

Phenomenology of Retaliating to Workplace Ostracism in Academia

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The present qualitative inquiry sheds light on the psychological ramifications and behavioral responses of workplace ostracism in Higher Educational Institutes of Pakistan. The data was collected from 20 ostracized teaching faculty members from public and private sector universities through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and thematic analysis was carried out by NVIVO 11 Plus software. This was supplemented by content analysis to find the strength of each theme in the form of relative frequencies. The findings revealed three major themes; (1) psychological ramifications manifested in threatened needs and negative emotional reactions, (2) behavioral responses (pro-social, antisocial, and avoidant), (3) the underlying causes of diverse behavioral responses. It was found that negative psychological impacts of ostracism were inevitable, but behavioral responses were primarily pro-social due to ostracized faculty's future-orientation, high importance of maintaining relationships, absence of alternative relations, less exposure to ostracism, and re-inclusion expectations.

Keywords. Workplace ostracism, psychological ramifications, behavioral responses

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Workplace ostracism is being ignored or excluded by an individual or group (Williams, 2009). In an organizational context, it refers to the degree of perceived exclusion and disregard (Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008). Zimmerman, Carter-Sowell, and Xu (2016) found that academic settings are increasingly characterized by 'chilly climate' and their interdependent work settings require further scrutiny of sector-specific impacts and outcomes of workplace ostracism. Similarly, Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan also have a predominance of workplace ostracism (Fatima, Ilyas, Rehman, & Imran, 2017; Fatima, Bilal, & Imran, 2019). Moreover, the collectivist and high power distance cultures are more tolerant of subtle mistreatments like ostracism (Shao & Skarlicki, 2014). Despite this only the instances of more overt forms of mistreatments like bullying have been reported in Pakistani HEIs (Ahmad, Kalim, & Kaleem, 2017) which signals the need for further investigation of workplace ostracism in this sector.

Though ostracism has work-related impacts as well recent investigations show a stronger trend towards is psychological aftermaths in academic settings (Bilal, Fatima, & Imran, 2019). These damaging repercussions that include threatened needs (Williams, 2009); stress (Mahfooz, Arshad, Nisar, Ikram, & Azeem, 2017), burnout (Qian, Yang, Wang, Huang, & Song, 2019); and negative emotions (Abubakar, Yazdian &, Behraves, 2018). Robinson, O'Reilly, and Wang (2013). These psychological impacts result mostly in negative outcomes i.e., reduced work performance, lower contextual performance, withdrawal, deviance, and turnover intentions, and sometimes in positive outcomes i.e. increased task as well as contextual performance (Mao, Liu, Jiang, & Zhang, 2018). Ostracism is a context-dependent phenomenon, and sector-specific qualitative inquiries offer in-depth insights into its unique outcomes (Waldeck, Tyndall, & Chmiel, 2015). Waldeck (2017) advocated that qualitative investigations for ostracism impart the in-depth and rich viewpoint of lived experience that contributes toward more authenticated results.

The Temporal Need-Threat Model (TNTM) (Williams, 2009) is used in this study to shed light on the sequential steps through which the psychological impacts of workplace ostracism occur and translate into employee outcomes. This model explains that initial detection of ostracism is followed by immediate negative psychological states, fortification of negative impacts, and subsequent results. Moreover, we have used the multi-motive model of Responses to Social Rejection (Richman & Leary, 2009) that elaborates how contextual factors shape the impacts and outcomes of workplace ostracism.

Based on this gap we have focused HEIs of Pakistan to examine the psychological impacts and subsequent outcomes of workplace ostracism in teaching faculty. Hence, the present research aims to extend the existing research on subtle interpersonal mistreatments in the academic settings from a psychological standpoint. Contrary to the much-used narrow-focused empirical methods we took a broader in-depth exploration of workplace ostracism through a qualitative phenomenological approach. Thus, we added to the extant body of knowledge by shedding light on the lived experiences ostracized teaching faculty in the collectivist cultural context of Pakistan. Moreover, this study also has implications for policymakers and HEIs administration to keep a check on ostracism and devise strategies to minimize its negative ramifications.

The Temporal Need Threat Model (TNTM) is well-recognized theoretical model to understand ostracism (Williams, 2009). This model has explained four stages through which an ostracized individual goes through. The '*minimal*' stage the detection of ostracism occurs, and after that victim enters in '*reflexive*' stage where negative emotions are experienced (i.e., sadness and anger). In the '*reflective*' stage the ostracized individuals try to fortify their fundamental needs and make re-inclusion attempts (by positive outcomes). Lastly, if ostracism persists they will withdraw and enter the '*resignation*' stage (eventually engage in negative outcomes).

Multi-motive Model of Responses to Social Rejection (MMRSR) explains the responses to various kinds of social rejections (including ostracism) depending on contextual factors. These contextual factors are perceived cost of rejection, availability of alternative belongingness, the value of relationships, expectation of re-inclusion, pervasiveness, and perceived unfairness. If the cost of rejection is high, alternative belongingness is low, high value is placed on relationships, the expectation of re-inclusion is present, ostracism is less chronic, and perceived less unfair it will result in positive outcomes. Contrariwise, withdrawal or negative outcomes will be exhibited (Richman & Leary, 2009).

The psychological impacts of being ostracized manifest as threatened needs as well as negative emotional states. The psychological impacts take place as soon as the target perceives ostracism (Mao et al., 2018). Primarily, the need to belong is thwarted as a result of ostracism (Richman & Leary, 2009). Williams and Nida (2011) have highlighted three other needs that are affected by ostracism. Self-esteem that is one's sense of self that is derived in part from the treatment one receives from others is damaged after ostracism. Moreover, ostracism impacts one's sense of control over

the environment and lastly threatens the need for a meaningful existence that is a belief that human beings are worthy and their existence matters (Williams, 2007). When threatened by ostracism, targets seek to fortify these needs in the short run; in the long run, sustained psychological need depletion can result in alienation, helplessness, and depression (Williams, 2009). Other psychological impacts of ostracism are in form of negative emotions (Williams & Nida, 2011), sadness (Buckley, Winkel, & Leary, 2004), psychological distress (Mahfooz et al., 2017), anxiety and sadness (Baumeister & Tice, 1990; Buckley et al., 2004). Moreover, the ostracized individuals report high job dissatisfaction (Fatima, 2016) and burnout (Qian et al., 2019). Some of the studies also report that leads to engagement in aggressive response and anger (Chow, Tiedens, & Govan, 2008; Mao et al., 2018).

When any employee faces negative emotional states their behavioral outcomes are likely to suffer (Robinson et al., 20013; Mao et al., 2018). The psychological impacts of workplace ostracism can result in three kinds of outcomes, that may be positive, negative, or avoidant (Robinson et al., 2013; Wesselmann, Ren, & Williams, 2015). Positive behavioral outcomes include improvement in task performance and citizenship behaviors. Negative outcomes on a contrary note, encompass a decline in task performance and reluctance to engage in citizenship behaviors. Sometimes they include the display of counterproductive attitudes as well. The avoidant attitudes include withdrawal and turnover intention. Unlike the psychological impact that is always negative, their behavioral outcomes can vary according to contextual factors (Mao et al., 2018; Zhang & Kwan, 2015).

As per TNTM, the immediate negative psychological impacts of ostracism in minimal and reflexive stages will lead towards a need for fortification in the reflective stage (Williams, 2009). In order to be re-included the ostracized faculty convalesce their social image by engaging in compliance, conformity, obedience, and ingratiation (Riva, Williams, Torstrick, & Montali, 2014). This can be achieved with high task performance and greater citizenship behaviors (Robinson et al., 2013; Mao et al., 2018). If these attempts are not successful, the ostracized faculty will keep on experiencing negative emotional states and depleted needs that would result in avoidant or antisocial outcomes. These negative outcomes include a reduction in helping behaviors, lower productivity, and deviant behaviors (withholding work efforts or having rude behavior) (Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018; Mao et al., 2018).

Lastly, a passive stance may be taken by victims of ostracism rather than being involved in active positive or negative behaviors.

This can be done by displaying social numbness and avoiding the sources of ostracism to minimize psychological pain (Imran et al., 2019; Twenge, Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Bartels, 2007). They do so by minimizing social interactions, not taking an active part in discussions, and communication (Ren, Wesselmann, & Williams, 2016) or becoming silent (Gkorezis, Panagiotou, & Theodorou, 2016).

As per the MMSR if individuals who perceive a high cost of rejection, have low alternative belongingness, puts a high value on relationships, and have an expectation of re-inclusion will indulge in positive behaviors. Moreover, positive outcomes will be more evident if the victim has not been chronically ostracized or feels that being ostracized was fair. In the case of opposite contextual factors, the ostracized individuals may engage in active negative behaviors or adopt a withdrawal approach (Richman & Leary, 2009). Building on TNTM and MMSR we put forth the following propositions for teaching faculty in HEIs of Pakistan:

1. After exposure to workplace ostracism, fundamental needs will be threatened and negative emotions will be experienced.
2. The psychological impacts of workplace ostracism generate different behavioral outcomes.
3. The behavioral outcomes after being ostracized differ in accordance with contextual factors.

Method

Study Design

Research Philosophy. The research philosophy is based on interpretivism. According to Creswell (2013), ontological assumptions in this philosophical perspective postulate that the nature of context shape the prevalence of knowledge and epistemological stance encompasses the subjective view of knowledge, availability of which depends upon the perception of people and environment.

Research Approach. Further, inductive reasoning has been followed that enables data collection for specific aim, followed by in-depth exploration and pattern recognition that subsequently ends up with a generic conceptual framework (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This is in line with the interpretivism worldview of research to examine the impacts of workplace ostracism in higher education institutes in developing countries which is the context of the current study (Robinson et al., 2013). Here, inductive reasoning is a well-matched approach to explore the research question of the current study due to

its context-specific nature (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Further, the inductive approach is suitable for the types of studies where results can vary because of change in context from where responses have been obtained (Madill, Jordan, & Shirley, 2000).

Research Design. Based on these parameters, the current study falls under the head of qualitative research design as the aim of the current study is to explore the outcomes of workplace ostracism in the context of the HEIs of Pakistan. In order to get a detailed understanding of the underlying phenomena, a phenomenological qualitative research approach has been adopted to explore the exposition of the current study as it permits to obtain comprehensive results based on shared beliefs and experiences (Creswell, 2013; Madill et al., 2000).

Sample

Population. In recent times, the HEIs have been recognized with ‘chilly’ and exclusionary climates (Bilal et al., 2019; Fatima et al., 2017; Zimmerman et al., 2016). Therefore, the current study emphasizes the higher education institutions operating in Pakistan and teachers are the unit of analysis to get responses about the outcomes of workplace ostracism.

Sampling Technique. As ostracism in the workplace is a unique experience one faces, hence non-probability sampling design has been used instead of random sampling to obtain effective responses. Moreover, Salganik and Heckathorn (2004) argued that non-probability sampling methods are effective if the population is hidden, and stigmatized and their official records are not available. Thus, based on the phenomena under study, characteristics of participation, and exploratory nature of the study, a purposive sampling method has been deployed to select the targeted respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The inclusion criteria for respondents are as under:

1. Must have faced ostracism in the workplace.
2. Must be the faculty member of public and private sector universities.
3. Respondents must possess at least one year of experience in order to understand the workplace dynamics.

The participants were approached through official e-mails stating the study purpose in major public and private universities. The faculty was requested to give consent for a one-to-one interview if they fulfilled the above criteria. We received a response from 31 teachers,

amongst which 23 agreed to give an interview. The date and time of the interview were scheduled with each candidate. On the final day of the interview, 3 of the participants could not participate due to personal or official engagements.

Sample Size. For the current study, the sample consists of 20 ostracized faculty members of higher education institutions operating in Pakistan. In order to ensure the heterogeneity in the sample, participants were selected from public and private sector universities having different age groups, diverse levels, and both types of gender characteristics. A sample of twenty respondents is appropriate for qualitative research based on the guidelines provided by Yang (2008).

The demographic profile of respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographics of the Respondent (N=20)

Participants	Gender	Age (Years)	Designation	Qualification	Experience (Years)
1	Male	34	Lecturer	M.Phil.	2
2	Female	28	Lecturer	M.Phil.	3
3	Male	39	Lecturer	M.Phil.	6
4	Male	50	Associate Professor	PhD	16
5	Male	45	Assistant Professor	M.Phil.	7
6	Male	27	Lecturer	M.Phil.	4
7	Female	29	Lecturer	M.Phil.	6
8	Male	37	Assistant Professor	M.Phil.	11
9	Male	26	Lecturer	M.Phil.	2
10	Female	36	Lecturer	M.Phil.	7
11	Female	25	Lecturer	M.Phil.	1
12	Male	49	Associate Professor	PhD	15
13	Male	51	Associate Professor	PhD	17
14	Male	46	Assistant Professor	PhD	9
15	Male	57	Professor	PhD	21
16	Male	42	Assistant Professor	M. Phil.	8
17	Female	39	Assistant Professor	M.Phil.	6
18	Male	28	Lecturer	M.Phil.	3
19	Female	31	Lecturer	M.Phil.	4
20	Female	41	Assistant Professor	M.Phil.	18

Procedure

In order to get effective responses from the targeted participants, semi-structured non-directive interviews were used. Following the recommendations of McCracken (1988), interviews were organized to receive effective responses based on the conversation that ultimately used to execute the thematic analysis. The development of interview protocol is a very important and complex phase of any qualitative inquiry. In this regard, an extensive literature review was conducted to extract the questions about the psychological impact of workplace ostracism (Ferris et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2013; Williams, 2009).

The review process was conducted by experts (2 faculty members, 1 qualitative research expert, and 2 scholars of ostracism research) to check the suitability of the questions to be included in the final interview protocol list. In order to ensure further refinement of the instrument, a pilot survey was conducted to check the wording and appropriateness of questions. The time of each interview was between 20 to 40 minutes that serve the purpose to obtain the responses from the faculty members.

The interviewer gave a decent chance to participants to express all information they want to provide free in an evocative way as it's the beauty of the qualitative studies that data can be obtained through interaction with respondents (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, Hanson, Plano, & Morales, 2007). Many mini and grand tour questions were also castoff to ensure the rapport and trust of the respondents during the whole interview time. The grand-tour questions are general explorations into the topic while mini-tour questions focus on specific details for the richness of data (McCracken, 1988). Such that a sample grand tour question was "How your psychological state is affected after being ostracized?" and the pertinent mini-tour question was "Can you specifically explain what kind of emotions you experience after ostracism?" (see Appendix A for interview protocol questions).

Results

Data Analysis

In order to perform the thematic analysis, the interviews were recorded which were subsequently transcribed verbatim and at the final stage entered each interview was entered as a separate case in the NVivo-11 plus. To analyze the qualitative responses, thematic analysis is a mostly used technique that is actually "*a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data*" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.6). The individual responses (cases) were

further channeled as categories, patterns, and themes where researchers ensure the uniqueness of individual responses. At the first level, initial level coding was completed after familiarization with data through which the main themes were acknowledged. At the second level, these identified themes were further appraised to be considered as emerging themes that ultimately result in final themes. At the final stage, content analysis was executed to check the appearance of each theme (in terms of frequency) through the matrix coding query option in NVivo 11. The analysis was performed very diligently to avoid deviant patterns and anecdotal areas that ultimately ensured the quality of findings with high validity and reliability in the underlying context (Mason, 2002). Further, results were elaborated by following the parameters conveyed by Madill et al. (2000) that ensure the clarity, correctness, and actual respondents' utterances in the presentation of findings.

Findings

The findings presented in this section are based on the narrations of 20 ostracized faculty members working in public and private HEIs of Pakistan. Three major themes emerged from the data analysis i.e., (1) psychological ramifications of being ostracized, (2) the behavioral outcomes followed by psychological impacts of workplace ostracism, and (3) the underlying causes of diverse behavioral outcomes. Each theme was divided into sub-themes as shown in Table 2 and Table 3 depicts the frequency with which each theme prevailed.

Main Theme 1. Psychological Ramifications of Being Ostracized

Subtheme 1.1. Fundamental need threat. Workplace ostracism damaged four fundamental needs of belonging, meaningful existence, and lowered self-esteem. As one faculty member stated:

“I feel that I have no social connections here” (P 3).

“I am here like an alien, I do not have friends here... even my routine social interactions are very formal and short-lived. Most of the day I spend alone in my cabin” (P 9).

It was substantiated by another ostracized faculty member,

“Not being involved by others gives me a feeling that I lack the social connections to survive... I am like an outsider here” (P 1).

Another faculty member indicated that he felt less worthy after being ostracized. This was reflected in his statement,

“...I have no worth here, no one likes to involve me in departmental matters, and in informal terms as well...Even if it is mandatory to be a part of any official gathering, my opinion is either not taken or if I give any suggestion it is not considered” (P 12).

“Being left out by others induces the feelings that I am not valuable enough” (P 14).

Some of the faculty members also expressed that ostracism lowered their self-esteem.

“When I am not acknowledged by my colleagues or sometimes when they do not respond to me, I feel that it is due to my own lacking and it makes me feel bad about myself” (P 17).

“Not being included or being ignored by peers on a constant basis makes me think that no one likes me and I feel insecure due to it... Sometimes I think I am less able or do not possess good qualities due to which I get this treatment” (P 6).

None of the participants expressed a lowering of need to control as a result of ostracism.

Sub-Theme 1.2. Depressive and Aggressive Emotional States.

Certain psychological states were mentioned by faculty members after experiencing ostracism. Most of the faculty members showed negative emotions and feelings. It was mentioned by the faculty members that,

“Being ignored instantly makes me experience distressed, I feel higher tension at my workplace” (P 12).

“I become sad after my colleagues exclude me from social interactions or do not pay attention to me” (P 4).

“... when I am unable to gain the attention of my peers and department head and they frequently ignore me in departmental matters like in meetings, in course allocation, and in the allocation of research students, it drains me emotionally” (P 8).

Only a few faculty members explained that ostracism makes them angry.

“If someone does not respond to my request or does not include me, it annoys me” (P 2).

Main Theme 2. The Behavioral Responses Followed by Psychological Impacts of Workplace Ostracism. Three types of behavioral outcomes were traced and they were sub-categorized as antisocial, pro-social, and avoidant.

Sub-theme 2.1. Antisocial Behavioral Response. This category s included negative behaviors that can potentially be harmful to the employees as well as the organization. One of the ostracized faculty members stated:

“After being ignored, I behave rudely with the one who has ignored me... I also do not share any beneficial information with my peers” (P 11).

It was elaborated by two of the ostracized faculty members that their work and helping behaviors affected after suffering from ostracism.

“I consider that going an extra mile for the well-being of department is not my duty if my department head and colleagues do not include me” (P 9).

“I try not to indulge in extra helping behaviors” (P 6).

“...I have a lower motivation to perform my work duties with full dedication, I intentionally withhold effort and mostly leave early” (P 14).

Sub-theme 2.2. Pro-social. These outcomes depict the positive behaviors of ostracized faculty members. Ostracism made the victims more compliant, obedient and increased their propensity of ingratiation. One of the faculty members explained this by stating that enhanced performance and obedience may help him get a valuable place,

“...I try to obey all the instructions of my department head with full effort. I hope that he will see my potential and I will gain a worthy status too” (P 7).

Other ostracized faculty member showed their inclination towards developing a socially desirable image.

“... I have felt that my contradictory opinions lead my colleagues to avoid me, so now I try to second their views” (P 3).

“Now I praise my colleagues more and offer them help in their tasks... I voluntarily share their work... I do so to develop my positive image” (P 8).

Sub-theme 2.3. Avoidant. This behavioral tendency reflects a self-practiced and passive response to ostracism as one of the faculty member said,

“I try to avoid those who avoid me. It is painful to go to a situation where I know I will be ignored. So in order to save myself from this emotional distress, I spend most of the time alone” (P 19).

This behavior was reflected in the statement of another ostracized faculty member.

“I choose not to respond to this behavior, I remain silent. Even I intentionally avoid giving any suggestions or voice my opinions as I fear being ignored again” (P 4).

Main Theme 3: The Underlying Causes of Diverse Behavioral Responses. In this theme, the respondents were asked to explain why they engaged in specific behaviors after facing ostracism. The faculty members who showed the tendency of positive behaviors had the intention to fortify their need for belongings and self-esteem. Moreover, the ostracizer was higher in status, and they had the expectation to be included again. Another reason was the lower intensity of ostracism and higher future orientation. It was signified by one of the ostracized faculty members,

“I am quite new here and I hope my positive behavior will help me to become an important part of this department. I believe if I respond to this situation well it will have good long term outcomes” (P 3).

“I want to have a good social circle. Social support is important for survival. I also want to be liked and valued by my coworkers” (P 14).

The indulgence in negative behaviors was usually showed by those faculty members who did not place much importance on social relations and had alternative belongingness. The individuals did not show much intention of inclusion as well. This is manifested in the response of one faculty member:

“My work is only to do my job duties... I do not care about the behavior of others. I have good friends in other departments and outside this institution and I do not feel any need to make connections with those who do not like me” (P 7).

Those ostracized faculty members who were chronically ostracized used self-protection strategies.

“I am too exhausted and demotivated to show any positive performance or to retaliate. I prefer to avoid social interactions. I am tired of making efforts for such a long time” (P 1).

Moreover, those with low self-esteem also exhibited the same predisposition:

“I am not as good as others and I try not to participate in the departmental activities because I know my ideas and efforts are not up to their standards I fear that I would be ignored or rejected” (P 10).

Table 2
Summarization of Major Themes and Their Respective Sub-Themes

Initial Codes	Major Themes	Sub-themes
Low self-image, low belongingness, lack of self-worth, stress, psychological distress, anger, sadness, emotional exhaustion	1. Psychological Ramifications	1.1. Fundamental Need Threat 1.2. Depressive and Aggressive Responses
Ingratiation, flattery, obedience, compliance, increased work and helping behavior, deviance, rudeness, anger, low work effort, knowledge hiding, reduced helping, silence, avoidance of social interactions	2. Behavioral Responses	2.1. Antisocial Behavioral Responses 2.2. Pro-social Behavioral Responses 2.3. Avoidant Behavioral Responses
Pervasiveness, time, exposure to ostracism, value of relationships, other sources of belonging, future orientation, ostracizer’s status, ostracizee’s tenure, expectation of inclusion	3. Underlying Causes of Diverse Behavioral Responses	3.1. Pervasiveness of ostracism 3.2. Future Orientation 3.3. Value of Social Relationships 3.4. Alternative Belongingness 3.5. Expectation of Re-inclusion

Table 3

Summarization of Major Themes and Their Respective Sub-themes (Matrix Coding Query Results)

Sr. No.	Themes												
	1	1.1	1.2	2	2.1	2.2	2.3	3	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5
P 1	11	6	5	6	0	4	2	11	2	1	3	4	1
P 2	6	4	2	5	1	3	1	6	2	2	1	1	0
P 3	5	1	4	2	1	0	1	9	2	3	1	1	2
P 4	3	1	2	4	0	3	1	8	3	1	1	1	2
P 5	7	10	3	7	2	4	1	10	4	0	2	1	3
P 6	2	1	1	6	0	6	0	5	1	1	1	1	1
P 7	5	7	3	3	3	0	0	6	2	2	1	0	1
P 8	8	2	6	12	4	6	2	6	1	1	2	1	1
P 9	7	3	4	11	1	10	0	8	2	2	1	2	1
P10	9	3	6	7	1	4	3	4	0	1	1	1	1
P 11	6	2	4	5	0	5	0	9	2	1	1	3	2
P12	8	3	5	4	0	2	2	6	2	0	1	1	2
P13	10	4	6	5	5	0	0	9	1	2	2	3	1
P14	11	5	6	8	1	6	1	6	1	0	2	2	1
P15	9	3	6	7	3	4	0	9	2	1	2	2	2
P16	4	1	3	12	2	6	4	11	2	0	5	3	1
P 17	3	1	2	3	0	2	1	7	1	2	2	1	1
P 18	5	2	3	15	0	9	6	7	2	1	2	1	1
P19	6	2	4	11	2	7	3	4	1	1	1	0	1
P20	12	4	8	3	0	3	0	14	4	1	5	3	1
Total	137	65	83	136	26	84	28	155	37	23	37	32	26

Note. 1= Psychological ramifications; 1.1= fundamental need threat; 1.2= depressive and aggressive emotions; 2= behavioral responses; 2.1= antisocial; 2.2=pro-social; 2.3= avoidant; 3= underlying causes; 3.1= pervasiveness; 3.2= future orientation; 3.3= value of social relations; 3.4= alternate belongingness; 3.5= re-inclusion expectation.

Discussion

This research sheds light on the psychological ramifications and resultant behavioral responses of workplace ostracism in HEIs of Pakistan. It was proposed that workplace ostracism will have negative psychological impacts on teaching faculty. Two kinds of psychological impacts were reported by the respondents. The first one was threatening the basic needs of belongingness, meaningful existence, and lower self-esteem. Ostracism deprives individuals of social connections and as a result, their fundamental need of being accepted and affiliated with other individuals is not fulfilled (O'Reilly & Robinson, 2009; Williams, 2009; Wesselmann et al., 2015). Moreover, the need to have social recognition and self-worth is reflected in an individual's self-esteem that is lowered by being denied social connections (Fatima et al., 2017). Lastly, some of the participants signified that its innate need for human beings to feel an important and useful part of a work setting but due to ostracism they felt non-existent. Contrary to the larger body of research no participant indicated thwarted need to control as a result of being ostracized (Williams, 2009; Wesselmann et al., 2015; Mao et al., 2018).

This is due to the fact that in collectivist and high power distance cultures like Pakistan, people place a high value on being socially affiliated, liked, and accepted rather than having a sense of control (Knausenberger & Echterhoff, 2018). In this type of cultural dynamics having influence over people and situations is less desired as compared to the need for belonging (Conlon, 2012). The second psychological impact indicated by ostracized faculty members was experiencing negative emotional states. It was revealed that most of the faculty members had an inclination towards depressive emotions and only a few of them mentioned being angry or annoyed. This shows that being socially rejected makes an individual prone to emotional distress (Ronen & Baldwin, 2010). In eastern settings higher tolerance of mistreatment is prevalent and people have internal attributions of being mistreated (Bilal et al., 2019). In such cases, victims endure more stress and sadness related to emotional states rather than aggressive ones (Rudert, Sutter, Corrodi, & Greifeneder, 2018). On the whole, higher negative emotions were reported as compared to threatened needs that affirms that negative emotions are an instinctive result of being ostracized (Robinson, 2019; Williams, 2009).

Secondly, it was postulated that the negative emotions suffered by teaching faculty after ostracism will lead towards behavioral

outcomes. Negative emotions impact employee behavioral responses, unlike other mistreatments workplace ostracism can result in mixed behavioral outcomes (Jamieson, Harkins Williams, 2010). The findings of our investigation showed a higher inclination towards pro-social responses, followed by avoidant, and antisocial responses. The prior studies have usually examined these outcomes in isolation (Balliet & Ferris, 2013; Fatima et al., 2017; Peng & Zeng, 2017). Wesselmann et al. (2015) stated that ostracism might result in all three kinds of outcomes depending on contextual factors. The higher pro-social tendency is not surprising, because of the context of HEIs values inclusion and social acceptance specifically in collectivist cultures. Therefore, the ostracized faculty engaged in compliance and ingratiating response as compared to showing disagreement, deviance, anger, or silence (Bilal et al., 2019; Imran et al., 2019; Jahanzeb & Ftaima, 2018).

Lastly, we explored the causes behind differential behavioral responses due to the negative psychological impacts of workplace ostracism. The faculty members who showed pro-social responses indicated that they were more future-oriented, they give more importance to building relationships, had no alternative relations, had less exposure to ostracism and they expected that they will regain their social status. These findings affirm the MMRSR, which states how much value a person gives to relationships, inclusion, and the tenure of exclusion is linked with behavioral responses of social rejection. Moreover, those individuals who do not have any other source of belonging and still have hope that their relationship with ostracizers will repair will show the higher motivation for showing positive behaviors (Richman & Leary, 2009). This can be explained in light of TNTM (Williams, 2009) that in '*reflective*' stage individuals make an attempt of need fortification, as most of the ostracized faculty signaled lower self-esteem and belongingness needs, so in this case, pro-social attempts are more evident (Wesselmann et al., 2015).

The reason behind less display of avoidant and antisocial strategies is that ostracized faculty members did not show the need to control and its deprivation, moreover only a few signified lower meaningful existence. The fortification of these needs is a prime motive of antisocial and avoidant responses (Wesselmann et al., 2015; Yan, Zhou, Long, & Ji, 2014). Despite this, some of the other contextual factors contributed the faculty to be antisocial, such as only chronically ostracized faculty that had belongingness with other individuals showed negative behaviors. This affirms that if one is exposed to ostracism for a long time the responses will ultimately become negative (Williams, 2009). They showed higher intentions of

knowledge hiding, reduced helping behaviors, and lower work effort. This offers support to the ostracism literature that indicates damaged relationships through ostracism enhance deviant behaviors in organizations (Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018; Yang & Treadway, 2018). The passive and avoiding behaviors are also linked to the high intensity of ostracism that made faculty members emotionally exhausted to engage in active negative or positive behaviors. It was found by Fatima et al. (2017) that employees respond to ostracism by silence due to deprived self-esteem and meaningful existence. This also shows that faculty that had lost hope in the improvement of their inclusionary status avoided further social interactions and became silent to avoid pain from being ostracized (Imran et al., 2019; Richman & Leary, 2009).

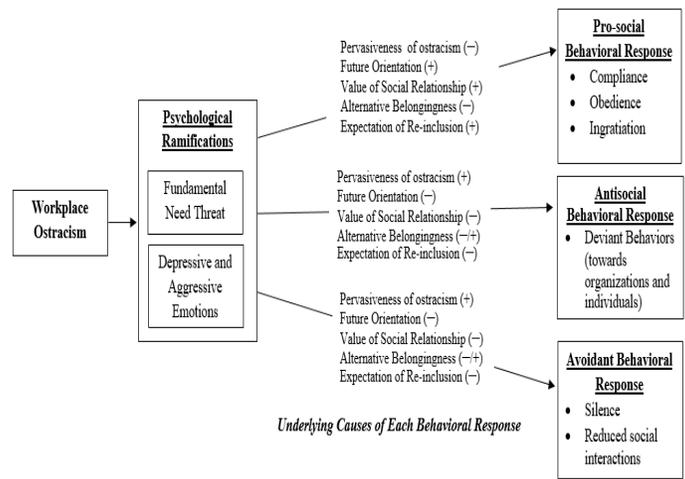


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework for Thematic Analysis.

Thus, it is concluded that ostracism faced by teaching faculty of Pakistani HEIs lead to psychological ramifications of threatened needs (i.e., belongingness, self-esteem, and meaningful existence) along with depressive and aggressive emotional reactions. These negative psychological consequences shaped three types of behavioral responses that were mainly pro-social, and antisocial and avoidant responses were also found to a lesser extent. The major underlying causes of predominant pro-social outcomes were future-orientation, the importance of relationships, the absence of alternative relations,

less exposure to ostracism, and re-inclusion expectations. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework derived from the thematic analysis.

Implications, Limitations, and Future Research Avenues

The outcomes and responses of workplace ostracism vary across different contexts and situations (Williams, 2009) and qualitative exploration is much needed methodological approach for its in-depth inquiry (Waldeck, 2017). Yet the extant research studies are mostly quantitative (Fatima et al., 2017; Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018; Zimmerman et al., 2016) that only offer limited insight into its consequences. Mao et al. (2018) put forth the argument that behavioral outcomes of workplace ostracism are paradoxical and have mixed findings. Wesselmann et al. (2015) identified that existing scholarship on behavioral responses resulting from ostracism only focuses on one type of its possible outcomes.

From a theoretical perspective, our study has bridged the above gap by using a phenomenological qualitative approach and simultaneously exploring pro-social, antisocial, and avoidant responses of workplace ostracism in academic settings. Moreover, based on TNTM and MMRSR we have extended the understating who is likely to engage in either of the behavioral tendencies. Moreover, we have highlighted the importance of context in workplace ostracism research. In contrast to the much examined negative outcomes in western corporate entities (Knausenberger & Echterhoff, 2018; Sharp, Peng, & Jex, 2019), we have shown that in academic settings of a collectivist and high power distance culture pro-social behavioral outcomes supersede avoidant and antisocial responses.

From a practical standpoint, the university administration and department heads can foster steps to create inclusive work settings where formal and informal social interaction, teamwork, and constructive competition is encouraged (Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018). The promotion of good quality employee relationships should be done through training, seminars, informal coaching, and shared leadership. Moreover, there should be policies for keeping a check on employees who ostracize colleagues and proper grievance mechanisms should be put into practice in this regard. Any incident of social exclusion should be identified and addressed on a priority basis. All these actions would help HEIs to develop climates characterized by inclusion and healthy interpersonal relations that would improve the psychological health and work outcomes of faculty.

Despite the theoretical and practical implications, this study is confined by certain limitations. The smaller sample size and the possibility of respondents' bias are inherent like all qualitative inquires (Waldeck, 2017). This could be addressed in the future by triangulation and mixed-method research. Moreover, the focus was only on the psychological impacts and resultant behavioral outcomes. For a comprehensive understating of consequences of ostracism, work-related impacts can also be simultaneous studied (Bilal et al., 2019). Lastly, this study is only limited to the HEIs of Pakistan, the context-dependent nature of workplace ostracism may yield interesting insights in other sectors and national contexts.

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Appendix

Interview Protocol Questions

1. How your psychological state is affected after being ostracized?
2. Can you specifically explain what kind of emotions you experience after workplace ostracism?
3. Describe which needs are deprived after experiencing workplace ostracism?(Prompt: meaningful existence, control, belonging, or self-esteem)
4. Elaborate how the psychological impacts of ostracism shape your behavior at work?
5. How will you describe your behavioral responses after ostracism? (Prompt: pro-social, antisocial, or avoidant).
6. What motivates you to display a specific behavior after experiencing negative psychological impacts of workplace ostracism?

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