

The Reasons for and Results of Ostracism at Schools and Recommendations for Solutions through Teacher Experiences

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Abstract

As in other organizations, there is ostracism also in educational organizations. Apart from the individual consequences of being ostracized, there are also undesirable organizational consequences. Considering the potential of educational organizations to transform individuals, the effect of ostracism on teachers becomes particularly important. The purpose of the study was to examine the reasons for and results of the ostracism that teachers face at schools by the school principals, and the recommendations for solutions to prevent ostracism. The study group of the study, which was structured with the phenomenology design, consisted of 12 elementary and middle primary school teachers who had personal experience with ostracism. The data collected through interviews were analyzed with content analysis. The study revealed that teachers were exposed to ostracism for political, social and/or individual reasons. Ostracized teachers experienced psychological and organizational problems. The teachers stated that preventing ostracism in schools would be possible with a more democratic and fairer organizational culture.

Keywords: Ostracism in the Workplace, School Administrator, Organizational Democracy, Organizational Culture, K-12 Teacher

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INTRODUCTION

In social life, individuals experience behaviors such as being ignored, being discounted, being neglected and not being taken seriously. All such behaviors exposed can be called exclusion. However, this concept is addressed in the literature with the concepts of “exclusion”, “rejection” and “ostracism”. For example, Williams (2007) tried to define the concept of ostracism with making semantic and psychological distinctions after associating the concept of ostracism with rejection and social exclusion. In this context, exclusion means being ignored, rejection means not wanting to interact with the individual or group, and social exclusion means isolation and showing discontent openly and (Williams, 2007; Williams & Zadro, 2005). According to Leary (2001), ostracism can manifest itself in different forms such as ignoring, direct rejection, and not showing affection.

Scott (2007) stated that experimental studies on social ostracism focused on social exclusion, ignoring and isolation. According to Scott (2007), ostracism is a special form of social ostracism and has four distinctive features. These are (1) visibility (physical, social, cyber, i.e., email or internet-based), (2) motive (not ostracism, role prescribed, punitive, defensive, oblivious), (3) quantity (low to high), and (4) clarity (low to high). One or more of these taxonomic features often establishes the basis of much of social ostracism’s empirical analysis, which has been conducted predominantly employing experimental design. Williams (2001) defined “ostracism as any act or acts of ignoring or excluding of an individual or groups by an individual or groups”.

Ostracism in the workplace refers to an individual or group being ignored, shunned or rejected by another individual or group (Hitlan, Clifton, & De Soto, 2006). In addition, ostracism in the workplace is also observed in cyber space today, when flexible remote working has become widespread. In this context, Harvey, Moeller, Kiessling, & Dabicit (2018) discussed ostracism in the workplace under three categories, namely physical, psychological and cyber. Physical ostracism includes actions such as avoidance, isolation, and not speaking. Psychological exclusion, which has a broader meaning, includes actions such as being left alone, not being talked to, and actions that cause more severe psychological pain such as not making eye contact, rejection, and being ignored. Cyber ostracism refers to not being included in the e-mail list and in the conversation. For example, in a study conducted with a game in which more than five hundred managers/employees participated in a virtual environment, those who were ostracized experienced negative emotions, just as in face-to-face communication. Again, in studies examining the negative pain experience caused by physical and psychological ostracism in individuals together, psychological ostracism led to more damage to individuals than physical ostracism. As a result, all three forms of ostracism psychologically hurt individuals (Harvey et al., 2018).

As another terms, the negativities caused by exclusion to individuals can be addressed within organizational bullying. However, while negative behaviors such as bullying and mobbing describe an interaction, there is no interaction in ostracism (Robinson, O’Reilly, & Wang, 2013; Harvey et al., 2018). Therefore, it can be said that the absence of interaction is the main distinction point of ostracism.

Ostracism in the workplace is a common experience. For example, in a study conducted by O’Reilly (2015), 70% of the employees stated that they were exposed to ostracism in the past. Again, in a study conducted by the Irish government on 5,200 employees in 2001, 35% of the employees expressed that they were exposed to bullying including exclusionary behavior in the last six months of the study (cited in Hitlan et al., 2006). In a study conducted by Hitlan et al., (2006) with the participation of 5000 people, 13% of the participants stated that they were exposed to ostracism in the last six months of the study. Furthermore, in a study conducted with 2000 managers/employees in the USA, 67% of the participants stated that they did not talk to someone else deliberately, and 75% stated that they were exposed to such a behavior at least once (cited in Harvey et al., 2018). All these data support the idea that organizational ostracism is common.

Robinson et al., (2013) defined the reasons for ostracism in the workplace in two ways, purposeful and nonpurposeful. According to researchers, sometimes nonpurposeful ostracism can occur unintentionally, like forgetting to invite to an invitation. Or, in some organizations, there may be unspoken norms about which individuals should be ignored or included in the group. Behaviors such as knowing who to greet verbally, knowing who will be greeted with a smile or who will be ignored while walking through the corridor can be given as examples to these behaviors. When all parties know and understand these norms, individuals will not perceive the situations they encounter as ostracism. The researchers showed exclusion in the workplace as follows (Robinson et al., 2013, 211).

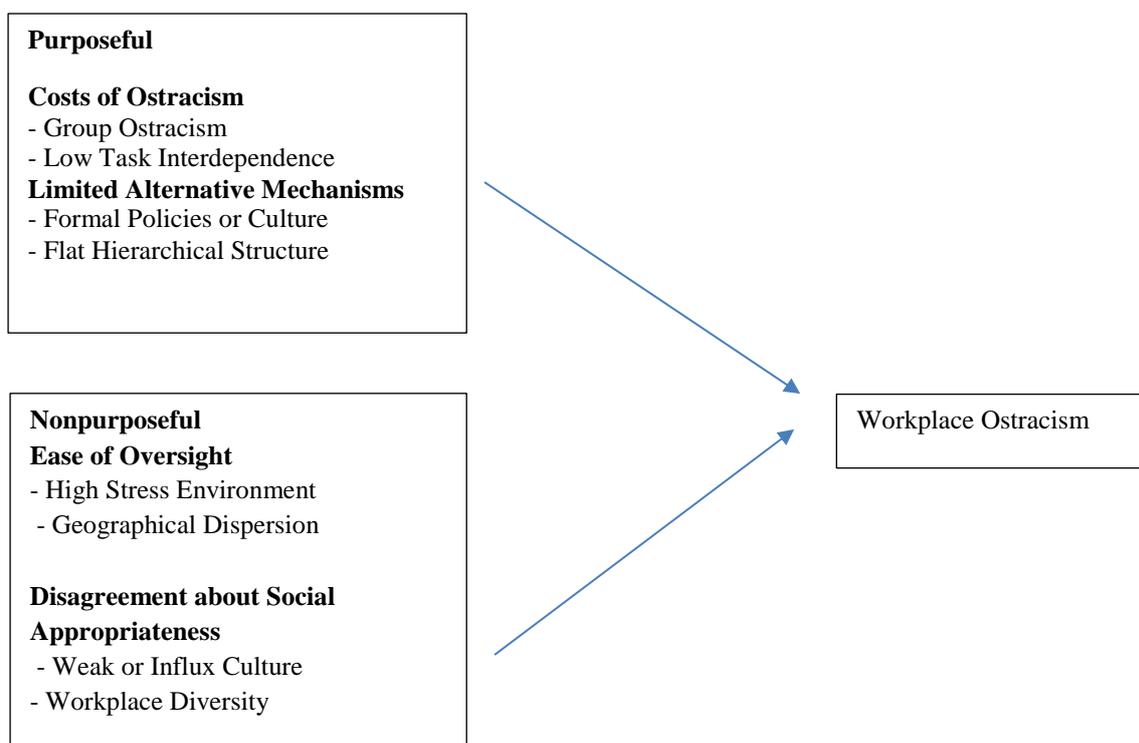


Figure 1 Organizational Antecedents of Workplace Ostracism

As the name suggests, purposeful ostracism is done with the intent to hurt, injure, and punish the other person. This kind of ostracism is known to both the ostracized and the ostracizer. In this ostracism, the ostracized individual withdraws himself or herself, does not interact, does not help the organization in many issues, and these reactions are in line with the goal of the ostracizer (Robinson et al., 2013).

Individuals react differently when faced with ostracism. According to Fiset (2017), individual responses to organizational ostracism are associated with contextual factors inside and outside the organization. Harvey et al. (2018) argued that reactions to ostracism can be explained by individuals' self-esteem, sensitivity to rejection, and attachment. Accordingly, it can be said that those with avoidant attachment style will move away from the ostracizing group compared to those with anxious attachment. Again, according to Harvey et al. (2018), those with high self-esteem tend to maintain their relationship with the ostracizing group, while those with low self-esteem prefer to stay away from the group.

Robinson et al. (2013) explained the consequences of ostracism with a holistic model. According to this model, ostracism has pragmatic and psychological consequences. The distinction between pragmatic impact and psychological impact of ostracism is that ostracism's pragmatic impact may not even be recognized as ostracism by ostracized individuals, whereas individuals perceive their exclusion as ostracism in the psychological impact. Robinson et al. (2013) who stated that pragmatic impacts of ostracism are not sufficiently taken into account by different researchers, pointed to the

pragmatic impact of it. For them, pragmatic impact refers to the loss of resources, information and relationships resulting from dependence on others. If this impact, which is not recognized much in contrast to the psychological impact, is ignored, the negativities in the target, information and resource cycle in the organization will continue. One of the consequences of the pragmatic effect is the loss of missed information and advices, the control of information, work relationships and functional support needed to get the job done. Second, negative behaviors such as harassment and maltreatment create pragmatic impact by decreasing social interaction as well as losing resources. In other words, based on the determination of the researchers, it can be said that the individual has a problem in performing his or her job in the pragmatic impact because ostracism gets in the way of information flow and establishing communication needed to get the job done. Psychological impacts of ostracism include withdrawal, antisocial behavior, engagement-oriented or prosocial behavior in individuals. These responses lead to negative and positive behaviors in the organization. Negative behaviors refer to individuals withdrawing from work, or individuals exhibiting unusual behaviors. Positive behaviors refer to ostracized individuals working harder to be included in the group again and their efforts to adapt to the organization (Robinson et al., 2013).

In short, the impact of ostracism on the organization and the individual is apparent. Organizational ostracism may lead to negativities particularly such as loss of productivity in the organization and deterioration of organizational culture. In addition, ostracism in the workplace brings about consequences such as decrease in the work efficiency of individuals, and not developing and maintaining reputation (Hitlan et al., 2006). On the other hand, ostracism in the workplace can threaten the psychological health of the individual. Studies showed that ostracism has negative consequences like stress, social anxiety, depression, anger, wounding emotion, and loneliness (Hitlan et al., 2006; Baumeister & Tice, 1990; Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Strucke, 2001; Ferris, Berry & Lian, 2008; Kaya, Ataman & Aydın, 2017).

Considering the weight of the organizational and psychological consequences of ostracism in the workplace, what can be done to reduce and prevent ostracism also gains importance. Researchers argued that developing an organizational culture which embraces inclusiveness and transparency, and an organizational culture in which the employee trusts the manager is possible with managers who know the negativity of ostracism (Whitener; Brodt; Korsgaard & Werner, 1998). Based on this argument, the organizational culture in question is expected to be realized through education principals. Educational institutions are environments where certain behavioral patterns are determined by rules and where things are carried out with a certain internal mechanism, and that have legitimacy in society. School principals' duty in general and their duty in particular is to bring functionality to this internal mechanism with predetermined rules. In other words, school principals are responsible for the implementation of educational decisions taken by higher authorities. Undoubtedly, schools show the distinctive characteristics of the society in which they exist. However, schools are environments where change and transformation are realized. Schools are not only environments where students gain competence, but also a learning environment for teachers, principals and even parents. If there is a restriction on or pressure against actions such as free, participatory, questioning, critical and self-expression in a learning environment, there can be no transformation in such an environment.

In spite of the schools' expectations for a much freer educational environment, there are discriminatory situations in schools as in other organizations. For example, in a study, teachers stated that they were subjected to discrimination by school principals due to sex, age, religion, political opinion, relations with administration, race and ethnic origin, performance and personality traits (Polat & Hicyilmaz, 2017). Similarly, in their study, Eickholt & Goodboy (2017) determined that approximately 26% of teachers were "seldom" exposed to incidents of ostracism at school, 7% of them were "sometimes" exposed, 2% of them were "frequently" exposed, and 1% of them were "often" exposed.

While there are studies conducted on social ostracism's effect on students in Turkey, there are only limited number of studies on teachers (Abaslı, 2018; Dönmez & Mete, 2019; Erdemli & Kurum,

2019; Halis &Demirel, 2016; Yılmaz, 2018) has been the subject. These studies examining teachers determined that teachers' perception of ostracism is low (Abaslı, 2018; Dönmez & Mete, 2019; Yılmaz, 2018). Although these data are positive, the study conducted by Erdemli & Kurum (2019) with school principals and teachers concluded that the participants experienced ostracism in schools due to being a member of a different union, having different political views, differences in belief, seniority, branch and sex. Having only limited number of studies on the subject in the literature and the ostracism that teachers are exposed to by school principals not being addressed in studies increase the importance of the subject. Starting from this importance, the present study aimed to examine the reasons for and results of the ostracism faced by teachers from their school principals and the recommendations for ostracism at schools.

METHOD

Study Design

The in-depth examination of the ostracism experienced by teachers at schools through teacher experiences required the study to be designed with phenomenology. Phenomenology design focuses on phenomena that are known but that we do not have a detailed understanding of. These phenomena can take different forms such as experience, perception, orientation and case. In other words, phenomenology focuses on explaining the meanings individuals ascribe to phenomenon or phenomena (Patton, 1990; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Here, qualitative studies seek answers to the questions of "why" and "how" in addition to the question of "what" (Punch, 2014, 16-17). From this point of view, benefitting from qualitative inquiry, the phenomenon that is focused on in the study process is the reasons teachers are exposed to ostracism at schools, the results of this ostracism and recommendation for solutions for ostracism.

Study Group

The study group consists of 12 elementary and middle school teachers who were working in public schools in Karadeniz Ereğli district of Zonguldak during the 2019-2020 academic year. In phenomenological research, the researcher needs individuals from a specific group who have sufficient knowledge and experience about the phenomenon that he or she will study in depth (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). For this reason, criteria sampling technique and snowball sampling technique, two of the purposeful sampling methods, were used as the basis for determining the study group. The criterion determined in the study was that the teachers participating in the study "had been exposed to ostracism by the school principals at the school they were working at" and "had been working at the same school for at least one year".

Teachers participating in the study were coded as T1, T2, T12, and their institution and real identities were not presented in the study. General information about the teachers participating in the study is given in Table 1.

Table 1 Information Regarding Teachers

Participant	Sex	Professional Seniority	Working Time (year)	Branch	Educational Status
T1	Female	22	2	English	Master Degree
T2	Female	10	4	English	Bachelor Degree
T3	Male	18	3	Science and Technology	Bachelor Degree
T4	Female	18	5	Math	Bachelor Degree
T5	Male	11	2	Visual Arts	Bachelor Degree
T6	Male	4	2	Music	Master Degree
T7	Female	17	11	Turkish	Master Degree
T8	Female	12	5	Classroom	Bachelor Degree
T9	Male	14	6	Turkish	Bachelor Degree
T10	Female	5	2	Guidance	Bachelor Degree
T11	Female	9	3	Classroom	Bachelor Degree
T12	Male	13	2	Math	Bachelor Degree

Data Collection Tool

The study data were collected with a structured interview form. While developing the interview form, the related literature was reviewed, and the related concepts were determined. The determined concepts were associated with the purpose of the study, and a question draft was developed and presented for expert opinion for the final form. In the interview form, the participants were asked about “the types of ostracism they were exposed to”, “the reasons for being ostracized”, “the effects of ostracism” and “recommendations for solutions to prevent ostracism”. In addition, the personal information of the participants (education status, school type worked, professional seniority and administration seniority) was included in the interview form.

Data Collection

The data were collected by the researcher between 06.05.2020 and 30.05.2020. During the aforementioned dates, face-to-face interviews were limited to only three teachers due to the COVID_19 pandemic, and interviews with the other nine participants were conducted via Zoom. As it is known, internet interview is also listed among the data collection options (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998, Akt: Creswell, 2016). After the first interview was conducted with the first teacher the researcher knew, the other participant, who was believed to be ostracized, was reached with the name and contact information received from the first participant, and was included in the study following the same method. Before the interviews, a preliminary interview was held with the teachers, and interviews were held on the dates and times determined on a voluntary basis. The interviews were recorded on the voice recorder as well as on the Zoom program. During the interviews, the researcher avoided directing the participants, and by asking different questions that were not related to the subject before the interviews, the researcher also tried to create a preparatory environment for the interview. The interviews lasted 30-45 minutes. After the records were transcribed, the transcriptions were sent to the relevant participant via e-mail. The purpose of following this path was to prevent data loss and to verify the statements of the participants.

Data Analysis

A repeatable and valid analysis technique used to make meaningful inferences about the content, content analysis technique was employed in data analysis. In content analysis designed with phenomenology, there is an effort to conceptualize the data and reveal the themes that can define the phenomenon. The results reached are presented in a descriptive narrative, and direct quotations are frequently included. In addition, the findings are explained and interpreted within the framework of the emerging themes and patterns (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011, 75). Content analysis is known for focusing on the subject or the context as a method, emphasizing the similarities and differences within the categories or codes, and addressing both explicit and hidden content within the text (Kızıltepe, 2017, 254-255). In the data analysis, the steps suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994), “data reduction”, “data display” and “conclusion drawing/verification” was employed respectively (Baltacı, 2017). For this purpose, first all the interview transcripts were read several times, then the answers to each question were read separately, and notes were taken on them to determine the codes, sub- and main-themes. Second, the similarities and differences in the data were determined, and the data were combined into a whole. At the last stage, participants’ statements were included. Tables were used for easier understanding of the data, and codes, themes and sub-themes were placed in the tables.

Reliability and Validity Works

Expert opinions were taken to increase the content validity of the interview form developed in the study. Within the framework of these opinions, necessary changes were made in the interview questions. Again, the codes and themes determined to increase validity were developed with two experts (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). For validity and reliability works in qualitative research, it is necessary to clearly define the characteristics of the participants, to explain the study data collection

and analysis process in detail, and to support the findings with direct quotations from the participants' views (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Accordingly, the personal information of the individuals forming the study group was clearly presented. In addition, data collection, analysis process and interpretation of the findings are explained in detail. Again, the researcher received help from a colleague for reliability. The reliability percentage was calculated with the Miles & Huberman (1994) formula (Reliability Percentage = Agreement / (Agreement + Disagreement) x 100). According to the formula, the result (48/59x100=81.35%), and this result was deemed sufficient to continue the analysis.

RESULTS

The findings obtained in the study are presented separately according to the reasons for ostracism, ostracism types, results of ostracism and recommendations for solutions to prevent ostracism.

The themes, sub-themes and statements developed based on the reasons for ostracism faced by the participating teachers at school are given in Table 5.

Table 2 Reasons Teachers are Exposed to Ostracism at School

Category/Theme	Sub-Themes	Statements
	Political (Different union / political view)	The reason why I was ostracized is because of my political and union choices (T9) I was ostracized because my school principle was the union leader and I was not a member and had different views (T7)
Reasons for Ostracism	Social (Not having the same common values)	I am not from the same group, I am marginal (T6). Whatever it is, I tell the truth everywhere, I criticize (T3) Being younger than the others (T10)
	Individual (Being critical, age)	

As can be seen from Table 5, teachers stated that they were exposed to ostracism for political, social and individual reasons. According to teachers, the political reasons that they believe are the causes of ostracism are having different political views and being member of different unions. Social reasons refer to not sharing the same values with the group. Individual reasons were given as being critical and their age.

The themes, sub-themes and statements developed based on the types of ostracism that teachers are exposed to in their schools are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Types of ostracism Teachers Experience at School

Category/Theme	Sub-Themes	Statements
	Physical (Not being invited to common joint activities, others staying away, not getting answers to questions)	I am not getting invited to activities outside the school not related to school (T2) I can't get answers to my questions most of the time (T8)
Types of Ostracism	Psychological (Being threatened with an investigation, unjust workload)	They constantly imply that I may get punished (T4) They give me more hours than the other teacher in my branch group (T3) They don't say hi even if I say hi to them (T7)
	Cyber (Being taken out of cyber groups)	With the direction of the principle, they began to sign out from the Whatsapp group one by one. When I asked my friend, she told me that they switched to Telegram. I wasn't included in the new Telegram group, and the Whatsapp group was terminated. So, our communication was cut (T1)

As can be seen from Table 3, teachers stated that they were exposed to physical, psychological and cyber ostracism. Physical ostracism took the forms of not being invited to common joint activities, others staying away, and not getting answers to questions. Psychological ostracism took the forms of not being greeted, being threatened with an investigation, unjust workload, and discriminatory practices, while cyber ostracism was done by taking the person out of the cyber groups.

The themes, sub-themes and statements developed based on the results of ostracism at school are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Results of Ostracism at School

Category/Theme	Sub-Themes	Statements
Results of Ostracism	Psychological (Sadness/stress/Psychometric disorders/ feeling of loneliness/Retiring into one's shell)	When you are not accepted as you are, you retire to your own shell, and the gap grows even more. The feeling of loneliness starts to develop (T1) I started to get sick in my stomach (T5)
	Social (Not being able to communicate/Superficial communication)	I usually don't communicate. I don't go to places that have teachers. I have only one friend that I spent time with. I ask my questions to her (T2)
	Organizational (Loss of motivation, being satisfied with low performance)	I lost the excitement at my job, what else can you ask for? (T11) I do my job minimally, I am not interested in other things at all (T2)
	Individual (Fighting for justice)	I should also mention here that this situation and the problems faced by all my friends who experienced ostracism at school pushed me to fight (T7)

As can be seen in Table 4, teachers stated that they experienced the psychological, social, organizational and individual results of ostracism. Psychological consequences of ostracism took the form of sadness/stress, loneliness, and psychosomatic disorders. Social consequences were non-communication or superficial communication. While organizational results of ostracism were loss of motivation and unwillingness to work, individual result of ostracism was fighting for justice.

The themes, sub-themes and statements developed based on solutions recommended for ostracism at school are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Solutions for Ostracism at School

Category/Theme	Sub-Themes	Statements
Solutions Recommended for Ostracism	Organizational communication (Direct communication, open communication)	In order to avoid this, the teacher should be able to talk to the school principal. Can the principal stop communicating with the teacher? (T9) Keeping the communication channels open and using equal communication language (T12).
	Organizational democracy/justice (The use of legal remedies, Equal/just workload, Tolerance for differences)	Understanding, being tolerant, accepting the other person as they are, division of labor and equal distribution of tasks can be effective in solving problems (T6). We should be able to tell the wrongdoing right away (T1). It can be prevented by establishing fairer systems. This can be achieved by applying more democratic and equal rules (T8).

As can be seen from Table 8, teachers believed that solutions will be found for ostracism through organizational communication and organizational democracy/justice. Organizational culture

includes trust and open communication. Organizational democracy, on the other hand, includes fair distribution of workload, tolerance of differences and the use of remedial mechanisms.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In the study, it was aimed to reveal the reasons for and results of the ostracism that teachers face at school, and the recommendations for solutions for ostracism. The study determined that teachers are exposed to ostracism at school.

Teachers explained the reasons for the ostracism they face at school as political, social and individual. The studies conducted also showed results supporting these findings. Erdemli and Kurum (2019) concluded in their study that teachers are exposed to ostracism mostly due to their different political views. The study of Polat and Hiçyılmaz (2017) revealed that teachers are discriminated by their school principals due to sex, age, religion, political view, relations with administration, race and ethnic origin, performance and personality traits. Among these, political reasons are explained by being members of different unions than the school principals. In some societies, different membership in unions may not have a very significant effect but has a very significant effect in Turkey. Even in the appointment of school principals, unions close to the political administration can step in. Studies conducted on the subject (Akcan, Polat, & Ölçüm, 2017; Özaydın & Han, 2014) confirmed this determination.

Hofstede (1993; 2001) defines the dimension of “power distance” in his Cultural Dimensions Theory as the degree of inequality of the power distribution between individuals. In societies with a high-power distance, the more centralized structure of organizations is considered normal. In addition, in organizations with employees with high perception of power distance, status is determined and promotion opportunities are less. Therefore, individuals with lower power are expected to follow different methods in order to gain strength (Leslie & Gelfand, 2012). In a country like Turkey where power distance is high, public organizations have a centralized structure. Thus, the effect of politics on schools is not considered an odd outcome. Furthermore, it will not be considered odd for individuals to engage unions close to the government and to gather under the umbrella of the unions in order to gain a little more power. As such, meeting along the same political line instead of merit may increase the likelihood of being ostracized for teachers who do not share the same line. Indeed, this situation which can be defined as reference support in the literature on management further explained in the Turkish literature on the same topic by school workers believing they need reference support in order to get promotion (Argon, 2016; Aydoğan, 2009; Özkanan & Erdem, 2015).

The social and individual characteristics that teachers listed as the reasons for ostracism can also be considered within the framework of Hofstede’s (1993; 2001) theory. The Individualism versus Collectivism dimension specified in the theory distinguishes the characteristics of societies. In individualistic cultures, people define themselves independently from other people in society. They act in line with their own desires and goals. In collectivist cultures, people define themselves as part of their families or communities they feel important. They put the interests of the community before their own. According to Hofstede and Minkov’s (2010) study, because of its characteristics, Turkey is a country with “high power distance” and “low individualism”. School principals not seeing teachers as members of the same community or crowd may lead to ostracism. In addition, within the understanding of power distance, the expectation that the orders given from top to bottom will be accepted without question, and personal / biological characteristics such as cultural codes, being critical and age can be considered as the reasons for ostracism by school principals.

According to the study findings, teachers were exposed to physical, psychological and cyber ostracism types. Studies also drew attention to these three types of exclusion (Harvey et al., 2018; Scott, 2007; Williamson, 2007). While physical ostracism refers to being avoided, cyber ostracism refers to being kicked out from cyber groups. The psychological ostracism, on the other hand, refers to unfair practices. A study (Keskinılıç-Kara, 2016) put forth that teachers who were exposed to

discrimination due to political reasons experienced behaviors such as being prevented from using their personal benefits at school, being prevented from making extracurricular activities and being given excessive workload.

The present study revealed that ostracism had psychological, social, organizational and individual consequences for the teachers. Psychological consequences refer to withdrawal, stress and psychosomatic disorders. This result of the study is also similar to the other study results (Hitlan et al., 2006; Baumeister et al., 1990; Twenge et al., 2001; Ferris et al., 2008; Kaya et al., 2017).

Organizational consequences of ostracism for teachers are loss of motivation and low performance. Undesirable situation in organizations, this result is similar to many studies. The studies put forth that various negative business behaviors are exhibited in the face of communication problems, conflicts, harassment and aggressive behaviors that employees encounter in the workplace (Averill, 1983; Gibson & Callister, 2010; McCardle, 2007; Meier & Semmer, 2012; Sloan, 2004). Employees decrease their productivity behavior in the face of such negativities in the workplace and may consider such negativities they are exposed to as unfair. Studies also revealed that increased perception of injustice reduces the productivity behavior (Holley, 2012; Lee & Allen, 2002; McCardle, 2007).

The individual consequence of ostracism for teachers is the selection of the way of struggle against ostracism, in other words, displaying opposing behavior for the pursuit of democracy. This behavior, which will be defined as the open/vertical type of organizational opposition, is carried out in order to clearly indicate the dissatisfaction felt to the members of the organization that may affect the organizational structuring, as stated by Kassing (1998). Previous studies also support this. That is, a positive association was found between organizational opposition and organizational democracy. According to the results of the researches conducted on the subject (Ataç & Köse, 2017; Sadykova & Tutar, 2014), in organizations that make their members feel valued and respect their rights and freedoms, there is a positive relationship between organizational democracy and having the means to openly communicate the regulations and criticisms within the organization to the senior management. As organizational opposition behavior increases, organizational democracy increases.

This study also inquired potential solutions against ostracism in schools. In this respect, teachers stated that ostracism can be solved through organizational democracy and organizational communication. As in political democracy, organizational democracy includes employee participation in decision-making processes (Crane & Matten, 2005; Harrison & Freeman, 2004; Pausch, 2013), as well as employee sovereignty, respect, the idea of equality, and securing rights (Beetham & Boyle, 1998; Bowles & Gintis, 1993). In addition, some researchers tend to define organizational democracy as the mode of communication in organizations (Cheney, 1995; Russell, 1997). When the subject is approached from this point of view, it would not be wrong to say that the organizational communication suggested by teachers against ostracism is indeed a part of organizational democracy. In fact, whether it is called democracy or communication, teachers basically long for a participatory, critical school climate in which they can express themselves and are accepted by their identities.

As a result, teachers were exposed to ostracism by school principals, that ostracism negatively affected their performance and that it could be prevented by organizational democracy. As stated in the introduction section of the study, organizations (including schools) show the characteristics of the society in which they are in. In societies where democratic culture prevails, it is expected that there will be less ostracism in the workplace. Although making a determination related to the culture of democracy in Turkey beyond the limits of this study, the fact that the participating teachers suggested organizational democracy to prevent teacher ostracism can be interpreted as a clue in the context of the subject because schools are environments where change and transformation can be initiated, and teachers and principals are expected to be pioneers in this regard.

Suggestions

This study is important in terms of discussing in-depth the reasons for and results of the ostracism, and also potential solutions. Because, it will be possible to include other concepts and dynamics that may have an impact on ostracism in the schools. The effects of many phenomena such as organizational culture, organizational silence, organizational justice, organizational support level and organizational opposition on exclusion are a matter of curiosity. In addition, the relationship between ostracism at school and social culture would be a topic for another research. Furthermore, school principals having knowledge about ostracism at school will contribute to developing a more participatory, more critical, and more democratic school climate. Courses on ostracism can be included in the trainings of school principals.

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