

The Relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Job Performance: Role of Psychological Capital as Mediator

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Abstract *The objective of this research was to investigate not only the relationship among workplace Ostracism (WPO), psychological capital (PC), and job performance (JP) but also to test the mediating role of PC between WPO and JP. Data were gathered from 278 employees of public sector universities. Statistical Package for Social Sciences and Amos was used to test the relationship among all variables. Structure equation modeling was employed to test the developed model. The results showed that WPO had a significant negative relationship with PC and JP while a significant positive relationship between PC and JP was found. Furthermore, the results revealed that PC partially mediated the relationship between WPO and JP.*

Key Words:

WPO; PC; JP;
Universities

Introduction

Researchers had defined ostracism in various ways, in literature different terms have been used to describe ostracism, including; rejection (Prinstein & Aikins, 2004), exclusion (Twenge, Catanese, & Baumeister, 2002), isolation (K. D. Williams, 2009), abandonment (Baumeister, Wotman, & Stillwell, 1993) and being in a corner (Jones, Carter-Sowell, Kelly, & Williams, 2009). According to Ferris, Lian, Brown, & Morrison (2015) workplace ostracism takes place when some employees eliminate others from having mutual interaction, sometimes exit from the room on their arrival, denying to have a few words and avoid to look at one another. According to K. Williams (1997), ostracism is a violation of the set norms and values that we are supposed to recognize at the workplace. Ostracism at the workplace can be referred to as a type of social distancing in the organization; as an example it includes ignoring a person intentionally, avoiding

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to greet one another, withholding the required information, and disregarding someone (Wu, Wei, & Hui, 2011). Being universal in nature, WPO is termed as the level to which an employee observes as if he or she is overlooked or eliminated by other employees in the organization (Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008). Similarly, WPO is referred to as a dark and unwanted phenomenon occurring within organizations which ultimately affects employee's behaviors at the workplace (Zhu, Lyu, Deng, & Ye, 2017).

Research studies show that WPO brings shattering impact to the attitudes and behavior of the target individuals including dwindled citizenship behaviors (Zhao, Peng, & Sheard, 2013), emotional tiredness and exhaustion (O'Reilly, Robinson, Berdahl, & Banki, 2015), low satisfaction level (Liu, Kwan, Lee, & Hui, 2013), diminishing pro-social behavior (Balliet & Ferris, 2013), greater deviant behavior (Zhao et al., 2013) and decreased delivery in performance (Ferris et al., 2015). WPO results in an adverse impact on the subjective welfare of employees, make them perceive themselves of low worth and even doubtful about their competencies (Wu et al., 2011). Moreover, the self-esteem of the concerned individual is diminished by ostracism in an organization (Ferris et al., 2015).

JP

JP is described by the way employees strive to achieve organizational goals and keep their interpersonal behaviors in compliance with organization's norms and values by efficient and effective utilization of the scarce resources to complete the assigned tasks (Tinofirei, 2011). JP is the execution of the assigned duties of an employee. What an individual do at the workplace or how tasks are carried out is termed as performance. Hence it can be uttered that JP is the sum of employee behavior in connection to an assigned task. JP of employees reflects their competences and ethical standards.

JP is a concept of multidimensional nature and can be explained based on two different perspectives; outcome and behavior. According to the outcome viewpoint, JP is the ultimate product of employee's behavior while as per the behavioral point of view; JP is what individuals do and how they behave at the workplace. In another way, JP can be elaborated as an assessment of results because the outcome and behavior aspects of JP are mutually connected (Schmitt & Borman, 1993). According to Pritchard (1992), JP has two dimensions; effectiveness and productivity. Effectiveness is the degree of success to deliver the expected output while productivity is output rate in comparison to input units. JP is an important factor for all organizations because it is a tool for analyzing the success of a company (Sadikoglu & Zehir, 2010). The non-financial tools like motivation, teamwork, productivity, competency, and quality of products and services are measured through JP (Manzoor, Ullah, Hussain, & Ahmad, 2011). JP had previously been measured through financial tools like profit, earnings, market

share, and growth rate (Demirbag, Tatoglu, Tekinkus, & Zaim, 2006). However non-financial tools like absenteeism, employee turnover, job satisfaction, quality, and productivity also need to be considered while measuring JP as an output of human resources (Abdalkrim, 2013). JP is kept on top priority by the organizations to survive, compete, and succeed (Imran, Fatima, Zaheer, Yousaf, & Batool, 2012).

Relationship between WPO and JP

Leung, Wu, Chen, & Young (2011) found in their study that WPO inversely effects JP. It was further added that when employees started to feel that they are being ignored in the organization during conversations and social interactions with a perception that they are no longer valued as a member of the big cluster, they start to discount their input to the organization which decreases JP. According to Haq (2014), ostracism at workplace decrease employees JP and increase stress and intention to leave the organization. Moreover, if the same thing continues, the ostracized person turns to a less worthy employee. For instance, Sommer & Baumeister (2002) revealed in their study that employees with a decreased level of self-esteem started to feel that their egos are challenged hence they approach the assigned job being less confident which ultimately decreases their JP.

Ostracism at workplace have different consequences for employees; for instance increase in job tension and depression, decrease in the level of job satisfaction, health-related issues, conflict in work-family balance (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999), deviance at the workplace, organizational citizenship (Lee & Allen, 2002), poor JP (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003) and turnover intentions (Harris, Harvey, & Kacmar, 2011). Similarly, ostracism leads employees to a state where they feel pained and take things negatively (Gruter & Masters, 1986). Research studies further demonstrate that negative experiences produce extreme emotional reactions and stress (Taylor, 1991) which eventually results in poor JP (Vigoda, 2000).

Bandura & Locke (2003) proposed that a high level of PC in employees tends to show a high confidence level which helps them to accomplish challenging assignments, make them face difficulties and deliver their best and ultimately experience the minimal job related negative outcomes which have a fruitful impact on JP. It was further added that employees with a high level of PC are highly optimistic about prospects (M. Seligman, Abramson, Semmel, & Von Bayer, 1998), they are fully confident to pursue difficult tasks (Bandura, Freeman, & Lightsey, 1999), they can stay firm in front of obstacles (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2001), they can use different trails to get success (Snyder, 2000) and their spirit to bounce back after being pushed by setbacks left minimal chances for stress and negativity to come, as a result, these employees are less likely to portray distinct negative endings like low JP and dwindled satisfaction, which is typically connected with ostracism at the workplace (Masten & Reed, 2002).

M. E. Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2014) demonstrated that optimism and hope serve as buffering instruments against stress, addiction, and deviant behavior. Research studies had established the existence of a strong relationship between optimism/hope and JP, employee's health (both mental and physical), and the aptitude to deal with adverse conditions (Curry, Snyder, Cook, Ruby, & Rehm, 1997). Likewise, highly efficient employees are less likely to assume failure and lose the required confidence level when exposed to negativity, adversity, and setbacks (Bandura & Locke, 2003). According to (Bonanno, Papa, & O'Neill, 2001), resolute employees portray emotional steadiness when they face complex and adverse scenarios and they want to experience new things (Fredrickson, 2001). Resilience helps employees to deal with an environment full of uncertainty and injustice which not only makes them able to adjust with adversity but also adds to their JP (Masten & Reed, 2002).

PC as Mediator

PC has been defined as a person's constructive psychological condition of development branded by i) self- efficacy; being confident to accept exciting tasks and putting all the required efforts to get it done ii) optimism; staying positive with a vision to remain successful at present and in future, iii) hope; faith to achieve goals, when essential, readdressing paths to achieve those goals with a hope to succeed, iv) resilience; bouncing back and even getting much better after being upset by hardships and problems (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). According to Kessler (2013), the above mentioned four components are critical dynamics to predict employee behavior and performance. The existence of PC is linked to an employee attainment level and well-being; hence, nurturing and developing PC will determine the survival, progress, and prosperity of an organization.

Methodology

Data were collected from 278 faculty members of public sector universities of KP, Pakistan through Self Efficacy Scale adopted from Luthans et al., (2006), employees' performance scale adopted from Teseema & Soeters (2006) and WPO scale adopted from Ferris, Berry et al. (2008). The self-efficacy dimension of PC, employees' perceived performance and WPO were measured with 6 items, 5 items, and 6 items respectively.

Results

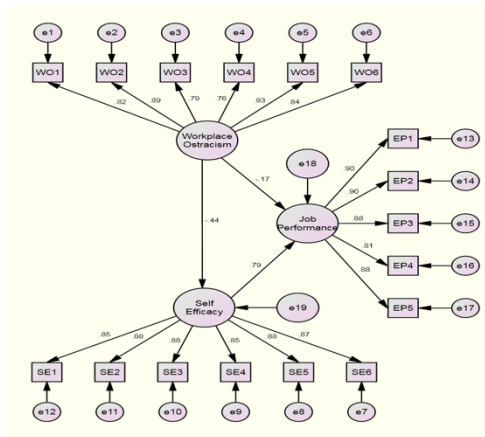
Table. Relationship between WPO, PC, and JP

	WPO	PC	JP
Workplace	1	-.523**	-.246**

Ostracism			
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******. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results revealed a significant negative relationship between WPO and PC. WPO also showed a significant relationship with organizational performance.



Model: Indirect Path from WPO to Employees’ Performance through PC

The results given in the above model showed a significant linkage between WPO, PC, and employees’ JP. PC (self-efficacy) played a partial mediation role between WPO and employees’ JP. The chi-square value for the above model was 221.970 with GFI, .89, CFI, .93, and RMSEA, .038. The relationship between WPO and JP was reduced from - 0.28 to - 0. 17 after adding PC as a mediator.

Conclusion

The core aim of this research was to know not only the correlation among WPO, PC, and JP but also to test the mediating role of PC between WPO and JP. Data were gathered from 278 employees of public sector universities. Statistical Package for Social Sciences and Amos was used to test the relationship among all variables. The results showed that WPO had a significant negative relationship with PC and JP while a significant positive relationship between PC and JP was found. Furthermore, the results of CFA confirm the partial mediation role of PC between WPO and JP. The management should pay special attention to reducing workplace ostracism to increase employees’ performance at the workplace because WPO have shown a strong association with PC and JP. Furthermore, it is indispensable for the management to take care of employees’ psychological capital for increasing their job performance.

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