses of ostracism in longer-run varied and became more positive and ostracized individuals attempted re-inclusion efforts but in case these efforts didn't work, or episodes of ostracism lasted longer, the ostracized teachers indicated withdrawal. It was said that:

It makes me feel bad immediately by inducing negative emotions (P14).

In the short term ... I feel stress (P2).

Right now I am trying to improve the situation and making efforts to get included (P12).

... I have tried to be a part of this organization, but I anticipate they will not change so, as I have exclaimed earlier, I want to quit due to its long prevalence (P20).

Workplace ostracism resulted in psychological and pragmatic impacts of various kinds that lead to positive or negative behavioral outcomes. Participants reported that these impacts vary in accordance with the time period and contextual factors. The immediate response was negative, and it resulted in psychological suffering. But over the longer run participants reported attempts to make themselves better, some of them indicated putting more effort into their work, others said they were now motivated to attain higher degrees so that they can prove themselves so that people may accept them. It was an aggregated response that if the re-inclusion efforts didn't succeed the participants will leave the job.

Contextual Difference

It was also found that some of the contextual factors (i.e., availability of other job options, the importance of peer associations, justice perceptions) also contributed toward a

difference in impacts and behavioral outcomes. The responses of the participants were as follows:

The first response indicates that the non-availability of the alternative job makes the person bear ostracism and suffer more.

... as I have no other option, so I feel helpless to quit this job (P11).

The second contextual factor indicates that people who place more value on social relationships have adverse impacts of ostracism. These kinds of victims indicated re-inclusion attempts.

I value the associations with my boss and peer as an important part of my social status. Despite they do not actively include me in their gatherings and conversations; I am still trying to improve my performance and actively try to be included (P13).

...I take steps to ensure that my goodwill is improved in the eyes of my HOD (P1).

The ostracized teachers who had no alternative social relationships also felt a deeper negative impact of ostracism and they strive to regain their inclusion in the workplace.

... No one at home is there for me... even the slightest gesture of ignoring by my coworkers sends me on the verge of depression. I try to perform better so that I can also be regarded as worthy (P5).

The teachers that perceived ostracism as being unjust behavior reacted by anger rather than being depressed or making the efforts to be re-included.

My peers ignore me and I perceive it to be unjust... Like I am performing all my duties with due diligence, I am good at them, but still, I feel rejected... It creates a stream of anger in me! (P9).

The above statements signified the changes in reactions of ostracized teachers based on the contextual factors, as one respondent stated that, he has no alternative employment, so despite experiencing chronic ostracism episodes he cannot quit. Another participant indicated the importance of peer associations. It was revealed that, if employees have relationships outside the workplace, they are less likely to involve in prosocial actions and make re-inclusion attempts. Justice perceptions were also found to be linked to the responses to ostracism, the employees who have higher injustice perceptions were likely to indulge in aggressive behaviors.

Discussion and Conclusion

The interview results have revealed interesting findings regarding the teaching faculty's responses to workplace ostracism and answered some of the scantily researched aspects of workplace ostracism in higher educational settings. In contrast to the larger body of research focusing on an empirical investigation of limited aspects of ostracism in educational settings (Zimmerman et al., 2016), this study uncovers in-depth responses of ostracism with underlying causes. Ostracism is inherently context-dependent and elicits

unique responses as per the settings and persistence of episodes experienced by the victim (Robinson et al., 2013; Williams, 2009; Zhao et al., 2013). Thus, this study offers valuable inquiry into unique experiences of workplace ostracism in academic settings in a developing and collectivist nation.

Teachers reported both psychological and pragmatic impacts. Both kinds of responses are interlinked and occur simultaneously, and they varied as per the context and time period. Responses to workplace result into behavioral outcomes; that are negative as well as positive. This is in line with the integrated model of workplace ostracism which postulates that workplace ostracism impacts not only psychological states of victims but also causes loss of work-related resources (Robinson et al., 2013). It was reported by the majority of the respondents that the need to belong and meaningful existence were thwarted the most; that are among four fundamental needs that are threatened by experiencing ostracism (control, meaningful existence, self-esteem and need to belong) as indicated in TNTM (Williams, 2009). The matrix coding query indicated higher frequencies for, psychological consequences among which negative emotions were most intense, followed by threatened needs and the most reported negative emotions were depression, stress, and anxiety. Some of the participants reported being sad, alone, disgraced and de-motivated which is in line with past research studies that immediate response to ostracism is always negative (Ronen & Baldwin, 2010; Williams, 2009). It was indicated that after facing psychological impacts, first, the victims make efforts to be included again, in case these efforts fail they decide to withdraw and resign (Williams, 2009). Yet, a more frequent indication of positive behavioral outcomes was brought to the surface (see Table 1).

Major pragmatic impacts reported by the ostracized teachers were being deprived of social connections as they were excluded from friendship and advice networks (Dutton et al., 2010; Sparrowe et al., 2001). As reported, the exclusion from informal networks was indicated more as compared to formal networks. It causes teachers to be deprived of valuable work-related resources i.e., social support, work-related information and advice (Ellison et al., 2014; Robinson et al., 2013). Following pragmatic impacts, victims either try to invest in resources by showing good performance and in case these efforts are not successful, they will prevent or avoid loss by withdrawal (Richman & Leary, 2009).

After experiencing psychological and pragmatic consequences, victims show positive or negative behavioral outcomes. Workplace ostracism cause positive task performance i.e., better lecture delivery, more effort in teaching quality etc. (Kerr, Seok, Poulsen, Harris, & Messe, 2008) as well as contextual performance i.e., working for betterment of department, helping students after class times, using creative ways of teaching when the victims intend to invest in resources and make efforts of re-inclusion (Balliet & Ferris, 2013). The negative outcomes i.e., less in-role, extra-role performance and increased withdrawal result in case the victims have more focus on avoiding and preventing loss of recourses rather than investing in them (Hobfoll, 2011) and does not want to be re-included (Williams, 2009).

Most participants reported efforts of getting accepted and included that indicates investing in resources, thereby, signaling pro-social outcomes (Hobfoll, 2011; Richman & Leary, 2009; Robinson et al., 2013). A higher strength of positive outcomes shows that most of the teachers are in the "Reflective Stage" of TNTM. The underlying contextual reasons of this kind of behavior are explained in Multi-motive model of social rejection, as Richman and Leary (2009) have stated that individuals indulge in pro-social behaviors when they feel there is a high cost of rejection, the value of relationship is very high, and they have expectation that relationships will repair. On contrary, when individuals have a low expectation that relationships will repair, they do not value relationships or have alternative relationships they will indulge in withdrawal behaviors (DeWall, 2013; Richman & Leary, 2009). Although some participants reported that if episodes of ostracism persist they will leave their job, but

no one indicated indulgence in antisocial outcomes or resignation at the present moment. It shows that teachers have an expectation that relationships with peers and superiors will repair, they value the relationship with them and do not have the availability of alternative relationships that restrains them from negative behavioral outcomes. One of possible explanation of re-inclusion and resource investment strategies is the collectivist culture of Pakistan where social relations are highly valued (Powell et al., 2009).

Moreover, indulgence in positive or negative behavioral outcomes was found to be dependent on time, as in the initial stage more focus is on positive outcomes that reduce with time. Williams (2009) asserted, when re-inclusion efforts do not work and the individuals continuously experience ostracism, their recourses deplete, making them unable to cope with ostracism. Consequently, they enter the resignation stage that explains hopelessness and withdrawal responses of teachers that ultimately result in avoidance and depression ultimately causing a negative impact on in-role and extra-role performance (Ferris, Chen, & Lim, 2017; Robinson et al., 2013). But, more frequency of positive behavioral outcomes indicates that teachers have not yet chronically experienced workplace ostracism and most of them are still focused on resource investment and re-inclusion efforts. On the basis of the findings of the present research, a conceptual model of the consequences of workplace ostracism is proposed as shown in Figure 1.

It is concluded that most of the teachers responded positivity after experiencing workplace ostracism. With respect to consequences based on time, it was found that teachers have experienced short episodes of workplace ostracism. In light of contextual factors, it can be explained that victims value relationships with colleagues and peers and have the expectation of being included again. This also indicates that victims have no better alternative relationship opportunities. Furthermore, re-inclusion and resource investment strategies reflect the collectivist culture of Pakistan where social relations are highly valued, and it is difficult to remain isolated. In case these efforts will not result in re-inclusion or they continue to experience ostracism, the participants indicated the intention of withdrawal, decreased efforts and resignation to avoid and prevent the loss of resources.

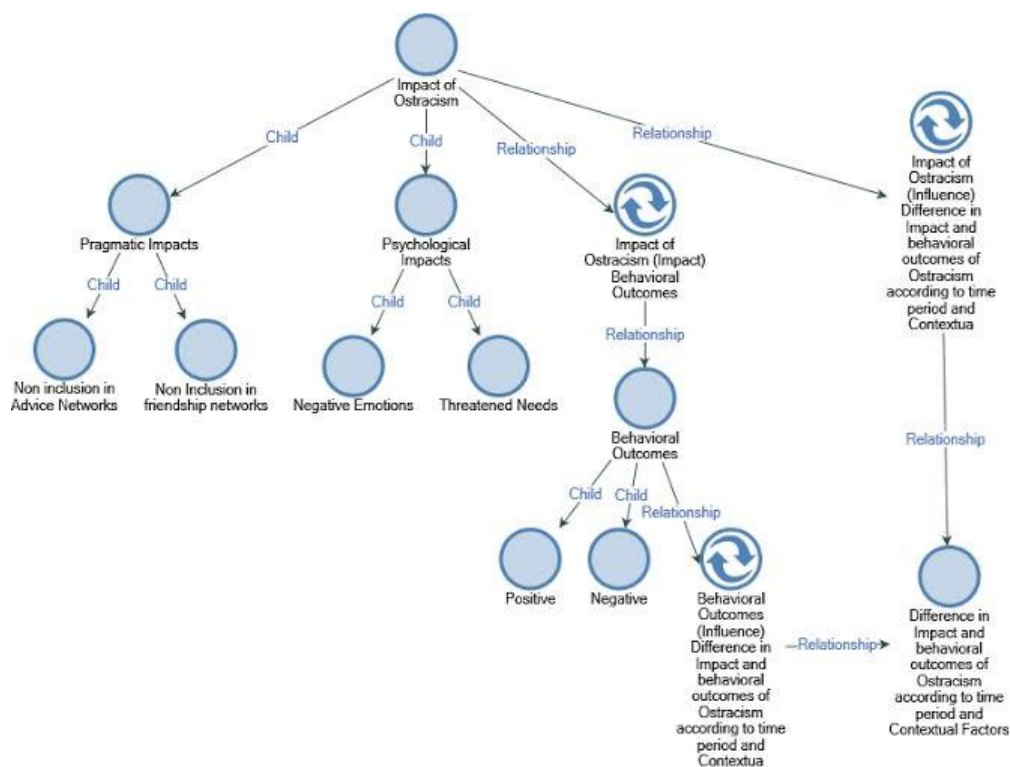


Figure 1. Conceptual Map

Contributions, Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite the growing interest in workplace ostracism research in the past decade, it has been overshadowed with empirical studies (Ferris, Yan, Lim, Chen, & Fatimah, 2016; Gkorezis & Bellou, 2016; Gkorezis et al., 2016; Haq, 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2014; Zimmerman et al., 2016). Williams (2009) indicated that the major challenge for ostracism research is to uncover the sequential nature of its outcomes. Furthermore, the meaning and impact of ostracism are determined greatly by the nature of settings and social context in which it takes place (Robinson et al., 2013). Every industry and culture has its own set of social norms; this makes it worthy to investigate the unique understanding and impact of workplace ostracism in academia. The study has advanced research on interpersonal mistreatments (Schneider et al., 2017) in much-ignored settings of HEIs (Keashly & Neuman, 2010) by using the much sought for qualitative approach (Liu & Xia, 2016; Waldeck et al., 2015). It has investigated workplace ostracism that is a conceptually distinctive form of interpersonal mistreatment as compared to mostly examined vivid forms i.e., bullying, verbal abuse and aggression (Balliet & Ferris, 2013; Zhao et al., 2013). Most of the past studies focused only on the psychological consequences of ostracism (Robinson et al., 2013). Jones and Kelly (2010) have signified the importance of examining the negative task-related outcomes of ostracism. Responding to this call, we have moved forward the literature on workplace ostracism by exploring the interplay in its psychological and pragmatic impacts and its relation to behavioral outcomes with respect to time and contextual factors. Practically, the results of this study can be used by developers of policies and the university administration to develop inclusive and non-discriminatory culture and devise policies for information sharing, better formal and in-formal relationships. The HODs should act as allies and diversity training and seminars should be carried out. Furthermore, grievance mechanisms for subtle workplace mistreatments should also be put in place alongside the harassment and bullying policies.

The present research is also not free from its limitations. This is a qualitative research inquiry and the use of small sample and specific population limits the generalizability of our findings. Furthermore, despite due diligence, the participants may have reported biased views or have hidden certain information that can possibly impact the findings. We recommend that future research explore sources and types of workplace ostracism in addition to examining its effects. In the future, researchers can focus on other types of subtle mistreatments i.e., discrimination, incivility, micro-aggression (Schneider, et al., 2017). This research can be replicated in other sectors and countries and the findings can be generalized by testing it quantitatively or doing mixed-method studies.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

1. What kind of psychological consequences do you face after being ostracized?
2. How ostracism does impact your work performance?
 - Give a description of the formal and in-formal exclusion in your settings?
3. How do you respond to the episodes of ostracism?
 - What are the pro-social responses and what are the anti-social responses?
 - How task performance is impacted and what the impacts on contextual performance?
4. Give reasons for your behavioral outcomes based on being ostracized?
 - Does your short-term and long term behavior in response to workplace ostracism remains the same? Why or why not?
 - Does your personal value placed on the relationships and availability of alternate relationship change the response to workplace ostracism?

(The questions in bullets represented mini-tour questions while rest of them represented grand tour questions)

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Article Citation

Fatima, T., Bilal A. R., & Imran, M. K. (2019). Workplace ostracism and employee reactions among university teachers in Pakistan. *The Qualitative Report*, 24(11), 2759-2777. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol24/iss11/6>
