

Unmasking Confidence: The Dunning-Kruger Effect's Influence on Employee Perception of Workplace Discrimination

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of Dunning-Kruger's effects on employee's acceptance and rejection of workplace discrimination, focusing on how feelings of inferiority and superiority shape these behaviors. Employing a qualitative research approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 employees from the banking sector in Bahawalpur, Pakistan. These interviews chosen for their conversational nature provided deeper insights into the participants' genuine perspectives. The study utilizes convenience and snowball sampling techniques with a non-probability sampling framework to select the sample. Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the data. The findings of this study underscore the significant role of the Dunning-Kruger effect in shaping employee's response to workplace discrimination, offering valuable insights for organizations to develop more effective strategies for managing workplace dynamics and reducing discrimination.

KEYWORDS

Dunning Kruger Effect, Workplace Discrimination, Employee Perception, Thematic Analysis

1 | INTRODUCTION

The Dunning-Kruger Effect was anticipated by Justin Kruger and David Dunning of Cornell University. The Dunning-Kruger effect has been defined as a cognitive bias in which incompetent or unaware subjects overestimate their knowledge or expertise, considering themselves as more adept than they are, whereas high-ability individuals underestimate their relative competence and may erroneously assume that tasks which are easy for them are also easy for others. According to the findings, the lowest-performing participants overestimated their talents and strongly believed that their abilities were above average. In contrast, the highest conducting attendees overestimated their abilities. The Dunning-Kruger effect is a sort of intellectual discrimination in which those who are less skilled or able tend to overrate how much they possess the relevant skill or ability relative to others who have more substantial levels of skill or ability (Gignac & Zajenkowski, 2020).

It was also discovered that inexperienced people were less likely to recognize skills or even knowledge in others. The research, (Kruger & Dunning, 1999) claimed that incompetent persons did not recognize

their ineptitude because they lacked consciousness, Meta mind, Meta understanding, and self-monitoring capacities. In contrast, people who underestimate their talents frequently cause more accidents and frequently make bad decisions in life. If rejection is due to discrimination at a personal level, there may be additional effects, such as increased anxiety brought on by a skills gap, unless the employee can perform the task at a higher level. Another possibility is that people change jobs if they are unable to perform at the required level of ability. When people make decisions based on irrelevant demographic information and fail to concentrate on information that is relevant to the outcome, discrimination may result. The degree of discrimination then depends on (a) the frequency of judgmental mistakes and (b) the extent to which such errors favor one group more than another (Axt & Lai, 2019).

According to the Dunning-Kruger effect (DKE), strong performers on a task tend to overestimate their performance, whereas poor performers on the same job tend to underestimate it. DKE is a metacognitive phenomenon of illusory superiority where people who

do poorly on a test think they fared better than others, whereas people who perform exceptionally well think they underperformed in comparison to others (Dunkel et al., 2023; Gignac & Zajenkowski, 2020; Mahmood, 2016; Mazor & Fleming, 2021). There is a problem that managers face in organizations that is due to acceptance and rejection of discrimination in organizations. Acceptance and rejection behavior is responsible for feeling superior and inferior, this affects the performance of employees in both ways positive and negative.

The Kruger effect states that in situations where people with lower levels of potential do not recognize their actual degree of skill, people are unaware of their incapability, and they significantly overestimate their skill. In firms, managers confront employee performance challenges due to concerns such as miscommunications, a lack of motivation and certain personal qualities of employees (Magnus & Peresetsky, 2022). Employees do not perform well because of their behavior of inferiority in the organization, which can lower overall employee performance and, as a result, lower overall organizational performance (Canady & Larzo, 2023). The research provides the solutions to overcome these problems and the ways that contribute to overall organizational performance. This paper aims to identify the behavior of employees regarding acceptance and rejection of discrimination due to feelings of superiority and inferiority in organizational settings, the researcher wants to explore the role of the Dunning Kruger effect in acceptance and rejection of discrimination behavior. To this end, we have some key objectives of this study which are as follows:

1. To explore employee perception of their workplace abilities, focusing on feelings of inferiority or superiority.
2. To assess the prevalence of workplace discrimination experienced by employees.
3. To examine how the perception of inferiority or superiority influences employee's acceptance or rejection of workplace discrimination.

This research significantly contributes to the literature by exploring how the Dunning-Kruger effect influences employee acceptance or rejection of workplace discrimination, driven by feelings of superiority and inferiority. It introduces a new dimension to the Dunning-Kruger effect, and offers valuable insights for managers, helping them to reduce workplace discrimination and enhance the organizational environment.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Dunning-Kruger Effect

Within the literature, overconfidence makes people overstate their abilities regarding information processing as they scale them back in relation to their real proficiency. This is termed Dunning Kruger Effect. Dunning Kruger theory states that even little better

persons are often likely to overrate their potential much more than people who are really good. There is reduced national and local productivity because of inequalities, which are often considered as market shortages. Learned seminal effect in the field of psychology and the identity of the Dunning-Kruger Effect explains the contradiction of the relationship between competence and confidence. Originating from research by (Dunning et al., 2003), Such an impact assumes that people with a lower level of competence are inclined to overrate their competencies whereas people with a higher level of competence can have an underestimation. This psychological bias carries great consequences on work-associated behaviour, since it affects decision-making, job performance assessment and inter-personal communication (Dunning et al., 2003). The study by Dunning and Kruger is what formed the basis of cognitives yielding the DunningKruger Effect. According to them, those who have low metacognitive skills cannot be able to evaluate their competence with some form of accuracy thus resulting in inflated self-estimates. Other studies have developed this model by investigating moderating and mediating factors of the influence, including personality factors, cultural pressures and subject matter knowledge.

Many researchers have discussed the manifestation of the Dunning-Kruger Effect in organization. Research by Johnson and Hayes (2016) highlighted its impact on leadership effectiveness, showing that individuals with inflated self-assessments may exhibit poor leadership behaviors. Similarly, Silver et al. (2021) explored its implications for teamwork and collaboration, revealing that overconfident individuals may undermine group performance. Furthermore, recent research by Bisquolm (2021) has extended the application of the Dunning-Kruger Effect to the domain of workplace discrimination, suggesting that distorted perceptions of competence may influence responses to discriminatory practices.

2.2 Workplace Discrimination

Discrimination can be defined as being a differentiation of the treatment of given individuals based on real or perceived affiliation to certain groups e.g. sex, age, ethnicity, religion, health or sexual orientation" (Clausen et al., 2022). Discrimination at workplace is indeed a widespread problem in many industries and sectors and it covers a wide variety of discrimination approaches that include discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, maturity, disability and sexual orientation. Although there are legal regulations prohibiting discrimination being implemented in the workplace, cases of discrimination and prejudice still arise and affect the well-being of employees, their job satisfaction, and career growth perspectives. Discrimination may occur in the workplace in many ways, Direct Discrimination is an instance where an

individual is subjected to inferior treatment compared to other people in view of the characteristics of certain discrimination that is subjected to an individual that may include race, gender, and disability among others.

Indirect Discrimination It entails a policy or practice that does not seem to be discriminative but overly affects specific groups of people on the basis of their protected attributes. Harassment entails any unwanted behavior that concerns a non-destructive feature that makes the working environment quite threatening, hostile, as well as offensive. Microaggressions the term microaggression refers to the subtle and not necessarily intentional behavior or statement that expresses an attitude of discrimination or stereotyping against marginalized groups. Discrimination in the work place may have severe effects on the employees in terms of the psychological factors, job satisfaction, and morale. It has also been found that discriminated persons have high chances of indicating greater levels of stress, anxiety and depression, which result to lower work performance and frequent absenteeism. In addition, discrimination has the ability to destroy trust and unity in teams, which will affect teamwork and performance.

To complement the clear forms of discrimination in the workplace, ideas of inferiority and superiority by the employees are of great influence on the experience and reactions of the employees. Self-perceived inferior people internalize negative attitudes or biases and hence become very sensitive to discrimination acts and are not ready to confront them. On the other side, those having an entitlement feeling may adopt some behaviors of arrogance or superiority and so lead to an arrogant approach to the experiences of the marginalized colleagues.

In order to eliminate the problem of discrimination at the workplace, it is important to understand the psychological reasons behind the feeling of inferiority and superiority. The organizations must set cultures that would enable any employees to know that they are valued and that they can be respected irrespective of how they are perceived or how well they are competent. Unlike the acceptance behavior, rejection behavior in discrimination in workplaces incorporates the attitude of employees where the employees are actively resistant or refuse to condone discrimination. It is important to understand the influences behind rejection behavior to enhance the inclusiveness and equality in the organizations. Any sense of inferiority and superiority contributes to shaping the minds of employees and their behavior at the workplace. Such psychological constructs based on the perception of individuals by themselves and the nature of their relationships with other employees can affect the reaction of the employees towards discrimination in the workplace and the way they deal with the organizational environment. To be able to discuss discrimination within the workplace in a wholesome manner it is important to

understand how the combination of feelings of inferiority-superiority as well as acceptance/rejection behavior interacts. The self-views by the employees and the social comparisons play a role in their actions towards discriminatory behaviors as employees might either be complacent or rebellious to the discriminatory conducts.

Research by Lee (2022) has gone to the extent of examining the connection between feeling inferior and acceptance behavior behaviour that could be perceived as the feeling of inferiority hence participants are more likely to take discrimination since they fear being marginalized even further or worse being punished. On the other hand, people with the feeling of superiority might be more ready to oppose discrimination as a threat to their position or sense of self. Organizations should understand the contribution of psychological factors to the reactions of the employees to the issue of discrimination at the workplace and conduct interventions based on removing the inferiority and superiority complexes. Such can include the creation of the skills development and confidence-building opportunities, foster the culture of respect and inclusion, and ensure the promotion of empathy and understanding among the workforce. On the other hand, feelings of superiority involve an expectation by an individual that he/she is superior or better qualified than others at workplace.

Such feelings can be caused by real accomplishments, favorable responses of supervisors or other colleagues or simply due to entitlement. The people who develop a feeling of superiority can be characterized by arrogant attitudes, lack of listening to the opinions of others, inclination to control the communication process. On the one side, the sense of superiority can give confidence and assertiveness to some individuals, but on the other hand, it may cause such undesirable effects like interpersonal conflicts, refusal to take feedbacks or work in a team, the loss of empathy, and understanding towards their colleagues. Besides, those who feel superior might want to deny cases of discrimination at the place of work believing that they are untouchable or above discrimination. Instead of focusing on the mask of inferiority and superiority, organizations should tackle the cause of the condition to establish a positive working environment where every employee feels appreciated and empowered to speak against discrimination and demand a desirable change.

2.3 Acceptance Behavior

Employment discrimination is usually the situation when a firm discriminates against the candidate or employee due to his or her protected veteran status, race, color, religion, sex or sexual orientation and gender identity (Steinacker et al., 2020). Acceptance means when employees accept this discrimination.

Research by Brief and Weiss (2002) implies that the acceptance behavior depends also on how the employees perceive the legitimacy of the discriminatory actions in the organizational environment. It is possible that discriminatory acts may be rationalized by the employees to keep everything as it is or to benefit themselves. There is also a potential that power eminence in the work environment could contribute to the acceptance conducts as people with less power might be prone to fit the hegemonic rules in order to avoid unwanted consequences. The reaction of employees to discrimination in the workplace is diverse and most people adopt the behaviors that are consistent with accepting discriminatory treatment. Such acceptance may take different forms such as internalizing the mistreatment, failure to contest any discriminatory practice and even through contributions to continued discrimination by keeping silent over such practices. Studies indicate that the behavior of acceptance is usually affected by the power relationships at the workplace. It is possible that employees with a lower sense of power or influence might be willing to tolerate such treatments due to fear of retribution or adverse effects in case of contradicting the established state of affairs (Cortina et al., 2013; Wattoo et al., 2025).

Moreover, organizations that promote discrimination or at least accept it can make a situation where acceptance is a rule and not an exception. Brief and Weiss (2002) also emphasize on importance of organizational culture in creating acceptance behavior. The best way through which discrimination can be discouraged in organizations is through inculcating a culture of openness, diversity and inclusion where employees are likely to be encouraged to oppose discrimination practices. On the contrary, companies which allow or silently approve discrimination can maintain the situation when behaving in an acceptance manner is more common (Wattoo et al., 2025). Knowledge of the acceptance behavior is most critical in organizations seeking to diversify, be equitable and inclusive. The only way to administer effective interventions to eliminating discrimination practices is to employ multifaceted interventions such as building awareness programs, diversity training, and policies that focus on fairness and accountability (Wattoo et al., 2025). Ensuring that employees are comfortable to oppose discrimination and influence positive action by organizations, this will help provide a more inclusive and diverse space on the workforce. Moreover, the recent studies by Lee (2022) has investigated the psychological processes of conducting acceptance behavior, which indicates the importance of certain personal attributes, including personality and self-esteem, in determining employee reactions in response to discrimination in the workplace.

2.4 Rejection Behavior

In the event that one employee is treated unfavorably by a manager compared to the rest, then discrimination is taking place. It may be paying a woman worker less to do the exact same job as a fellow male counterpart or not offering an applicant of less privileged ethnicity the same training opportunities as the others of better position (Clausen et al., 2022). The studies indicate that the organization culture and social norms and individual views of justice all affect the behavior of rejection. When employees feel that discrimination is unfair or counter to organizational values, they will have high likelihoods of rejecting them (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Instead, the organizational culture emphasizing diversity, fairness, and inclusion is more likely to promote the rejection behavior among the employees because they feel free to address discriminatory actions without the fear of punishment. Brief and Weiss (2002) also stress on the aspect of individual empowerment in the context of inculcating rejection behavior. Workers with great self-worth, confidence and good moral conscience are also likely to challenge discriminatory acts and demand good change in the organization. The organizations enable rejection behavior by allowing the employees to express concern, address grievance, and contribute into decision making activities concerning the diversity and inclusion programs. Whereas some employees might tolerate treating them in a discriminating manner, others might be so opposed or even find a way of fighting and transforming discriminatory acts they face. This rejection behavior may assume different forms, e.g.: speaking out against discrimination, pushing changes in policies, filing complaints, with the HR or other authorities. According to studies, rejection behavior tends to be supported by having the moral sense or the need to uphold the concepts of fairness and equality (Avery et al., 2007).

When employees are emotionally attached to fighting discrimination, they are likely to behave in rejection even at the risk of their own lives. Nevertheless, organizational structures and cultures that punish or do not assist enough of the dissenters, may restrict the effectiveness of the rejection undertakings. The spread of rejection behavior is critical towards establishing a workplace environment in which every employee is treated with equal worth, esteem, as well as power. Companies need to focus on the programs of diversity and inclusion and develop their policies to ensure a culture of equity, fairness, and respect. Organizations should enable employees to say no to discrimination and promote a positive change to make the workplace more inclusive and equitable to everyone. Recent studies of Schmitt et al. (2014) has studied the psychological implications of the rejection behavior, and has keyed on its positive implications that may have on the well-being on employees and organizational performance.

3 MATERIAL AND METHOD

3.1 Sampling Technique

Two types of the sampling procedures are probability sampling and non-probability sampling. We selected a non-probability sampling strategy for our research project. In a non-probability sampling technique, the elements don't have a known or predefined likelihood of being selected as a subject, (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). Each person in a group has a chance to be selected as a sample unknown using this sampling procedure. The researcher considered two techniques convenience sampling strategy and snowball sampling technique, in a non-probability sampling technique because it is more practical, time-saving, and straightforward for respondents to access. Snowball sampling allows the researcher to collect data by using referrals, where every respondent is asked to share the instrument with others. It's easier to find samples: When referrals originate from trusted sources, they make it simple and quick to identify participants. A researcher saves time by not having to perform an additional task. Cost-effective: Because the referrals come from a major data source, this strategy is inexpensive.

3.2 Sample Size

The sample is a subset of the population, and a good sample is one that accurately captures all the population's features, and claims (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). While cost, time, and effort savings are the primary drivers behind sampling, the sample size should also be sufficient to produce accurate population estimates. The sample size of the current study is 30 employees working in the banking sector of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. The reason for this number of participants to collect the data from is that semi-structured interviews may generate an ample huge amount of data which may be difficult for the researcher to handle. To manage the data well, 30 is an adequate size of sample that may be used in a qualitative study.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

It was necessary to set out the type of analysis for the qualitative study. The researcher employed the technique of thematic analysis, as described by (Benner Jr, 1985), Leininger (1985), and Taylor and Bogdan (1989), because there is a dearth of literature in Pakistan that supports this study technique. More specifically, the researcher has closely adhered to Braun and Clarke (2006) guidelines for conducting thematic analysis. The technique which the current study utilizes for the data analysis is the thematic analysis technique. Thematic analysis is an approach for evaluating qualitative data that requires exploring across information sets to pinpoint, analyze, as well as

document repeated patterns. It is a technique for illustrating data, but it likewise includes analysis in the processes of selecting codes as well as building motifs (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). A distinguishing feature of thematic evaluation is its flexibility to become utilized within a vast series of epistemological and theoretical structures, and to become applied to a variety of research study concerns, concepts, and example dimensions.

Thematic analysis has many advantages when we are using semi-structured interviews. This flexible approach to the data is made possible by thematic analysis. We can modify the study designs. Throughout the study process, it is also possible to modify the research objectives. We are not required to abide by prescriptions. We have several ways to get data. It takes a subjective approach, allowing us to connect it to a variety of hypotheses. In a qualitative study, analyzing massive amounts of data is a difficult undertaking. The researchers can stray from their objectives. They find it unpleasant to work with a large amount of data. This is when thematic analysis comes in useful. It is simple to carry out with a lot of data. A thematic analysis separates the data into various sets. Also, it keeps the researchers from becoming sidetracked. In addition, thematic analysis seeks out identifiable themes that emerge from participant replies or narrations. The steps taken in the thematic analysis of this study are displayed in Table 1.

3.4 Research Instruments

The present study used semi-structured interview questions to generate the responses of the respondents to answer the main research questions and fulfill research objectives. The questions of the interview were composed with the consideration of the research objectives and research question. They were open-ended and semi-tailored questions with no definite order or sequence to follow when asked by the respondents. Moreover, the questions could also be added or deleted as per the needs of the study and the responses of the respondents. Table 2 shows some of the many questions used in the semi-structured interviews to generate the responses of the respondents.

4 RESULTS

In this section the findings of the thematic analysis of the data collected from the respondents are presented, offering a deep exploration of employee's experience and perception in the workplace. The analysis revealed four key themes that provide a comprehensive understanding of how feelings of inferiority and superiority, as well as experiences with discrimination, shape employees' behavior and attitudes.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis Steps used in the study

Phase	Description
1. Becoming familiar with data.	The interviews were documented and transcribed. The first stage in any qualitative research is to read and reread the transcripts. To familiarize the researcher with the complete body of collected data, it was extracted in an analyzable format.
2. Generating initial codes.	The information was structured logically and sequentially. During the first coding, enormous volumes of data were condensed into small, important segments.
3. Searching themes.	The initial codes were organized into plausible patterns (themes) that revealed something interesting about the research subjects.
4. Reviewing themes.	The early codes were organized into likely patterns (themes) that revealed something significant about the research subjects.
5. Defining themes.	The identified themes were evaluated, and subtopics were explored to determine their relationship to the fundamental themes.

Table 2: Research Questions Used in This Study

RQ1 Do employees feel inferior to others in their workplace in terms of their work abilities?	
1.	How often do you find yourself comparing your work abilities to those of your colleagues?
2.	To what extent do you believe your work skills are inferior to your colleagues?
3.	Have you ever hesitated to share your ideas or opinions at work due to a perceived lack of competence compared to your colleagues?
4.	Do you often feel a sense of inadequacy when working on team projects?
RQ2 Do employees feel superior to others in the workplace in terms of their work abilities?	
1.	How frequently do you find yourself thinking that your work abilities surpass those of your colleagues?
2.	To what extent do you believe your contributions are more valuable than those of your colleagues?
3.	Have you ever encountered situations where you believed your skills were superior, leading to conflicts or misunderstandings with colleagues?
4.	Do you tend to take on leadership roles within your team based on a perception of your superior abilities?
RQ3 Do employees face workplace discrimination at their work?	
1.	In the past six months, have you personally experienced any form of discrimination at your workplace?
2.	How comfortable are you in reporting instances of discrimination to your supervisor or HR department?
3.	Have you witnessed any colleagues facing discrimination, even if you haven't experienced it yourself?
4.	Do you think your workplace has effective policies in place to address and prevent discrimination?
5.	How aware are you of the various forms of workplace discrimination, including subtle or indirect forms?
RQ4 Do employees accept workplace discrimination at their work?	
1.	Can you recall a specific incident where you accepted a behavior at work, even though it felt discriminatory to you?
2.	To what extent do you believe individuals should tolerate certain behaviors as part of workplace culture, even if they are perceived as discriminatory?
3.	Are there instances where you chose not to speak up against discriminatory behavior to avoid conflict or negative consequences?
4.	How much influence do your coworkers' reactions have on your decision to accept or reject discriminatory behavior?
5.	In your opinion, what factors contribute to a person accepting discriminatory behavior in the workplace?
RQ5 Do employees reject workplace discrimination at their work?	
1.	Can you provide an example of a time when you actively rejected discriminatory behavior at your workplace?
2.	To what extent do you believe individuals have a responsibility to stand up against discrimination, even if they are not directly affected?
3.	How supportive do you find your workplace environment in encouraging employees to speak out against discrimination?
4.	Have you participated in any training or workshops aimed at preventing workplace discrimination?
5.	What actions or initiatives do you think could be implemented to promote a culture of rejection towards discrimination in the workplace?
RQ6 Does feeling inferior to others lead the employees to accept workplace discrimination at their workplace?	
1.	Do you accept discrimination because you don't value yourself?
2.	Do you accept discrimination because you feel inferior to others?
RQ7 Does feeling superior to others lead the employees to reject workplace discrimination at your workplace?	
1.	Do you reject discrimination because you overvalue yourself?
2.	Do you reject discrimination because you feel superior to others?

1. The Feeling of the Inferiority at the Workplace

The first theme began around the impressions of inferiority that some employees encounter in their workplace. This theme describes how certain employees observe themselves as less capable or less proficient compared to their colleagues. These

feelings of inferiority are often correlated to self-doubt, lower self-esteem, and a lack of confidence in their work abilities. Employees who believe these feelings may struggle with assertiveness, often assuming negative incidents and attributing them to their perceived inadequacies. This sense of inferiority can

affect their overall job performance and satisfaction, leading to a cycle of self-reinforcement where their perceived lack of ability becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

2. The Feeling of Superiority at the Workplace

Compared with the first theme, the second theme focuses on the feelings of superiority that some employees experience concerning their colleagues. These people are more likely to consider themselves to be more qualified or experienced or worthy than other people in the working place. Such superiority may cause arrogance and snob attitude towards the roles of other people. Though it could have the positive effect of enhancing their self-confidence and inspire them, it could also cause strains and cleavages at the workplace. These employees who have such feelings of superiority can oversee meetings and discussions, seek to be credited with group results, and undermining the work of his or her colleagues, which influences the team and teamwork.

3. Facing Discrimination at the Workplace

The third theme further explores the discrimination issues that employees go through in the work place. This theme points out the existence of numerous types of discrimination, whether it can be done by gender, race, or age, or other personal features. Employees could also tell their stories of how they had been mistreated, passed over in the allocation of positions, or omitted in opportunities because of these prejudices. The effects of discrimination are enormous, which brings bitterness, reduced job satisfaction, and aliens. In the analysis, discrimination is not a simple individual matter, but it is also a systemic matter and is very much embedded in the culture and practices of the organizations.

4. Accepting or Rejecting Discrimination at Workplace

The last theme involves the reaction of the employees against discrimination at the workplace; mainly whether they would accept the practice or not. Other workers, especially those who consider themselves inferior, might live with discrimination thinking that this is one of those unfortunate things that happen in the job sphere. They can even justify discrimination in terms of not having a choice or it is okay since they think they deserve it because they are not as good as they should be. Conversely, the employees with a superiority complex or those who are confident or capable of doing their job, tend to reject discriminating conducts. They can contest against unfair treatment, promote themselves and seek redress within the formal solace. The theme reflects the interconnections between individual perception and the environment surrounding the organization in constituting responses to discrimination.

Analysis of Thems 1: Feeling of Inferiority at Workplace

This theme insinuates that individuals believe that they are truly inferior in their feelings and emotional self-image with regard to others. For example: one of the respondents said "When someone sorts out the problem, which I failed to do and have vast knowledge about different trending languages" he feels inferior as he is the less capable person in his organization. He has all the qualities and expertise necessary to do things well. Another respondent has a similar view about himself as he said "Whenever he completed the task, which I failed to do or consuming more time to do" he feels inferior and less capable person in his work field. He thinks he has less expertise and skills compared to his colleagues. He possesses all the qualities of performing better than her coworkers. Another one came up with a very different idea "I think my skills are superior then others and I find good myself than others" he thinks she is over-skilled as she does extra duties. He is harder working and does overtime. He fulfills his responsibilities on time, and it makes him a better performer than other coworkers.

Finding of Theme 1

Based on the analysis above, most of the respondents genuinely seemed to be feeling inferior when they carried out their work responsibilities. However, there have been a few responses that suggest that some people do not feel the Dunning-Kruger Effect or determine themselves as inferior. However, there have been some responses that suggest that people who considered themselves as less capable performers had high skills and abilities for the job they were doing. Therefore, these findings cover the main research question 1 in terms of answering it.

4.1 Analysis of Theme 2: Feeling of Superiority at the Workplace

According to the basis of the analysis above theme no 1, most of the respondents genuinely seemed to be feeling inferior when they were doing something for their jobs they were doing. This theme suggests that people experience the Dunning-Kruger Effect at their workplace and consider themselves as genuinely superior to others. For example, one person said, "I help out my colleagues in solving their problems in which they are tangled and most of the time those problems are so easy to solve that I doubt the abilities of my colleagues". So here it seems that the respondent considers himself a better performer and his colleagues somewhat inferior. This may be due to his ambitious nature. Having an ambitious nature doesn't mean that the work the organization offers to the person is not according to the person's qualifications. The person may not have the capabilities that the organization requires and just because of being ambitious the person may be thinking

differently or may be detracted from what the organization has hired him for. And so, this employee seems to be feeling superior. Another person said, "When we work faster than them and solve problems faster than them". So here it seems that being flexible and skillful are the basic requirements of any job, they don't make you over-skilled. The person has over-estimated his abilities and skills, but this over-estimation doesn't make him a capable person. Thus, the response of this respondent proves that he suffers from the Dunning Kruger Effect of feeling superior to others.

Findings of Theme 2

Based on the analysis above, it seemed that some of the respondents were considering themselves as over-skilled due to experiencing the Dunning Kruger Effect of feeling superior to others. They were not over-skilled, but it was their misperception that made them overestimate their skills and abilities. Moreover, there have been some responses that suggest that people who considered themselves as more capable performers had low skills and abilities for the job they were doing.

4.2 Analysis of Theme 3: Facing Discrimination at the Workplace

According to themes 1 and 2, it has been found, that they were experiencing the Dunning Kruger Effect of inferiority and superiority which shows that they were less or more skilled than what they thought of themselves. However, both types of people, whether feeling inferior or superior face workplace discrimination at the workplace, which shows that discrimination is a widespread phenomenon in organizations. For example, one person said, "Yes I faced discrimination sometimes even though I find myself the most capable employee among my coworkers". This statement shows that the person faced discrimination as compared to his/her coworkers, yet the person feels of himself/herself superior. Similarly, another person said, "I face discrimination, who does not face it. This world is so discriminatory, and organizations are no different".

On the contrary, one person said "Yes there is discrimination in my workplace! Oh wait! I think there isn't any. Or maybe I face it. I don't know...". This statement shows that the person has low self-esteem and high self-doubt which makes the person unable to understand whether what he/she faces is discrimination or something else. This self-doubt also tells that this person may feel inferior and that inferiority results in self-doubt. Also, this response talks about the ambiguity around discrimination which people feel, and which makes them discard their true experiences of discrimination as their misunderstandings.

Finding of Theme 3

It seemed that some of the respondents were

considering themselves discriminated against and some weren't. Some even doubted what they faced, whether they could label it discrimination or something else. Therefore, these findings cover the main research question 3 in terms of answering it.

4.3 Analysis of Theme 4: Accepting and Rejecting Discrimination at Workplace

One of the respondents said, "Discrimination is a part of every organization, but I cannot bear it and speak up always". This statement shows that the person is facing discrimination but raises their voice against it. The respondent further said, "Why do I stay quiet, I am the best employee here whether people like it or not". This statement shows that perhaps the person rejects discrimination because of feeling superior to others. Another person said, "I faced discrimination, but I do not support it, and these are my suggestions to overcome discrimination, such as implement clear anti-discrimination policies, provide diversity training, focus on equity, and provide inclusion training, promote inclusive leadership". This statement shows that the person has high self-esteem and high confidence in the workplace to reduce discrimination. Again, the glimpses of superiority are noticed here, and one may say that is why the person is rejecting discrimination. Moreover, many people show the tendency they accept discrimination because they feel inferior, or they feel as if they somewhat deserve it. For example, one person said, "It may not be discrimination, maybe I need to improve my work".

Findings of Theme 4

The responses of the respondents clearly show that those who accept discrimination feel inferior and so they accept discrimination and those who reject it, they reject it because they feel superior. Therefore, there is a clear play of the Dunning-Kruger Effect in people's acceptance and rejection of workplace discrimination. Therefore, these findings cover the main research questions 4, 5, 6 & 7 in terms of answering them.

5.3 Conclusion

The primary aim of the present study is to identify the behavior of employees regarding acceptance and rejection of discrimination and feelings of superiority and inferiority in organizational settings. In other words, the study aims to explore the role of the Dunning-Kruger effect in people's acceptance and rejection of discrimination at their workplaces. The research established 7 main research questions to be answered to fulfill 7 research objectives. To do so, the data was collected from 30 employees working at different banks in Bahawalpur, Pakistan, using semi-structured interviews. The data collected was then analyzed using the thematic analysis technique. The organization of the analysis is done under four main themes identified in the

analysis which answered all the 7 research questions. The themes suggested that people in the workplace feel inferior and superior and they feel that way due to facing or experiencing the Dunning Kruger Effect of being superior or inferior. The analysis also suggests that people face discrimination massively in organizations irrespective of the fact that whether they believe that they are superior or inferior. Moreover, the interesting bit about the analysis is that it suggests that people's tendencies to accept and reject discrimination are dependent on the fact that whether they feel superior or inferior. People feeling inferior in organizations tend to accept discrimination without any question as their deserving fate while those who feel superior question discrimination and bluntly reject it.

5.1 Research Implications

This study investigated the cognitive bias produced by the Dunning-Kruger Effect, which causes people to overestimate and underestimate their potential and talents when they are more or less than what they expect of themselves. This led them to accept and reject discriminatory practices in organizations as well. The research has both practical and theoretical implications. For example, the current study's findings are expected to illustrate the potential cause of people feeling superior and inferior (which is the Dunning Kruger Effect) in organizational settings, and how this may be leading people to accept or reject workplace discrimination. The current study may help the organizations and their management to understand the psychological mindset of their employees, particularly concerning discrimination. A better understanding of the employees may lead the organizations to flourish through their better productivity and controlling discrimination. On the theoretical ground, the study provides a thorough literature for future studies where a psychological bias of the Dunning Kruger Effect is linked to discrimination in a unique way enabling the organizations to understand the psyche of their employees better, particularly regarding discrimination and their dealing of this phenomenon.

5.2 Limitations and Future Directions

The present study collected the data by using semi-structured interviews with the banking sector employees of Bahawalpur, Pakistan, so it may be lacking generalizability to the other contexts. It may also be recommended to collect data from focus group discussions or with the utilization of other qualitative methods of data collection for it may provide more profound results. Moreover, only thirty people were included in the sample of the study due to the shortage of time to handle vast data so the future study may consider a wider sample. Also, the study used qualitative methods to analyze data. It is suggested to use mixed methods for further studies in this area to

measure the diversity in results.

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