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**17 YEARS OF WORKPLACE OSTRACISM RESEARCH:
BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS**

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Abstract

This study conducted a bibliometric analysis, covering the current development, the citation pattern, key contributors and collaboration, and key areas of workplace ostracism, spanning from 2007 to 2023. It statistically analyzed 222 documents, retrieved from Scopus. Microsoft Excel was utilized to conduct the frequency study and VOSviewer was used for data

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visualization, and Harzing's Publish or Perish was used for citation metric. The findings revealed that workplace ostracism research has been steadily growing since 2007, with a total of 5860 citations. Top publications by authors and countries, are both from China and Pakistan. These countries play an important role in collaborating with other countries. Pakistan has the highest number of institutional publications. Pakistan also has the most significant author, who has cooperated with other authors. The major focus of the research is business, management, and accounting. All the findings have significant implications for enhancing workplace ostracism research. The focus of the study was restricted to the Scopus database, and future research might look at relevant articles reported in other databases. The study examined a comprehensive set of bibliometric indicators and aspects, that highlight a broad range of workplace ostracism across time.

Keywords : Workplace Ostracism, Bibliometric, VOSviewer, Harzing's Publish or Peris

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1. Introduction

Workplace Ostracism (WO) has become a harsh reality in today's world, and many employees have encountered this phenomenon at some point, making it a common issue in the workplace. According to **Howard et al. (2020)**, the word ostracism, which started as a negative interpersonal treatment, has become a growing hotspot in the organizational field. Moreover, ostracism has recently drawn the attention of scholars, particularly social scientists (**Williams, 2007**). The existing literature shows that WO is very harmful to employees' occupational health since it is an act of omission (**William & Nida, 2022**). Being unwanted at work is the emotion that underlies the perception of WO (**Dash et al., 2023**). Those who feel these kinds of feelings and perceive themselves as separated from the workplace, report feelings of being ostracised (**Dash et al., 2023**). Nonetheless, because this issue is a personal emotion, it is recognized as an unfavorable employee experience like harassment or bullying (**Camacho et al., 2020**). Unfortunately, organizations do not consider workplace

ostracism as an offense and only include threats, bullying, and harassment in their codes of conduct (**Haldorai et al., 2020**).

The review of what is currently known about workplace ostracism and future directions to be explored, is the result of the growing interest in this field of study. Accordingly, it is necessary for additional exploration of bibliometric analysis since it looks into evolution and development that constantly shift themes. Moreover, the previous bibliometric study has narrowed down the analysis, based on certain theories that are related to workplace ostracism. This study comprehensively analyses the current state of workplace ostracism since its development. Thus, this study was based on the research questions given below:

1. What are the current trends and developments of workplace ostracism?
2. What are the current citation patterns and the most impactful documents of workplace ostracism?
3. What are the key contributions and collaborations of authors, institutions, and

countries in the specific fields of workplace ostracism?

4. What are the key areas involved in workplace ostracism research?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Workplace Ostracism

Williams (2007) defines ostracism as a situation in which someone is purposely ignored or excluded by others. According to early social rejection studies, workplace ostracism is also characterized as social isolation, peer rejection, abandonment, being out of the loop, and social exclusion (**O'Reilly et al., 2015**). Majority of current literature depicts ostracism as a workplace evil, involving the mistreating perpetrator and the mistreated victim. There are several forms of exclusion, one of which is language-based exclusion, which happens when two or more people communicate in a language that is incomprehensible to others (**Takhsha et al., 2020**). It can be purposeful ostracism when the perpetrator intentionally hurts the victim, or it can be non-purposeful ostracism when the perpetrator unintentionally hurts victims (**Anjum et al., 2022**).

There are several reasons why workers are being ostracised. Perpetrators frequently ostracise co-workers, who have accomplishments or attributes they wish they had (**Liu et al., 2019**). Behavioural factors such as reporting misconduct, can cause whistleblowers to be ostracised by others (**Sharma & Dhar, 2023**). On the positive side, ostracism is practised when the employee excludes a coworker who is found to exhibit unethical behavior (**Robinson & Schabram, 2019**). It can be used as a tool to change the behavior of the individual and promote a more ethical work environment. The employee's behavior, attitude, and psychological outcomes are negatively impacted by workplace exclusion

in many ways. According to **Haldorai et al., (2020)**, ostracism at work consistently and negatively affects workers' emotions and behaviours, resulting in a range of self-defeating actions. It is reported that ostracism will hinder an employee's capacity to participate fully in work activities since it has negative emotional and cognitive impacts (**Haldorai et al., 2020**).

3. Past Studies

The bibliometric study of workplace ostracism is limited and only two studies were open to the bibliometric analysis. The previous bibliometric studies, by **Liu & Xia (2016)**, focused on trend analysis, with the hope of social exchange and social identity theory. **Kaushal et al. (2021)** limited the analysis to theories, related to ostracism such as ostracism, social exclusion and rejection theories, counterproductive work behavior theories and organizational support theory. In other words, further bibliometric research is required since the study's coverage is still limited and inadequate. Hence this study offers a thorough bibliometric analysis of previously released documents, on crucial aspects of workplace ostracism.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Sources of Data

The Scopus database was searched for all categories of papers, published between 2007 and 2023. To completely include the search result, the following keyword was used in the search query: TITLE ("workplace ostracism" or "workplace isolation" or "workplace exclusion" or "workplace rejection" or "workplace avoidance"). Based on the query, a total of 222 documents were obtained. The search technique, used in this study, was designed to include a wide range of relevant publications, by incorporating multiple languages, document types, data categories, and document

years. Following that, the data were exported as research information systems (.ris) and comma-separated values (.csv) files. **Figure 1** depicts the characteristics of the search strategy and each step required in performing bibliometric analysis

4.2. Tools used in the Study

The following softwares were used in the bibliometric analysis: (1) Microsoft Excel was used to create relevant charts and graphs and calculate the frequencies of published materials; (2) VOSviewer was used to construct and visualize the bibliometric networks; and (3) Harzing's Publish and Perish software calculated citation metrics, the number of cited papers, and author counts. These tools were chosen because of their capacity to effectively analyze big datasets and give extensive insights into the bibliometric landscape.

5. Results

5.1. Current Trends and Development

The total number of publications, each year from 2007 to 2024, is shown in **Table 1**, which also demonstrates the annual growth in interest in this field of research. The field of workplace exclusion was first explored in the publication, *Workplace Isolation: Exploring the Construct and its Measurement* by Marshall et al. (2007), according to the Scopus databases. A year later, it all started with the introduction of workplace ostracism, with *The Development and Validation of Workplace Ostracism*, by Ferris et al. (2008).

After this publication, there was not much development of workplace ostracism, with only five publications from 2009 to 2015. In 2010, there was no publication until it became popular in 2016, with 12 articles, inviting 689 citations. Since then, the number of publications has expanded dramatically, year after year, showing the rising relevance, and importance of this study. Since this study was conducted in the middle of

December 2023, it has represented the maximum number of publications, with 61 articles and 121 total citations. There is already one publication for 2024, and it is believed that the number will rise in line with the trend. Further, the substantial growth in citations per publication and h-index values from 2019 onwards, indicate that the research on workplace ostracism is not only expanding but also gaining recognition and influence within the academic community.

5.2. Citation Pattern and Impactful Articles

5.2.1. Citation Metric

Table 2 shows the citation metric for workplace ostracism. The number of citations and citations per year, may also be used to measure a researcher's productivity. There was an average of 366.25 citations per year, for the 222 articles retrieved, with 5860 citations recorded over 17 years (2007-2023).

5.2.2. Highly Cited Documents

Table 3 displays the top 10 highly referenced publications about workplace ostracism, both locally and worldwide, based on the total number of citations and the average number of citations, per year, obtained so far. It is also possible to identify the articles that have been the most referenced by numerous scholars over the history of the database. The widely referenced publications highlighted here, act as pillars in the discipline, setting the groundwork for future studies. The paper entitled, *The Development and Validation of the Workplace Ostracism Scale*, by **Ferris et al. (2008)**, obtained the most total citations, at 549 citations, which worked out to be 36.6 citations per year. This is not surprising, as indicated by the publication trend and this paper is the second study of workplace ostracism, and naturally, it obtained high citations. Then, second most referenced article is *Invisible at Work: An*

Integrated Model of Workplace Ostracism by **Robinson et al. (2013)**, which reported 316 citations, with 31.6 citations per year. This article received the second-highest total citation, per year, in 2013, at 685 total citations. Workplace Ostracism and Knowledge Hiding in Service Organizations, by **Zhao et al. (2016)**, is the third most referenced article, with 235 total citations and with an average of 33.57 citations per year. Like this work, it received the most total citations, in a single year in 2016, at 689. However, in terms of citations per year, papers by Howard et al. (2020), are the most significant, with an average of 54 citations each year.

5.3. Top Contributors and Collaborations

5.3.1. Publications by Authors

Table 4 lists the top contributing authors, based on the number of publications being more than four, regardless of their citations and *h*-index, and it means that other authors were left out of this selection for the analysis. According to the Table, the top contributing authors are Kwan H.K. from China, with 10 total publications, followed by Fatima T. from Pakistan, with 9 total publications. The third places are taken by Chung Y.W and Sarwan A. As both were able to publish six total publications. It is interesting to record that majority of authors are from Pakistan.

5.3.2. Publications by Institutions

Table 5 shows the top institutions, that are credited with a minimum of five publications on workplace ostracism. The interesting thing is that majority of publications on workplace ostracism come from Pakistan and China. The first and second highest have produced 11 publications from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur and the University of Lahore, Pakistan. The third highest is from Renmin University of China, with five total publications. The result correlated with

the previous results of publications by the author, in which the top three authors were from Pakistan and China.

5.3.3. Publications by Countries

The countries, that contributed the most, with a minimum of 10 publications on workplace ostracism, are shown in **Table 6**. China, with 91 total publications, over the 17 years, was the top country that actively contributed to this field of study. This outcome was in line with the previous findings of publications by institutions, that are the top institutions from China. Surprisingly, even though workplace ostracism research originated in the United States, China was able to dominate the field. The second country is the United States, with 37 total publications and the third country is Pakistan, with 34 total publications. The rest of the countries are India, South Korea, Canada, Oman, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

5.3.4. Co-authorship Among Authors

Figure 2 depicts a network visualization of co-author mapping, among various authors, to identify author collaborations. The visualization uses the full counting approach and it is based on information from authors, who have produced at least one document about workplace ostracism. The color, circle size, text size, and thickness of connecting lines, indicate the degree of the link between authors. Related authors, who collaborate closely and regularly and do research together are listed in the same color. For example, Figure 2 illustrates that Fatima T., Bilal Ar., Mohammed Zj, and Iqbal K. worked closely together. Based on the result, Fatima T. appears to have had strong collaboration with various authors.

5.3.5. Co-authorship Among Countries

The next analysis was also on collaboration but this time, it is based on author affiliation

countries, as shown in Figure 3. The selection of countries, that have at least one document, regardless of the number of citations received, was identified by full counting techniques. Consequently, 41 countries met the threshold, but, only 33 countries were visualized on the map because some of the countries were not linked to one another. According to the findings, authors from China play a vital role in collaboration with countries that closely interact with China, such as Italy, Macao, and Switzerland, whereas authors from the United States collaborate with Indonesia, Turkey, Taiwan, Canada, and Australia.

5.4. Key Areas Involved

5.4.1. Subject Areas

According to **Table-7**, 222 documents, on workplace ostracism, cover a wide range of subject areas. It demonstrates the wide range of possibilities for this study topic. With 138 total publications, at 62.16%, the most written subject was business, management, and accounting. Psychology and social sciences came in second and third, with 85 total publications, at 38.29% and 44 total publications, at 19.82% respectively. Other fields of study included economics, econometrics, and finance, decision sciences, medicine, and art and humanities.

5.4.2. Co-Occurrence Keywords

Figure-4 shows the results of further analysis, which included mapping all keywords, for every document, using VOSviewer. The authors' keywords are adequate to reflect the article's contents, according to the fundamental principle of keyword analysis (**Comerio & Strozzi, 2019**). Using the full counting approach, the co-occurrence of all keywords, that cover both author and index terms in this study, was considered. Each keyword appears at least five times, and therefore, 50 of the 822 keywords fulfil the requirement. When two keywords

appear in the article at the same time, the keywords co-occur, showing that the two concepts are related. Related keywords are those that have the same color and which are frequently listed together. For example, **Figure 4** suggested that workplace ostracism, stress, workplace exclusion, turnover intention, and all red keywords are closely related and usually co-occur together. In other words, each colour also represents a cluster, and it has five clusters in color red, green, blue, yellow, and purple.

6. Discussion

The analysis effectively indicated a shift in the evolution and rising relevance in the field of workplace ostracism since 2007, which answers the first research question. **Marshall et al. (2007)** initiated workplace ostracism research, with workplace isolation, and **Ferris et al. (2008)** continued the creation of the workplace ostracism scale a year later. The appearance of a publication, for 2024, indicates that workplace ostracism would engage the attention of an increasing number of scholars in future.

The citation measure was employed to uncover this research topic since it provides useful insights into the impact and scholarly influence of publications on this subject. To date, 5860 citations have been acquired, based on the 222 papers gathered, indicating a total of 366.25 citations each year, or 26.4 citations per article. The first rise in citations can be credited to pioneering publications such as **Ferris et al. (2008)** and **Robinson et al. (2013)**. In terms of the most impactful documents, an article by **Ferris et al. (2008)** entitled, *The Development and Validation of the Workplace Ostracism Scale*, is the most impactful, with 549 total citations.

The key contribution was determined by top contributing authors, institutions, and

countries to answer the third research question. The study reveals a diverse group of researchers, including Kwan H.K., Fatima T., Chung Y.W., and Sarwar A., with Pakistan's Islamia University of Bahawalpur, University of Lahore, and Renmin University of China leading in publications. This concentration aligns with top authors' distribution and strengthens collaborative efforts, within specific academic communities. China is the leading contributor globally, following the United States and Pakistan, demonstrating a strong commitment to understanding and addressing workplace ostracism in diverse organizational contexts. Then, to understand the collaboration pattern, this study provides a network visualization of authors and countries, revealing close collaboration among authors like Fatima T., Bilal A.R., Mohammed Z.J., and Iqbal K. This highlights the importance of collective efforts in advancing understanding of workplace ostracism, with authors from China and Pakistan contributing to the global network of scholars. This highlights the global nature of workplace ostracism research.

Finally, for the fourth research question, research on workplace ostracism is usually published in the subject area of business, management, and accounting, which means that it was not concentrated in the field of social sciences only. The diverse range of subject areas reflects the complexity of workplace ostracism as a phenomenon. The term, Workplace Ostracism, stands out as the predominant keyword, and it can provide valuable insights into the central themes and focal points of workplace ostracism research. The utilization of keyword co-occurrence analysis reveals complex patterns of collaboration among research themes.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the uniqueness of this study has effectively determined the issue of workplace ostracism through extensive bibliometric analysis. The analysis summarised existing knowledge. by examining the concept in terms of year of publication, publication by authors, institutions, and countries, citation of documents, signification collaboration network, and subject area. This is greatly valuable to researchers since it allows them to get insights into their subject of study. For example, researchers will be able to decide on the most important and impactful publications to focus on, by reviewing citation analysis. Overall, academicians may utilize this study as a reference to better understand and how to assess academic achievements, using multiple indicators.

8. Limitation of Study

The published findings were subjected to limitations in numerous ways. Even though Scopus is one of the most extensive databases for academic research, it does not contain all published sources (**Aidi Ahmi, 2019**). Future studies might make use of more databases such as Web of Science and Google Scholar. Integrating all these databases can contribute to new and important outcomes. Further, this bibliometric study was done from 2007 to 2023, and the productivity of publications may fluctuate across time consequently. Hence future research should examine the bibliometric data independently, for each period.

9. Scope for Further Research

The expanding number of publications, citations, and global significance, suggest that this field will continue to be an important issue of discussion and investigation in the coming years. Researchers and practitioners should expect more advances and a growing body of

information, that will contribute to a better understanding of workplace ostracism. Future research might look into specific subtopics within workplace ostracism or cross-disciplinary partnerships to improve the overall understanding of this phenomenon.

10. Acknowledgement

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Table-1: Year of Publication from 2007 until 2024 for Workplace Ostracism

Year	TP	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	h	g
2024	1	1	1	1.00	1.00	1	1
2023	61	30	121	1.98	4.03	7	8
2022	31	21	165	5.32	7.86	8	11
2021	30	28	354	11.80	12.64	12	17
2020	19	17	505	26.58	29.71	13	19
2019	25	24	592	23.68	24.67	15	24
2018	12	11	649	54.08	59.00	11	12
2017	13	13	602	46.31	46.31	12	13
2016	12	12	689	57.42	57.42	10	12
2015	4	4	126	31.50	31.50	4	4
2014	1	1	2	2.00	2.00	1	1
2013	4	4	685	171.25	171.25	4	4
2012	1	1	224	224.00	224.00	1	1
2011	4	4	306	76.50	76.50	3	4
2009	1	1	101	101.00	101.00	1	1
2008	2	2	617	308.50	308.50	2	2
2007	1	1	110	110.00	110.00	1	1

Notes: TP=total number of publications; NCP=number of cited publications; TC=total citations; C/P=average citations per publication; C/CP=average citations per cited publication; h=h-index; and g=g-index.

Source: Scopus database

Table-2: Citation Metrics for Workplace Ostracism

Metrics	Data
Publication Years	2007-2023
Total publications	222
Number of citations	5860
Citable year	16
Citations per Year	366.25
Citations per Paper	26.4
Citations per Author	2143.18
Papers per Author	89.19
Authors per Paper	3.02
h-index	41
g-index	71

Source: Scopus database

Table-3: Top 10 Highly Cited Articles for Workplace Ostracism

Authors	Title	Total Citations	Cites per Year
Ferris et al. (2008)	The development and validation of the workplace ostracism scale	549	36.6
Robinson et al. (2013)	Invisible at work: An integrated model of workplace ostracism	316	31.6
Zhao et al. (2016)	Workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding in service organizations	235	33.57
Wu et al. (2012)	Coping with workplace ostracism: The roles of ingratiation and political skill in employee psychological distress	224	20.36
Wu et al. (2016)	Why and When Workplace Ostracism inhibits organizational citizenship behaviors: An organizational identification perspective	182	26
Howard et al. (2020)	The antecedents and outcomes of workplace ostracism: A meta-analysis	162	54
Leung et al. (2011)	The impact of workplace ostracism in service organizations	156	13
Zhao et al. (2013)	Workplace ostracism and hospitality employees' counterproductive work behaviors: The joint moderating effects of proactive personality and political skill	140	14
Scott et al. (2013)	A social exchange-based model of the antecedents of workplace exclusion	119	11.9
Liu et al. (2013)	Work-to-family spillover effects of workplace ostracism: The role of work-home segmentation preferences	111	11.1

Source: Scopus database

Table-4: Most Productive Authors for Workplace Ostracism

Author's Name	Affiliation	Country	TP	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	<i>h</i>	<i>g</i>
Kwan, H.K.	China Europe International Business School	China	10	10	676	67.60	67.60	8	10
Fatima, T.	University of Lahore	Pakistan	9	9	78	8.67	8.67	6	8
Chung, Y.W.	The University of Suwon, Hwaseong	South Korea	6	6	235	39.17	39.17	6	6
Sarwar, A.	University of Lahore	Pakistan	6	6	98	16.33	16.33	5	6

Bilal, A.R.	University of Lahore	Pakistan	5	5	41	8.20	8.20	4	5
Imran, M.K.	The Islamia University of Bahawalpur	Pakistan	5	5	77	15.40	15.40	4	5
Liu, J.	Renmin University of China, Beijing	China	5	5	400	80.00	80.00	4	5
Ayub, A.	The University of Faisalabad	Pakistan	4	3	41	10.25	13.67	3	3
Lee, C.	D'Amore-McKim School of Business, Boston	United States	4	4	397	99.25	99.25	4	4
Zhao, H.	Shanghai Center for Enterprise Innovation and High-quality Development, Shanghai	China	4	4	448	112.00	112.00	4	3

Notes: TP=total number of publications; NCP=number of cited publications; TC=total citations; C/P=average citations per publication; C/CP=average citations per cited publication; h=h-index; and g=g-index.

Source: Scopus database

Table-5: Most Productive Institutions for Workplace Ostracism

Institution	Country	TP	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	<i>h</i>	<i>g</i>
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur	Pakistan	11	11	114	10.36	10.36	7	10
University of Lahore	Pakistan	11	11	153	13.91	13.91	8	11
Renmin University of China	China	10	10	459	45.90	45.90	7	10
Shanghai University of Finance and Economics	China	8	8	841	105.13	105.13	7	8
Shanghai University	China	7	7	358	51.14	51.14	5	7
Tongji University	China	7	7	512	73.14	73.14	6	7
COMSATS Institute of Information Technology Lahore	Pakistan	7	7	157	22.43	22.43	6	7
University of International Business and Economics	China	6	3	271	45.17	90.33	3	6
The University of Suwon	South Korea	5	5	197	39.40	39.40	5	5
Harbin Institute of Technology	China	5	5	86	17.20	17.20	5	5
Sun Yat-Sen University	China	5	5	224	44.80	44.80	5	5

Guangzhou University	China	5	3	52	10.40	17.33	2	5
Northeastern University	United States	5	5	507	101.40	101.40	5	5
China Europe International Business School	China	5	5	64	12.80	12.80	5	5
Sohar University	Oman	5	5	41	8.20	8.20	4	5

Notes: TP=total number of publications; NCP=number of cited publications; TC=total citations; C/P=average citations per publication; C/CP=average citations per cited publication; h=h-index; and g=g-index.

Source: Scopus database

Table-6: Most Productive Countries for Workplace Ostracism

Country	TP	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	h	g
China	91	79	2631	28.91	33.30	25	50
United States	37	34	1989	53.76	58.50	22	37
Pakistan	34	30	570	16.76	19.00	13	23
India	16	11	91	5.69	8.27	5	9
South Korea	13	12	295	22.69	24.58	9	13
Canada	12	11	1220	101.67	110.91	9	12
Oman	10	7	54	5.40	7.71	5	7
Turkey	10	6	102	10.20	17.00	6	10
United Kingdom	10	8	427	42.70	53.38	6	10

Notes: TP=total number of publications; NCP=number of cited publications; TC=total citations; C/P=average citations per publication; C/CP=average citations per cited publication; h=h-index; and g=g-index.

Source: Scopus database

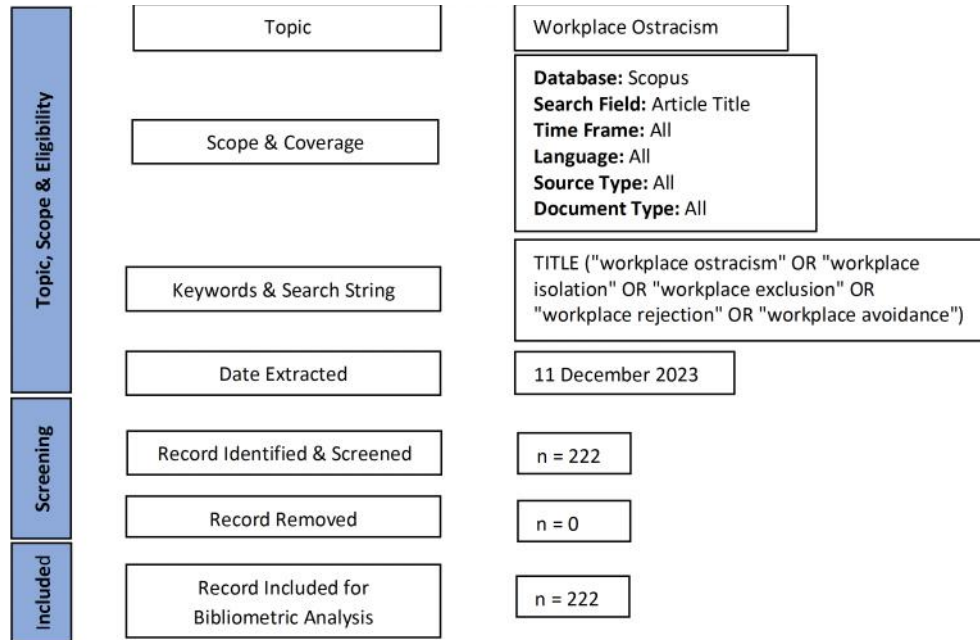
Table-7: Subject Area for Workplace Ostracism

Subject Area	Publications	%
Business, Management and Accounting	138	62.16%
Psychology	85	38.29%
Social Sciences	44	19.82%
Economics, Econometrics and Finance	26	11.71%
Decision Sciences	13	5.86%
Medicine	13	5.86%
Arts and Humanities	12	5.41%
Computer Science	6	2.70%
Environmental Science	6	2.70%
Nursing	6	2.70%
Engineering	4	1.80%
Energy	3	1.35%
Agricultural and Biological Sciences	2	0.90%
Health Professions	2	0.90%
Mathematics	2	0.90%

Multidisciplinary	2	0.90%
Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology	1	0.45%
Earth and Planetary Sciences	1	0.45%
Neuroscience	1	0.45%
Total	222	100%

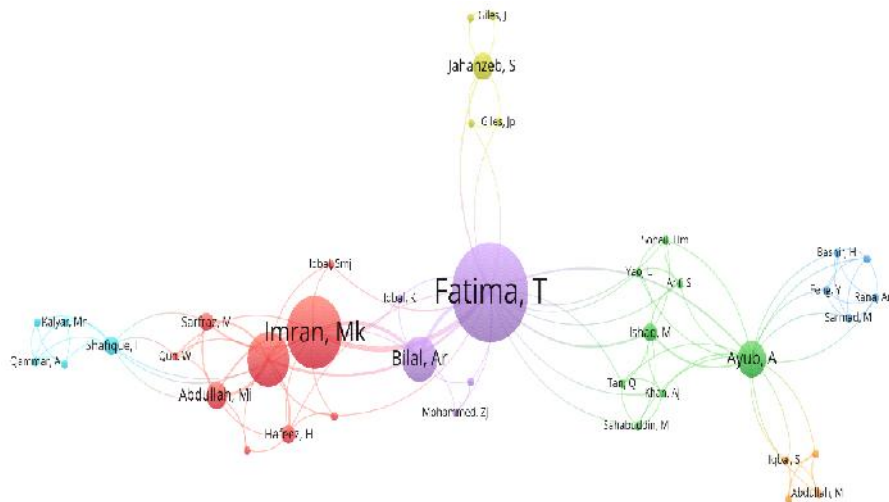
Source: Scopus database

Figure-1: Flow diagram of the search strategy



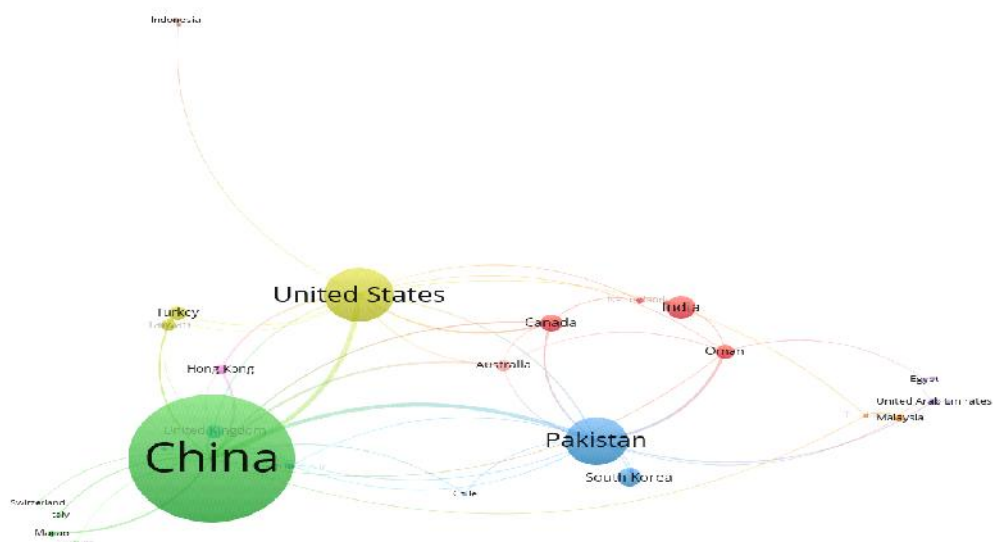
Source: Author compilation

Figure-2: Network visualization map of the co-authorship by countries



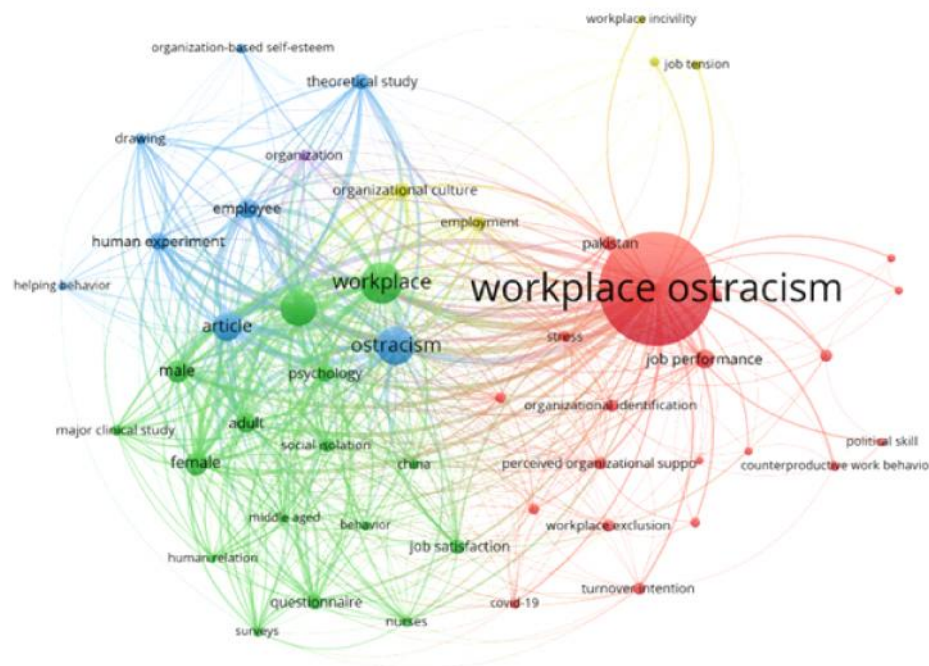
Source: Scopus database

Figure-3: Network visualization map of the co-authorship by countries



Source: Scopus database

Figure-4: Network visualization of co-occurrence analysis of all keywords



Source: Scopus database