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## Workplace dynamics and individual outcomes: Role of workplace ostracism in shaping inner resignation

ديناميكيات مكان العمل والنتائج الفردية: دور النبذ في مكان العمل في تشكيل الاستقالة الداخلية

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### Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of workplace ostracism on horizontal workplace violence, occupational self-efficacy, and inner resignation in the faculty members working in higher education institutions of Pakistan. In this study, a survey was held for native Urdu speakers. The back-to-back method was used for the translation of the questionnaire. The translated questionnaire was pilot tested with a small group to ensure clarity. The total of 321 responses were collected by using self-administered questionnaires and online platform. The SPSS and Smart PLS4 software were utilized for hypothesis testing. The results of the study show that respondents have low workplace ostracism, horizontal workplace violence, and inner resignation, whereas they exhibit high occupational self-efficacy. The results also indicate that workplace ostracism has the strong and positive relation with horizontal workplace violence while negative relation with occupational self-efficacy. The findings of the study show that interrelationship between workplace ostracism and inner resignation is not an isolated one but is significantly influenced by horizontal workplace violence and occupational self-efficacy.

**Keywords:** Workplace ostracism, Horizontal workplace violence, Occupational self-efficacy, Inner resignation, Higher education institutions.

### Introduction


Workplace ostracism (WO) include practices involving excluding, ignoring, or socially isolating employees by other colleagues, has emerged as a critical issue in the modern-day workplace. With people spending considerable time at work, social interactions with peers and

هدفت الدراسة إلى معرفة تأثير النبذ في مكان العمل على العنف الأفقي في مكان العمل، والكفاءة الذاتية المهنية، والاستسلام الداخلي لدى أعضاء هيئة التدريس العاملين في مؤسسات التعليم العالي في باكستان. في هذه الدراسة، تم إجراء استطلاع للناطقين باللغة الأردية. تم استخدام طريقة العودة إلى الخلف لترجمة الاستبانة. تم اختبار الاستبانة المترجمة بشكل تجريبي مع مجموعة صغيرة لضمان الوضوح. تم جمع إجمالي 321 استجابة باستخدام الاستبيانات ذاتية الإدارة، وعبر منصة الإنترنت. تم استخدام برنامج SPSS و Smart PLS4 لتحليل النتائج واختبار الفرضيات.

أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن المشاركين لديهم انخفاض في النبذ في مكان العمل، والعنف الأفقي في مكان العمل، والاستسلام الداخلي، في حين أنهم يظهرون كفاءة ذاتية مهنية عالية. كما أشارت النتائج إلى أن النبذ في مكان العمل له علاقة قوية وإيجابية بالعنف الأفقي في مكان العمل بينما له علاقة سلبية بالكفاءة الذاتية المهنية. تظهر نتائج الدراسة أن العلاقة المتبادلة بين النبذ في مكان العمل والاستسلام الداخلي ليست علاقة معزولة، ولكنها تتأثر بشكل كبير بالعنف الأفقي في مكان العمل والكفاءة الذاتية المهنية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** النبذ في مكان العمل، العنف الأفقي، الكفاءة، مؤسسات التعليم العالي، الذاتية المهنية، الاستقالة الداخلية.

superiors can significantly shape their workplace experiences. The existence of workplace ostracism (WO) has made it a growing concern for not only researchers but also for the organizations, and employees (Ferris et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2022). It can have extensive negative

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influence on employees, resulting in increased job dissatisfaction, psychological distress, decreased job performance, and organizational commitment. Beyond the level of the employees, WO can significantly impact organizations, resulting in lower morale, decreased productivity, and increased turnover rates (Ferris et al., 2015; Wu et al., 2016). As such, addressing WO is vital to promote a healthy and inclusive work environment that benefits individuals and organizations (Li et al., 2021).

As an interpersonal stressor, WO jeopardizes individuals' social resources, which are assets that can be used to solve problems or deal with challenging events as needed (Choi, 2020). Therefore, employees perceive it as a threat, when they observe a possible or actual loss of these resources. Resource loss events are responsible for most cases of depression (Hobfoll, 1989). WO significantly limits the resources that a person can keep. When ostracized people use their social resources to combat exclusion, they are less likely to replenish those resources like others, which causes their reserves to run low (Wu et al., 2021). Those who lack resources may feel stressed and exhausted since resources can help someone manage daily work activities (Zhao et al., 2022).

The impact of WO can also be observed in other organizational dimensions. When employees experience WO can lead to exhaustion and the depletion of their psychological, emotional, and material resources (Ferris et al., 2015). This passive interpersonal interaction can negatively impact employees' psychological state and behavior patterns (e.g., horizontal workplace violence), decreasing participation, self-efficacy, and emotional dependence on the organization and others (Chi & Liang, 2013). Ostracized employees may also experience negative attitudes and retaliatory behavior including burnout, emotional exhaustion, and inner resignation (IR).

The study aims to find the influence of WO on occupational self-efficacy (OSE), horizontal workplace violence (HWV), and inner resignation (IR) in the faculty members of higher education institutions in Pakistan. The purpose of the current study is to address and analyze the two significant literature gaps. The first is a population gap, with more research on WO required in the education sector as most research is only conducted in healthcare organizations. Although the issue of WO is prevailing in many organizations worldwide, research is still required to understand that how WO is

established in economically under developed country (i.e., Pakistan), where cultural and social norms may differ from those in other countries.

The second gap is a theoretical gap in understanding the relationship among WO, HWV, OSE, and IR. Workplace ostracism and its impact on HWV, OSE, and IR is a significant yet insufficiently researched area within the higher education sector, particularly in Pakistan. Most academic research has either examined these issues in isolation or primarily concentrated on explicit manifestations of interpersonal conflicts and their consequences, resulting in notable knowledge gaps regarding these phenomena' intricate and interrelated dynamics.

### **Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development**

Workplace ostracism is a destructive employee behavior, where colleagues, superiors or other employees deliberately excludes an employee from organizational activities (such as ignoring them, excluding them from meetings, or social events) (Bedi, 2021). This type of behavior goes against ethical norms and can cause significant harm to the victim, raising ethical concerns in organizations (Choi, 2020). Research shows that WO has negative impacts on psychological and work-related outcomes. WO can result in increasing job stress, burnout, and workplace violence, whereas it also decreases employee performance, self-worth, and loyalty (Wu et al., 2016; Ferris et al., 2015). Ostracism can not only negatively impact the mental and physical health of employees but can also hinder their work performance (Li et al., 2021).

#### ***Horizontal Workplace Violence***

Horizontal workplace violence (HWV) is a type of workplace violence that occurs internally and involves conflicts between groups (Al-Qadi, 2021; Jang et al., 2022). It can manifest in various behaviors, including sabotage, infighting, scapegoating, criticism, and other explicit and implicit non-physical hostilities (Jang et al., 2022). HWV also encompasses various forms of hostile conduct, such as aggression, harassment, detrimental actions, bullying, intimidation, or physical confrontations between colleagues (Hampton et al., 2019). The causes of this phenomenon are diverse, stemming from competitive environments, personal grievances, organizational culture, or stress (Blackstock et al., 2018). Studies conducted by Al-Qadi (2021) and Hampton et al., (2019) stated that the significant and extensive consequences of HWV,

as it leads to reduced job satisfaction and performance, and increased turnover intention, mental and physical health issues.

WO can act as a precursor or catalyst for HWV (MacLean et al., 2016). As employees feel marginalized, they may resort to aggressive behaviors as a coping mechanism or a means of asserting their presence (Mendonca & D'Cruz, 2021). Given its passive-aggressive nature, ostracism can be an insidious means by which colleagues inflict harm on one another (De Clercq et al., 2019). As ostracized employees are perceived as weak and having lack of social support resulting in increased employee's exposure to other forms of HWV (Shorey & Wong, 2021).

*H<sub>1</sub>: Workplace ostracism has a direct and significant impact on horizontal workplace violence.*

### **Occupational Self-Efficacy**

Occupational self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks efficiently in the workplace (Hartman & Barber, 2020). Bandura's social cognitive theory defines faculty self-efficacy as teachers' confidence in influencing student performance (Bandura, 1986). The OSE of faculty members is a major factor in enhancing their occupational effectiveness and retention (Muhangi, 2017). Pfitzner-Eden (2016) stated that faculty members having lower levels of OSE experience higher job-related stress resulting in facing difficulty in fulfilling their teaching responsibilities.

### **Horizontal Workplace Violence and Occupational Self-Efficacy**

According to research, exposure to HWV can significantly affect a person's sense of self-efficacy (Hsieh et al., 2019). Employees experiencing HWV, frequently state feelings such as helplessness, a loss of control, and doubt regarding their professional success (Shorey & Wong, 2021). Explicit and implicit consistent negative feedback, can reduce an individual confidence to carry out their work activities and to deal with their work-related issues (De Clercq et al., 2019).

Bandura's social cognitive theory (SCT) explains that experiences like mastery, vicarious, verbal, physiological, and affective influence self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). These experiences involve direct experiences of job success or failure, with success increasing self-efficacy and

failure decreasing it (Hui et al., 2023). In an organization where hard work values HWV is prominent, peers may deliberately undermine an individual's efforts, leading to perceived failures and lower occupational self-efficacy (Suggala et al., 2021).

Furthermore, HWV can produce a pervasive insecurity that makes victims more fearful of upcoming interactions and difficulties at work (Tziner et al., 2023). Because bullies frequently target those, they believe to be weak or vulnerable, this anxiety can create a vicious cycle in which the person is exposed to more violence tactics (Shorey & Wong, 2021).

*H<sub>2</sub>: Horizontal workplace violence has a direct and significant impact on occupational self-efficacy.*

### **Inner Resignation**

Inner resignation (IR) refers to declining to perform tasks or duties that extend beyond the contractual obligations to restore fairness or balance (Hartner-Tiefenthaler, 2021). This occurs when employees feel that their organization must fulfill its obligations but also perceive an inherent injustice in the employee-organization relationship (Hämmig, 2017). As employees should follow their organizational policies and procedures, it is also important for the organizations to understand their psychological processes their long-term effects. For instance, employees who experience IR may initially perform their tasks at similar levels but eventually lose interest and loyalty (Sirsawy et al., 2016).

A strong sense of OSE can act as a buffer against IR (Weissenfels et al., 2021). Employee experience less feelings of helplessness or overwhelm, when they believe that they possess the skills, knowledge, and abilities to handle their job demands (Ampofo et al., 2020). An individual with high OSE typically approaches tasks with confidence, believing that they can handle challenges and navigate workplace obstacles. This proactive and confident approach can help reduce feelings of emotional exhaustion because the individual feels equipped to manage work stressors (Pereira et al., 2021). Belief in one's abilities is positively correlated with task and colleague connection, personal achievement perception, and further reducing one of the core symptoms of IR (Lee & Liu, 2021).

*H<sub>3</sub>: Occupational self-efficacy has a direct and significant impact on inner resignation.*

***Workplace Ostracism, Horizontal Workplace Violence, and Occupational Self-Efficacy***

The dynamic between WO and experiencing HWV can greatly affect an individual's feeling of professional competence and efficacy (Mendonca & D'Cruz, 2021). Employee's experiencing ostracism, may become more inclined to aggression or discouraging behaviors from colleagues, which can further damage their self-confidence (Zhang et al., 2023). Essentially, the isolated employee not only feels alone but also faces intentional actions from peers that can cast doubt on their skills or competence. This sense of rejection can lead to negative emotions, such as self-doubt and isolation, which can be amplified by HWV, ultimately leading to a significant decrease in OSE (Suggala et al., 2021).

Research has shown that exposure to or witnessing HWV may harm employees OSE (Shorey & Wong, 2021; Hui et al., 2023). The harmful behaviors and attitudes linked with HWV can profoundly impact employees, causing them to internalize these negative experiences and thereby compromise their confidence and competence on the job (Tziner et al., 2023).

*H<sub>4</sub>: The relationship between workplace ostracism and occupational self-efficacy is mediated by horizontal workplace violence.*

***Horizontal Workplace Violence, Occupational Self-Efficacy, and Inner Resignation***

According to social cognitive theory, OSE is the employee's belief that he/she can succeed in specific work-related situations (Bandura, 1986). When an individual experiences HWV, their belief in their ability to perform their tasks effectively (OSE) may suffer (Ma et al., 2023). If HWV depletes an individual's OSE (an essential

resource), it could pave the way for the emergence of IR (Livne & Goussinsky, 2018).

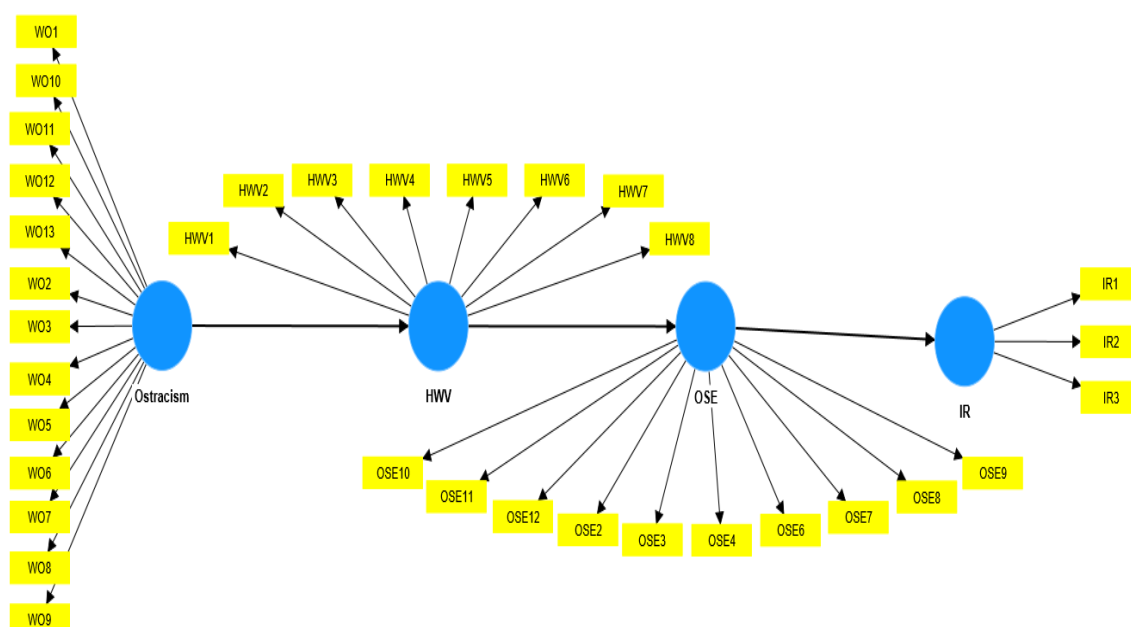
In COR theory, Hobfoll (1989) provides an additional perspective that people try to keep, protect, and build their resources, and the potential or actual loss of these important resources can cause stress. The potential impact of HWV on an individual's OSE, considered a crucial resource, may contribute to the development of IR (Xiao et al., 2022).

*H<sub>5</sub>: The relationship between horizontal workplace violence and employee's inner resignation is mediated by occupational self-efficacy.*

***Workplace Ostracism, Horizontal Workplace Violence, Occupational Self-Efficacy, and Inner Resignation***

An adverse consequence of WO is the heightened probability of HWV (MacLean, et al., 2016). According to Jahanzeb and Fatima (2018), it is suggested that individuals who experience WO may engage in these behaviors to regain lost power, react to perceived threats, or manage feelings of isolation. This self-belief can be undermined by repeated exposure to HWV, making a person feel less competent and valuable in their roles (Bandura, 1986). A diminished perception of OSE can play a significant role in fostering a sense of IR (Ampofo et al., 2020). Employees are more likely to withdraw from tasks and mentally "check out" of their duties when they doubt their abilities, which results in this IR (Chang & Lee, 2020).

*H<sub>6</sub>: The relationship between workplace ostracism and an employee's inner resignation is serially mediated by horizontal workplace violence and occupational self-efficacy.*



**Figure 1.** Theoretical Model

## Methodology

### Research Methods

This study utilizes quantitative research methodology to achieve the research objectives. The study analyzed the influence of WO on IR through a mediated mediation analysis. The researchers employed Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess and analyze their theoretical framework. This methodology enables researchers to analyze the associations between observed and latent variables while taking into consideration discrepancies in the data.

### Sample and Procedure

The data were gathered from the faculty members (i.e., Lecturer, Assistant professor, Associate professor, and Professor) of higher education institutions of Pakistan. Based on the barriers like time and cost, to acquire representative sample for the study, purposive sampling technique was utilized. The study questionnaire was rigorously tested for accuracy, equivalence, and suitability for native Urdu speakers. The back-to-back translation method was used for the questionnaire with the support of language experts to preserve the original questions' meaning.

### Sample Size

The data collection process was planned and executed quickly using an online platform and

personal administration to reach a diverse group of participants. A total of 321 complete responses were in three phases, between March 2023 to August 2023. Demographic and IR data were collected first. In the second phase, HWV and OSE were collected, and in the last phase data were collected for WO.

After conducting Cook and Leverage's outlier test yielded 309 valid responses. Women numbered 137, while the rest were men. 59.5% were Ph.D. degree holders, whereas the remaining were having Master degree in various fields. In the respondents, 33.9% were Lecturers, 37.2% were assistant professors, 20.7% were associate professors, and 0.8% were professors.

### Research Instruments

The measurement section of this study utilized a questionnaire as a tool for data collection. To explain the overall objectives of the questionnaire, the questionnaire includes statements included the purpose, benefits, and assurance of anonymity of the respondents. The questionnaire consists of five subsections, with the first subsection being demographic. The participants were asked to rate each statement on a Likert 5-point scale (1=never to 5=always). The second subsection assessed WO using the 13-items scale developed by Ferris et al., (2015). The third subsection assessed OSE of the faculty members by using the 12-item scale developed by Caprara et al., (2003). Two items were removed from the OSE analysis because of low factor loading (value < 0.4). The fourth



subsection assessed HWV, and the 08-item scale was developed by Einarsen et al., (2003). The fifth subsection assessed employee IR using three items scale developed by Schmitz et al., (2002).

## Result Analysis

### Testing Descriptive Statistics

**Table 1.**  
Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation Analysis

Descriptive Statistics			Pearson Correlation Analysis			
Construct	Mean	S. D	WO	HWV	OSE	IR
Age	4.241	1.154				
Experience	2.647	1.241				
Education	1.672	0.582				
Employment Status	3.547	0.353				
WO	1.700	0.451	1			
HWV	1.550	0.338	0.671**	1		
OSE	4.371	0.267	-0.400**	-.514**	1	
IR	1.613	0.382	.470**	.556**	-.485**	1

Note 1: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note 2: Workplace Ostracism (WO); Horizontal Workplace Violence (HWV); Occupational Self-Efficacy (OSE); Inner Resignation (IR)

### Assessment of Reflective Measurements

The researchers employed the method Dijkstra and Henseler (2015) recommended to evaluate the reliability and validity of the reflective constructs. Overall, the measurement tools used in this study proved reliable, valid, and relevant for measuring the constructs of interest in the study. The Cronbach's alpha, rho-a, composite reliability, and AVE values, respectively, for the WO (0.945, 0.946, 0.952, 0.604), HWV (0.844,

0.845, 0.880, 0.580), OSE (0.722, 0.731, 0.783, 0.553), and IR (0.770, 0.775, 0.821, 0.564) were found to be in an acceptable range. This suggests that the constructs are reliable and that the items measure the same underlying construct. All constructs have loadings between 0.623 and 0.816, meeting the 0.40 or higher recommended criteria. Variance inflation factor assessed multicollinearity. VIF values (1.169–2.156) are below threshold 3 (Table 2).

**Table 2.**  
Assessment of Reflective Measurement

Construct	Items	Type	Loading	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE	VIF
Workplace Ostracism	WO 1 - WO 13	Reflective	0.720 - 0.816	0.945	0.946	0.952	0.604	1.169 - 2.156
Horizontal Workplace Violence	HWV 1 - HWV 8	Reflective	0.623 - 0.762	0.844	0.845	0.880	0.580	1.378 - 1.877
Occupational Self-Efficacy	OSE 2 -4 & 6 -12	Reflective	0.713 - 0.794	0.722	0.731	0.783	0.553	1.210 - 1.753
Inner Resignation	IR 1-3	Reflective	0.704 - 0.741	0.770	0.775	0.821	0.564	1.247 - 1.299

Note: CA= Cronbach Alpha; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; VIF = Variance Inflation Factor; BCCI = Bias Corrected Confidence Interval

### Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity of the study constructs (i.e., WO, HWV, OSE, and IR) was evaluated based on two criteria. One of them was the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, which facilitated the comparison of correlations between constructs. According to Henseler et al., (2015), constructs were considered non-unique if their values exceeded 0.90. Furthermore, the Fornell-Larcker criterion involves comparing the

variance explained by each construct with its correlation with other constructs. The diagonal numbers in bold indicate the amount of variance explained by each construct, while the remaining numbers represent the correlation between constructs. The unique constructs exhibited higher variance than their correlation (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 3 demonstrates the distinctiveness and uniqueness of each construct, as evidenced by the higher variance compared to the correlation.

**Table 3.**  
*Discriminant Analysis (HTMT and Fornell-Larcker Criterion)*

Hetro-Trait Mono-Trait (HTMT) Criterion					Fornell-Larcker Criterion			
	Ostracism	HWV	OSE	IR	Ostracism	HWV	OSE	IR
<b>Ostracism</b>					<b>0.777</b>			
<b>HWV</b>	0.707				0.712	<b>0.762</b>		
<b>OSE</b>	0.587	0.750			-0.588	-0.693	<b>0.743</b>	
<b>IR</b>	0.735	0.830	0.768		0.594	0.627	-0.637	<b>0.751</b>

*Note 1: The bold numbers in diagonal in Fornell- Larcker section are the square root of AVE of each construct, and other numbers are correlations between constructs*  
*Note 2: Horizontal Workplace Violence (HWV); Occupational Self-Efficacy (OSE); Inner Resignation (IR)*

### Model Evaluation

Table 4 reveals that all variables have SRMR values of 0.079 and NFI values of 0.91, indicating that the model fits the empirical data accurately. In addition, the Q2Predict values for HWV (0.655) and OSE (0.358) indicate high predictive relevance with large effect sizes. In contrast, the Q2Predict value for IR (0.286)

indicates high predictive relevance with medium effect sizes (Henseler et al., 2015). These Q2Predict values exceed the recommended minimum threshold of 0.00 and demonstrate the model's strong predictive ability for each variable. In addition, the Q2 effect sizes for HWV, OSE, and IR indicate that these variables substantially influence the endogenous variable (WO).

**Table 4.**  
*Model Evaluation*

	SRMR	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>adj</sub>	NFI	Q <sup>2</sup> <sub>predict</sub>	Q <sup>2</sup> Effect
<b>WO</b>					
<b>HWV</b>	0.079	0.659	0.915	0.655	Large
<b>OSE</b>		0.492		0.358	Large
<b>IR</b>		0.404		0.286	Medium

*Note: SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual); NFI (Normed Fit Index); Q<sup>2</sup><sub>Predict</sub> for Predictive Relevance*

### Hypothesis Testing

The results of the hypothesis evaluation are presented in Table 5 and Figure 2. The table provides the results of a path analysis examining

the relationships between WO, HWV, OSE, and IR. The results suggest that all the proposed hypotheses are supported, with significant direct or indirect effects between the variables.

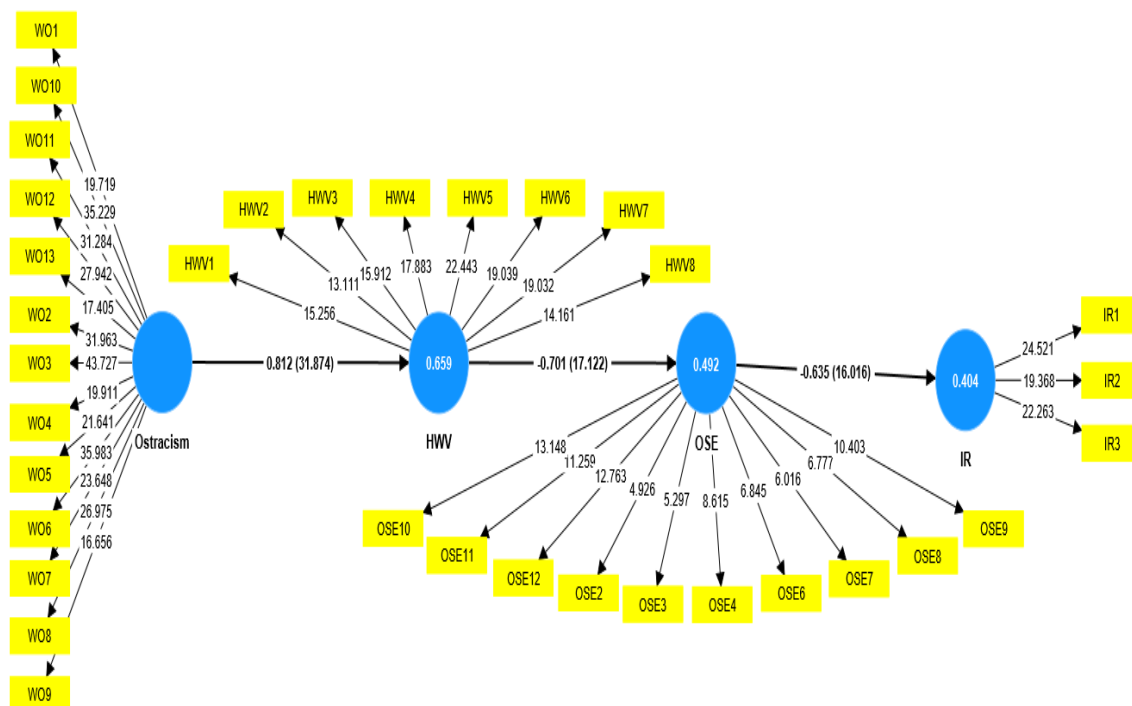
**Table 5.**  
*Results of Hypothesis Testing*

Hypothesis	Direct / Indirect Effects	Path Coefficient	T statistics	P values	Bias	BCCI		Hypothesis Support
						2.50%	97.50%	
H <sub>1</sub>	WO -> HWV	0.812	31.874	0.000	0.001	0.759	0.857	Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	HWV -> OSE	-0.701	17.122	0.000	-0.002	-0.759	-0.594	Supported
H <sub>3</sub>	OSE -> IR	-0.635	16.016	0.000	-0.004	-0.702	-0.546	Supported
H <sub>4</sub>	WO -> HWV -> OSE	-0.569	12.409	0.000	-0.001	-0.652	-0.474	Supported
H <sub>5</sub>	HWV -> OSE -> IR	0.446	9.211	0.000	0.003	0.339	0.532	Supported
H <sub>6</sub>	WO -> HWV -> OSE -> IR	0.362	7.756	0.000	0.003	0.267	0.448	Supported

Note: Workplace Ostracism (WO); Horizontal Workplace Violence (HWV); Occupational Self-Efficacy (OSE); Inner Resignation (IR); Bias Corrected Confidence Interval (BCCI)

Specifically, WO was found to have a significant positive direct effect on HWV ( $\beta = 0.812$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ,  $t = 31.874$ ), supporting H<sub>1</sub>. HWV, conversely, has a significant negative direct effect on OSE ( $\beta = -0.701$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ,  $t = 17.122$ ), thus supporting H<sub>2</sub>. In addition, a significant negative direct effect of OSE on IR was observed ( $\beta = -0.635$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ,  $t = 16.016$ ), supporting hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>. The product coefficient approach (Indirect effect) was used to evaluate the significance of indirect effects using bias-corrected confidence intervals (BCCI) (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Furthermore, the analysis found that the indirect effects of WO on OSE through HWV [ $\beta = -0.569$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ,  $t =$

12.409, BCCI = (-0.625, -0.474)], and HWV on IR through OSE [ $\beta = 0.446$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ,  $t = 9.211$ , BCCI = (0.339, 0.532)] were also significant, indicating that these variables partially mediate the relationship between WO and IR. These results support hypotheses H<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>5</sub>. The results indicate that the impact of WO on IR is sequentially mediated through HWV and OSE [ $\beta = 0.362$ ,  $p < 0.000$ , BCCI = (0.267, 0.448)], thereby proving H<sub>6</sub>. Nevertheless, as the WO rises, the projected direct relationship's direction shifts, indicating that as IR rises, so do the levels of HWV and consequential decrease in the levels of OSE. This demonstrates the significance of the impact of IR on sequential mediation.



**Figure 2.** Results: Assessment of Structural Model



## Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the relationship among WO, HWV, OSE, and IR. The study employed a path analysis approach to examine the direct effects of these variables and utilized the product coefficient approach to assess potential mediating effects.

Firstly, the results indicate that WO has a significant positive direct effect on IR. This finding suggests that when employees experience WO, their intention to remain with the organization diminishes. WO refers to the act of excluding or isolating individuals in the workplace, leading to feelings of exclusion and reduced belongingness. The positive direct effect implies that WO positively impacts IR, potentially leading to higher turnover rates.

Secondly, the study reveals a significant positive direct effect of WO on HWV. The findings suggest that employees experiencing WO are more likely to involve in activities that are harmful to the organization. WO can elicit negative emotional responses, such as resentment or frustration, which may manifest as HWV. These behaviors can include intentionally underperforming, spreading rumors, or engaging in acts of sabotage. The positive direct effect highlights the role of WO in fostering HWV.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate a significant negative direct effect of WO on OSE. This suggests that individuals who experience work ostracism may develop lower levels of OSE. WO may result in reducing employee's self-efficacy about themselves and their occupation. The negative direct effect indicates that work ostracism has a detrimental impact on employees' OSE.

The study also examined the indirect effects of WO on IR through the mediating variables of HWV and OSE. The analysis revealed that these indirect effects were also significant. Specifically, both HWV and OSE partially mediated the relationship between WO and IR. These findings suggest that WO not only directly affects IR but also exerts its influence indirectly through the mediating variables of HWV and OSE. Employees who experience work ostracism may be more inclined to engage in HWV and develop negative OSE, which can contribute to their emotional exhaustion and intention to leave the organization.

## Conclusion

The research findings strongly suggest that WO profoundly impacts the development of IR among faculty members in HEIs in Pakistan. It is important to note that this connection is not an isolated one but is significantly influenced by the occurrence of HWV, which, in turn, undermines OSE. It is essential to implement thorough interventions that specifically address ostracism and its detrimental effects due to the complex interplay of these factors. Such interventions are required to promote the well-being and participation of faculty members in the academic setting of Pakistan's HEIs.

## Implications

The cultural, social, and organizational differences in Pakistan's HEIs give rise to unique implications for the relationships within these institutions. It is imperative to examine the issue of ostracism and its consequences to foster a cooperative academic atmosphere within HEIs in Pakistan. WO can have a profound effect on a faculty member's sense of belonging and motivation in Pakistan's academic setting. This is particularly concerning in an environment that values collaboration, collective research endeavors, and teaching rooted in community engagement. Ostracism is associated with a psychological state known as role disengagement, wherein individuals disengage from their roles despite outwardly appearing engaged (Kašpárková et al., 2018).

When faculty members feel excluded, they may become more susceptible to peer aggression or engage in such behaviors themselves to assert their social standing (Haldorai et al., 2020). Acts of violence, including verbal confrontations, professional sabotage, and the deliberate withholding of vital information, can worsen the isolation and potential for interpersonal conflict.

Consistent exclusion of faculty members can decrease their professional self-assurance. The direct consequence of HWV is a decrease in self-efficacy, which can be further diminished by WO. Improving OSE can mitigate the adverse psychological consequences experienced by faculty members due to exclusion, thereby safeguarding their professional productivity and well-being.

To promote a dynamic academic environment within HEIs in Pakistan, it is essential to acknowledge and address WO and its associated consequences. The convergence of WO, HWV,

and diminished OSE has the potential to generate a pervasive state of interpersonal conflict within the academic faculty. This can result in a decrease in research quality, teaching standards, student mentorship, and academic productivity. These problems can ultimately result in faculty turnover, decreased employee engagement, and negatively impact the institution's reputation. For the success and wellbeing of the faculty members and HEIs, it is essential to address issues like WO, HWV, OSE, and IR.

### **Future Directions and Limitations**

It is imperative to comprehend the dynamics of WO in specialized contexts, particularly in HEIs in Pakistan. Future research should adopt a hybrid methodology that explores mechanisms across diverse cultural contexts to gain a deeper understanding. Investigating the comparable dynamics among administrative staff, graduate assistants, and even postgraduate students who may assume roles like those found in academic settings would be interesting. Longitudinal research can provide insight into WO's cyclical nature and long-term consequences. Future studies might examine alternative mediators or moderators like social support or organizational justice and emotional exhaustion as a mediator. Understanding these intricate interactions can lead to a more comprehensive perspective. Finally, during and post COVID-19 pandemic, online teaching methods (through Blackboard, Team, and ZOOM) has increased, research in the area of virtual ostracism and its impact on effective learning environment or faculty efficiency is essential.

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