

# “The interplay of mindfulness in mitigating the effects of workplace ostracism on knowledge sharing: Insights from Jordanian private hospitals”

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# THE INTERPLAY OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE OSTRACISM ON KNOWLEDGE SHARING: INSIGHTS FROM JORDANIAN PRIVATE HOSPITALS

## Abstract

The study aims to investigate the relationship between workplace ostracism and employee willingness to share knowledge with the moderating role of mindfulness. The data were collected from six leading private hospitals in Amman, Jordan, targeting 271 employees holding different medical and administrative positions regarding their experiences with workplace ostracism and the corresponding impact on knowledge sharing. Thus, the study sample being healthcare professionals is not by default but rather a conscious choice in light of the critical role they play in a high-stake environment; moreover, in some cases, knowledge hoarding has proven to have dire repercussions. The results revealed that workplace ostracism significantly and negatively affected degrees of knowledge sharing ( $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that ostracized workers would feel shut out and likely become a hindrance to the information and insight flow. The positive outcome is that employees engaging in mindfulness practices seem to cushion the blow that such negative experiences deliver. Those likely to become easily focused are likely to be less threatened by knowledge sharing – they expect that the impact of ostracism will be transient, which could protect a person from the potentially isolating effects of ostracism in the workplace.

## Keywords

professional marginalization, communication in the workplace, behavioral management, mental presence

## JEL Classification

M12, M54, D23

## INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving environment, businesses are constantly searching for new and innovative ways to enhance their performance to remain ahead of competence. Nonaka (1994) noted that employees are the largest pool of new knowledge in organizations, and knowledge sharing can reinforce the joint creation of new knowledge. Similarly, Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) suggested that individuals should integrate their earlier knowledge together and exchange it for organizational knowledge.

Workplace ostracism is now a predictor of work-related stress. So far, relatively little investigation has been conducted concerning possible ways in which workplace ostracism would be, in some way, handled with one's resources and workplace interventions (Vui-Yee & Yen-Hwa, 2020). Mindfulness and meditation-based stress reduction programs have emanated effective in coping with interpersonal problems that result from workplace ostracism (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000; McCormick & Hunter, 2008). Mindfulness is a process that injects and requires a combination of intellectual and emotional aptitudes,



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heightened sensitivity, nurturance support to respect one's reaches to meet the information needs of others, and some level of interactivity and delicacy in dialogues (Gerpott et al., 2020). Knowledge sharing is conceptualized as an intensive process of information moving from one person (donor) to another (receiver) and finally being reused and modified by the latter suitably. It is widely believed that this process is massively supported by an individual's capacity for perspective taking; it helps one orient him/herself in the thought process of others and, therefore, to spread the information right and easily. This capability is more like a mandatory process that drives the sharing of knowledge in practice. It is not just about the transference of information; it increases its usefulness and appropriateness for the receiver (Vance et al., 1991; Gerpott et al., 2020). Takhsa et al. (2020) recommended using moderating or mediating variables that may decrease workplace ostracism's effect on knowledge sharing. Furthermore, Ramaci et al. (2019) request more exploration on mindfulness through experimental studies and a diverse sample.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Workplace ostracism is ignoring an individual or excluding him from an interaction or a relationship at a professional workplace (Ferris et al., 2008). The impacts of this phenomenon have been proven negative, and it is not just a minor social offense. Neglecting social bonds may deteriorate strengths and employees' engagement in organizations, eventually dampening the overall organizational effectiveness (Balliet & Ferris, 2013; Riaz et al., 2019). Ferris et al. (2015), Imran et al. (2023), Rabiul et al. (2023), and Wu et al. (2016) suggest that ostracized employees usually have lowered levels of helpfulness and productive activity. Nevertheless, this narrative is not unilateral. Derfler-Rozin et al. (2010), Hitlan et al. (2006), and Van Beest and Williams (2011) proved that in certain cases, employees might respond in a counter-intuitive way, showing more helpful behavior in an attempt to be accepted again and reintegrated into the community of their workplace. The complex interplay of psychological factors in relationships at the workplace has an enormous impact on individual and organizational performance.

Workplace ostracism has been related to a number of negative outcomes, such as unethical behavior at the workplace, unproductive work behavior, and moral badness at the workplace (Hitlan & Noel, 2009; Zhao et al., 2013; Chung, 2015). While these activities may also potentially contain some degree of exclusionary behavior, active violent or bombastic actions toward a company or person are different from workplace ostracism. It is characterized as passive aggression beneath its end goals. Additionally, workplace ostracism is often

undetected and subtle, which provokes the victim to feel worthless as an employee of the organization, thus dramatically affecting his or her organizational affiliation (Ferris et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2016).

As such, knowledge sharing has become generally recognized as the key factor for companies' survival in today's changing environment (Akram et al., 2017). It results in employees having new experiences and points of view, which ultimately contributes to knowledge discovery (Oyemomi et al., 2016). Knowledge sharing is significantly influenced by workplace climate in organizations (Oufkir et al., 2017; Alzghoul et al., 2018). Such a behavior is related to individual traits, interpersonal and team qualities, cultural traits, organizational environment, and motivation level (Le & Lei, 2018; Wang et al., 2023). This continuous interaction provokes transferring tacit and explicit knowledge of employees to a workplace due to an effective means of communication (Elrehail et al., 2018). Recent research has started to consider the negative impact of workplace ostracism on trust, shared understanding, and intentions toward knowledge sharing (Wang et al., 2023; Williams, 2007; Zhao et al., 2013; Zhao & Xia, 2017).

Possibly, workplace ostracism is an important predictor of knowledge sharing habits among employees (Sahito et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2016). It is a kind of a voluntary behavior by employees; the key fact is that this behavior is not stated explicitly and, as a rule, does not get into most job descriptions (Alzghoul et al., 2018). When they are shunned, prosocial and voluntary activities like knowledge sharing are affected negatively. In ad-

dition, socially discounted individuals cannot socialize with other members of the organization (De Clercq et al., 2019). Takhsha et al. (2020) indicated that this type of ostracism can take various forms, for example, linguistic, which refers to a situation whereby two or more people communicate in such language that others cannot understand. Another way is ostracism, which means one person or group ignoring another in spite of the rejected individual wanting to have a connection (Robinson et al., 2013). Purposeful ostracism happens when the actors plan to hurt others; non-purposeful ostracism happens inadvertently when those involved do not intend to harm another individual (Anjum et al., 2022).

Empirical research has been widely supportive of the negative relationship between workplace ostracism and knowledge sharing. For instance, Takhsha et al. (2020) showed a strong negative relationship between the two constructs. Further, they empirically showed that ostracism significantly works as disincentive to knowledge sharing at the workplace and the mediating mechanisms in this relationship. Similarly, Islam et al. (2021) found a significantly negative relationship of workplace ostracism with knowledge sharing. The article has therefore recommended that organizations intervene in a proactive manner, even on an accumulative basis, for minimizing the damaging effects of workplace ostracism on knowledge sharing, contributing to employees' development and ultimately factoring in the overall organizational performance. Moreover, Zhao et al. (2016) found that the relationship of ostracism in the workplace with task performance was partially mediated by knowledge sharing. Similarly, the research learned that the task interdependence moderated in between workplace ostracism and knowledge sharing in the aspect that the negative relation of workplace ostracism with knowledge was stronger in case of high dependence on each other in work.

Besides, according to Zaman et al. (2021), institutions need to develop strategies that do not allow for workplace ostracism and accept knowledge sharing from their employees in a bid to increase the level of engagement and productivity. In the end, Dash et al. (2023) indicated that any organizational climate in which members share their knowledge with one another will ensure that there

is the minimization of the impacts that the workplace ostracism generates on knowledge sharing. It is for this reason that it is recommended further research be done on interventions for developing a conducive organizational climate that enhances knowledge sharing and hence reducing the adverse effects resulting from workplace ostracism.

Ostracism in the workplace can greatly affect employee performance, satisfaction, and health (Robinson et al., 2013; Williams & Zadro, 2005). This is also related to a lack of knowledge sharing owing to the tendency of employees to feel excluded or marginalized; they tend, first and foremost, to hoard whatever kind of information that has come into their possession.

Carter et al. (2016) highlight the growing interdisciplinary interest in applying mindfulness in organizational contexts, particularly as an adjunct to strategic transformation efforts. Despite this interest, the translation into empirical workplace research remains limited (Dane & Brummel, 2014; Paul & Perwez, 2023; Sawal, 2023). Mindfulness literature has been bifurcated into two main streams: one emphasizing the internal psychological aspects of individual mindfulness, and the other focusing on the social practices of collective mindfulness (Sutcliffe et al., 2016). Research has demonstrated various effects of mindfulness, including improvements in interpersonal relationships and social cognition (Arch & Craske, 2006; Brown et al., 2007). However, there is a notable gap in understanding mindfulness's role in workplace settings, especially its influence on job performance (Carter et al., 2016; Panda, 2022). Given that employees often view knowledge as a personal asset and are reluctant to share it, mindfulness could play a crucial role in fostering knowledge sharing among employees (Gerpott et al., 2020).

Workplace ostracism, as outlined by Williams and Zadro (2005), is subject to individual perceptions, meaning what one employee perceives as ostracism might not be seen the same way by another. Ferris et al. (2008) and Hitlan and Noel (2009) have typically treated workplace ostracism as a singular, one-dimensional concept. However, when an individual perceives him/herself as being ostracized, it can lead to various negative out-

comes. In this context, mindfulness becomes crucial. It can motivate an individual to exert more effort in handling interpersonal challenges. The study not only examines the relationship between workplace ostracism and knowledge sharing but also investigates how mindfulness might moderate the impact of workplace ostracism on knowledge sharing. This analysis determines whether mindfulness may buffer the negative effects of perceived ostracism on an employee's knowledge sharing intentions.

Consistent research has demonstrated negative aspects of employees going through workplace ostracism, including decreasing job satisfaction, increasing intentions to quit, sleep deprivation, and poor performance (Ferris et al., 2008; Hitlan & Noel, 2009; Williams & Zadro, 2005). However, based on the recent articles, mindfulness is considered to be a possible buffer from the negative consequences suffered as an outcome of being ostracized at the workplace. For example, Jha et al. (2010) indicated that mindfulness moderated the relationship between the experience of workplace ostracism and the well-being of the employee. Iteration of the part played by mindfulness in knowledge sharing has been the subject of iteration by a number of researchers. For instance, Huang et al. (2020) focused on the relationship between mindfulness and employees and knowledge sharing. Recent studies tried to bring forth the possible mediating role of mindfulness in ostracism and knowledge sharing. For example, mindfulness has been found to play a role as a mediator in the relationship between the workplace setting and the knowledge-sharing structure (Gerpott et al., 2020).

Mindfulness significantly affects the manifestation of workplace ostracism, influencing employee well-being and job performance. Mindfulness has also been shown to foster knowledge sharing in the workplace. While research specifically looking into the role of mindfulness as a moderator in the relationship between workplace ostracism and knowledge sharing is lacking, prior studies have indicated that mindful disposition may well mitigate some negative impacts felt from office isolation, therefore contributing to knowledge sharing. Consequently, organizations should foster a mindful workplace culture that fosters knowledge

sharing to improve employee well-being and job performance. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how mindfulness can suppress the adverse effect of workplace ostracism on knowledge sharing among employees. The elaborated hypotheses are:

*H1: Workplace ostracism is negatively associated with knowledge sharing.*

*H2: Mindfulness moderates the effect of workplace ostracism on knowledge sharing.*

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The present study aims to investigate the impact of workplace ostracism on knowledge sharing and the moderating role of mindfulness through a quantitative approach. To achieve this objective, the survey questions were adapted from prior research conducted in Western countries, and two linguistic experts utilized the back-translation method to ensure the accuracy of the translations. Following a pilot survey with 20 participants, minor modifications were made to the questionnaire. The study population consisted of employees from major private hospitals in Amman, the capital of Jordan. Six hospitals with approximately 859 employees were selected. The simple random sampling technique was used to distribute the questionnaire, ensuring that all members of the study population had an equal chance of being selected. The survey was administered through official emails, with 476 questionnaires issued to participants. Then, 274 surveys were completed and returned, with three responses being eliminated due to incomplete data. Therefore, the total number of questionnaires suitable for statistical analysis was 271, representing the research population effectively.

Regarding research instruments, workplace ostracism was measured using a 10-item measure (Ferris et al., 2008) with a seven-point response scale (one = never to seven = always). Knowledge sharing was measured as a second-order construct with two dimensions: tacit and explicit sharing. This variable used five items adopted from Chung et al. (2016) and Bock et al. (2005) with a seven-point response scale (one = strong-

ly disagree to seven = strongly agree). Finally, mindfulness was measured using a 17-item measure (Cardaciotto et al., 2008), where participants used a seven-point response scale (one = strongly disagree to seven = strongly agree).

The analysis of the demographic characteristics of the sample included gender, age, educational level and years of service in the private hospitals in Amman (Table 1). A total of 271 valid responses were considered in the analysis. The results revealed that the majority were male, 62.3%, and female represented 37.7%. Most were aged between 30 and 40, 33.6%, followed by those aged between 41 and 50, 27.3%. Regarding educational level, most participants were bachelor's degree holders, 53.9%. Concerning years of service, most participants demonstrate above 10 years (61.3%). These results indicated a diversity of the demographic characteristics of the sample, reflecting respondents' perceptions about the study variables.

**Table 1.** Demographics results

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	169	62.3
Female	102	37.7
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 30 years	37	13.7
30 to less than 40 years	91	33.6
41 to less than 50 years	74	27.3
More than 50	69	25.5
<b>Educational level</b>		
High school	62	22.9
Associated degree	40	14.8
Bachelor degree	146	53.9
Postgraduate degree	23	8.5
<b>Years of service</b>		
Less than 4 years	3	1.1
5-10 years	102	37.6
Above 10 years	166	61.3

### 3. RESULTS

The proposed research framework was assessed using partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS3. This approach helps one to evaluate the structural model's predictive capability since it is able to maximize the explained variances within the

latent predictors constructs (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, the structural paths were analyzed checking the main effects. Finally, the study also considered an important determination of the common method variance (CMV) that attributed to the self-reported measures approach, which poses validity issues (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The study examined the CMV through Harman's factor and principal component extraction technique. The results of variance explained by the first factor was 34.54%. This result does not pose a significant threat to interpretation. Variance inflation factor (VIF) due to a complete collinearity test was further conducted to make sure that forms of findings through self-reported do not have CMB-related issues. The VIF scores for all the variables ranged under 3.0, which indicates no CMB (Kock, 2015).

#### 3.1. Measurement model

To assess reliability through internal consistency, this study assessed the measurement model and checked convergent and discriminant validity. For testing internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha criterion was used while the study measured the composite reliability of constructs, as Hair et al. (2017) suggest. Table 2 indicates that Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values are above the acceptable value of 0.7 and 0.6, respectively (Hair et al., 2017).

For testing convergent validity, this study applied outer loadings with a minimum threshold of 0.5 (Henseler et al., 2009) and AVE with a threshold of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The values are all above the threshold minimum, thus confirming the convergent validity of the model. The values with poor loadings (less than 0.50) were dropped (MIND7, MIND8, MIND16, and MIND17), consistent with Hair et al. (2017). According to Hair et al. (2017), discriminant validity is "the extent to which a variable correlates systematically more highly with its own measure than it does with the measure of another variable" (p. 792). Table 3 shows Fornell-Larcker criteria values. This study used the Fornell-Larcker criterion by taking the square root of AVE, which represents the diagonal constructs matrix correlation.

**Table 2.** Constructs validity and reliability

Indicators	Loadings	AVE	CR	Alpha
WS1	0.71	0.58	0.65	0.89
WS2	0.76			
WS3	0.80			
WS4	0.78			
WS5	0.70			
WS6	0.72			
WS7	0.69			
WS8	0.66			
WS9	0.65			
WS10	0.78			
KS1	0.80	0.56	0.64	0.83
KS2	0.83			
KS3	0.79			
KS4	0.81			
KS5	0.69			
MIND1	0.80	0.53	0.61	0.87
MIND2	0.83			
MIND3	0.89			
MIND4	0.85			
MIND5	0.80			
MIND6	0.81			
MIND7	Deleted			
MIND8	Deleted			
MIND9	0.79			
MIND10	0.74			
MIND11	0.88			
MIND12	0.70			
MIND13	0.86			
MIND14	0.89			
MIND15	0.89			
MIND16	Deleted			
MIND17	Deleted			

Note: WS = Workplace ostracism; KS = Knowledge sharing; MIND = Mindfulness; AVE = Average variance extracted; CR = Composite reliability.

**Table 3.** Fornell-Larcker criterion

	KS	MIND	WS
KS	0.825		
MIND	0.855	0.854	
WS	0.785	0.731	0.641

Note: WS = Workplace ostracism; KS = Knowledge sharing; MIND = Mindfulness.

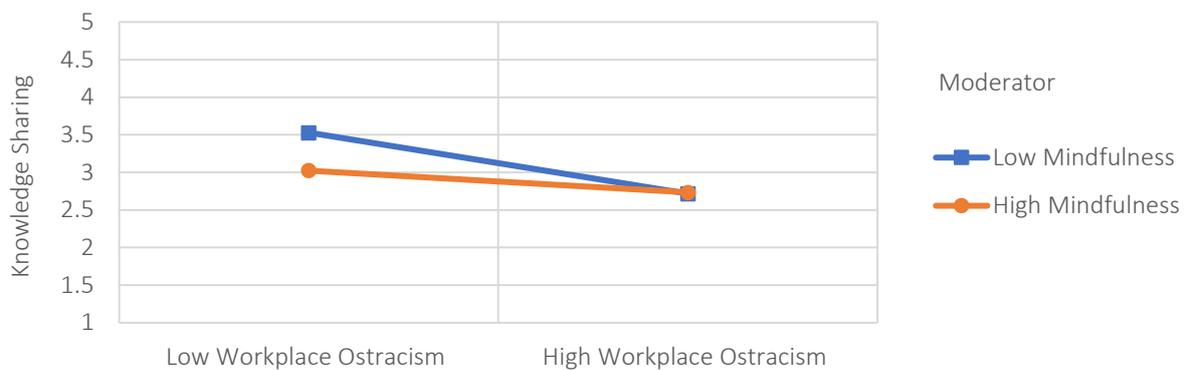
### 3.2. Structural model

The study examined the structural model by analyzing the path coefficients. To test the research hypotheses, the study applied a non-parametric through the bootstrapping approach to gain the  $\beta$ -values and corresponding  $t$  and  $p$  metrics. In addition to the path coefficients, the study analyzed the structural model by other metrics, like coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), and effect size ( $f^2$ ). The values of predictive relevance more than zero indicate that the model has a predictive capability. Moreover, analyzing the effect size is necessary to report the model's predictive accuracy. Table 4 illustrates the structural model results. The results indicated that workplace ostracism is negatively associated with knowledge sharing ( $\beta = -0.374$ ,  $t = 5.795$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $f^2 = 0.262$ ), supporting H1. Next, the study examined the moderation effect using a two-stage approach suggested by Hair et al. (2017), since it has the ability to display higher statistical power than the product indicators. According to the standardized interactions, the results supported the interaction of mindfulness\*workplace ostracism on knowledge sharing ( $\beta = -0.021$ ,  $t = 2.281$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ); thus, the study accepted H2. Figure 1 illustrates the moderating effect results.

**Table 4.** Effects on endogenous variable

Path	$\beta$	T	P	$R^2$	$Q^2$	$f^2$
WS $\rightarrow$ KS	-0.374	5.795	0.000	0.787	0.519	0.262
WS*MIND $\rightarrow$ KS	-0.021	2.281	0.000			

Note: WS = Workplace ostracism; KS = Knowledge sharing; MIND = Mindfulness.



**Figure 1.** Moderating effect results

## 4. DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to explore the dynamics between workplace ostracism and knowledge sharing and to examine the potential moderating role of mindfulness in this relationship. By integrating these elements, the study aimed to provide a more nuanced understanding of how interpersonal challenges in the workplace impact the flow of knowledge and how individual coping mechanisms, like mindfulness, can influence this process. The results strongly confirm hypothesis one, as workplace ostracism has a negative association with knowledge sharing. This finding came in line with Sahito et al. (2023) and Wang et al. (2023). Employees who see themselves as outsiders are less likely to disseminate information due to the lack of enthusiasm or alienation from their institutional setting. This aspect is critical because understanding the various subtle aspects of social dynamics within work can help uncover how such elements may prevent collaboration and facilitate less effective sharing. Ostracism also affects organizational knowledge management and collaboration; hence, it not only harms an individual's well-being.

Supporting the second hypothesis, mindfulness moderates how workplace ostracism influences knowledge sharing. This is consistent with Huang et al. (2020) and Gerpott et al. (2020), where mindfulness was shown to have a preventive role. People who practice mindfulness seem more able to withstand the negative impact of workplace ostracism. They keep their readiness to exchange information, showing that mindfulness might be an essential personal tool for coping with adverse experiences at work. These findings indicate that

promoting mindfulness may be a fruitful strategic endeavor for organizations to address the detrimental impact of ostracism on knowledge sharing.

This study adds to the existing line of research by supporting the established relationship between workplace ostracism and reduced knowledge sharing, in line with Dash et al. (2023) and Imran et al. (2023). Since many of these associations have been corroborated under different organizational conditions, this paper supplements the current understanding of this relationship. Moreover, the results regarding the role of mindfulness as a moderator are consistent with an increasing focus on researching organizational behavior on individual characteristics and mental conditions. This supports Panda (2022) and Paul and Perwez (2023), who highlighted that the concept of mindfulness is increasingly taken as one of the personal attributes contributing to shaping dynamics and outcomes within workplace settings.

The study is insightful; however, there are some limitations. Its cross-sectional approach mainly limits the capability to determine causality between workplace ostracism, knowledge sharing, and mindfulness. Furthermore, the use of self-reported data may introduce biases, such as social desirability or inaccuracies in people's ability to assess themselves. For further research directions, longitudinal studies should clarify the causal relations and dynamics of these variables. Further, a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative interviews or observational data, would help better understand the mechanisms underpinning these findings. It is also beneficial to expand the research across different industries and cultural contexts for higher generalizability.

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## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the links among workplace ostracism, knowledge sharing, and mindfulness to discover useful information that has great value not only in terms of theoretical understanding but also in its utilization in organizational settings. This aspect is crucial because it highlights the effect of social dynamics on collaborative and intellectual capital in organizations. Ostracism has detrimental effects on employees; therefore, organizational leaders and human resources practitioners should focus more on fostering a more inclusive and supportive work environment, which enables the flow of knowledge among employee, thus improving collaboration. Moreover, the study reveals that mindfulness is also beneficial in mitigating the detrimental impacts of workplace ostracism on knowledge sharing. When individuals are ostracized, mindfulness operates as a protective factor that allows them to continue be-

ing willing to share knowledge with colleagues and interact positively. This insight is especially relevant in the modern world of work where things appear to change so rapidly, sometimes under great pressure, that cultivating mindfulness can be seen as a worthwhile method for enhancing employee's resilience, mental health, and overall level of satisfaction.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Salman Abu Lehyeh, Amro Alzghoul.  
Data curation: Salman Abu Lehyeh.  
Formal analysis: Amro Alzghoul.  
Investigation: Salman Abu Lehyeh, Amro Alzghoul.  
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Supervision: Salman Abu Lehyeh.  
Validation: Amro Alzghoul.  
Visualization: Salman Abu Lehyeh.  
Writing – original draft: Salman Abu Lehyeh, Amro Alzghoul.  
Writing – review & editing: Salman Abu Lehyeh.

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