

**TO BE SILENT OR SPEAK UP?
IMPACT OF WORKPLACE BULLYING ON EMPLOYEE SILENCE:
MEDIATING ROLE OF WORKPLACE OSTRACISM AND MODERATING
ROLE OF POSITIVE FRAMING**

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Being silent in the workplace is detrimental to academic furtherance. However, keeping quiet may be caused by various factors in organizations. Still, there is a perplexity of the reasons for employee silence behaviors. No evidence found that studies have incorporated positive framing into workplace bullying. Therefore, this study investigated the impact of workplace bullying on employee silence while considering the mediating role of workplace ostracism. The study also tests the moderating role of positive framing in these impacts among employees from higher education institutions by emphasizing social identity theory. The study collected data through structured questionnaires from conveniently chosen 391 participants from higher education sectors in Sri Lanka. The study adopted a structured equation modeling technique for data analysis with Smart PLS 4.0. Results revealed that workplace bullying positively impacts employee silence, and workplace ostracism mediates the bullying and silence impact. The positive effect of workplace bullying on employee silence through positive framing is lessened for employees who remain silent. As a result, developing social ties with everyone without bullying in institutions is a top strategic goal for workers in the higher education sector. The results indicated that if bullied employees adopt silent behavior, ostracism aids them in keeping silent compared to those who raise their voices. The current study advances research on workplace bullying by empirically examining the effects of workplace bullying, workplace ostracism, and employee silence, in addition to expanding the nascent knowledge on these topics in higher education. Workplace bullying and employee silence are best understood by employing ostracism as a mediator. Scholars can better comprehend individual viewpoints on workplace bullying and employee silence by incorporating positive framing as a moderator. The findings highlight the importance of positive framing in the workplace in reducing the damaging outcomes of bullying in organizational settings.

Keywords: Employee silence and Positive framing, Workplace bullying, Workplace ostracism