Impact Of Workplace Bullying On Work Engagement: Mediating Role Of Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement among teachers of public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, while considering organizational commitment as a mediator. Data were collected from 394 teachers of four public sector universities, namely, University of Malakand, University of Swat, University of Peshawar and Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan working in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. Amos and SPSS were the statistical tools used to help in analyzing the data. The results revealed a significant negative relationship between workplace bullying and organizational commitment, workplace bullying and work engagement while a positive relationship between organizational commitment and work engagement was revealed. Workplace bullying's influence on work engagement diminished when organizational commitment was included as a mediator; as a result, the coefficient dropped from -0.49 to -0.26. Thus organizational commitment was proved to be a partial mediator in the relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement.

Keywords: Workplace Bullying; Work Engagement; Organizational Commitment; Teachers; Pakistan.

Introduction

Bullying at work is a type of workplace harassment that entails recurrently occurring undesirable behaviours such as social isolation, bullying, and verbal abuse (Ståle Einarsen, 2000). Nielsen, Matthiesen, and Einarsen (2010) found that between 11.3% and 18.1% of workers report having been bullied at work. Because the victims of workplace bullying are unable to effectively defend themselves against the mistreatment they endure at the hands of their abusers, the repercussions of bullying are severe. According to a number of studies, bullying at work has a positive relationship with burnout (Ali, Bilal, Raza, & Usman Ghani, 2019; Livne & Goussinsky, 2018; Rossiter & Sochos, 2018) and turnover intentions (Bano & Khan; Hassan, Ikramullah, & Iqbal, 2021; Paul & Kee, 2020) and is inversely linked to job satisfaction (Drydakis, 2019; Giorgi, Leon-Perez, & Arenas, 2015; Valentine, Fleischman, & Godkin, 2015), job performance (Devonish, 2013; Robert, 2018; UCHO, 2013), organizational commitment (Jin & Hwa, 2017; Kang, Kim, & Han, 2018; Malik, Sattar, & Yaqub, 2018), work engagement (Coetzee & van Dyk, 2018; Ståle Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, Lande, & Nielsen, 2018; Goodboy, Martin, & Bolkan, 2020), and organizational citizenship behavior (López-Cabarcos, Vázquez-Rodríguez, Piñeiro-Chousa,

& Caby, 2020; Mourssi-Alfash, 2014; Tsai & Chang, 2022).

Bullying in the workplace is mainly described as persistent harassing behaviours, such verbal abuse and social exclusion, carried out over a prolonged period of time by one or more of the offenders. Another important factor to consider is the process of bullying that escalates, whereby disputes between the aggrieved parties grow over time and the harassing actions become more severe and regular (Ståle Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996). A power imbalance between the bully(s) and the victim occurs in the context of workplace bullying as well (Jenkins, Zapf, Winefield, & Sarris, 2012). These traits add to the detrimental effects of workplace bullying in a number of ways. According to Namie and Namie (2011), bullying behaviour can also take the form of pressure, intimidation, sabotage, embarrassment, threats—both verbal and nonverbal—and interruption of job productivity.

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), work engagement is the term used to describe an ongoing positive motivational state towards work resulting from an energetic (physical, emotional, and cognitive) connection between people and their occupations. According to González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker, and Lloret (2006), engaged individuals exhibit vigour, which is defined as high levels of energy and psychological resilience at work, an eagerness to be devoted to one's work through determination and perseverance, even during challenging circumstances, dedication, which is defined as a feeling of meaning, importance, passion, excitement, motivation, pride, and challenge, and absorption, which is defined as a complete state of focus and intense involvement in one's work. Work engagement tends to support and encourage people's work productivity (Hanaysha, 2016; Kim, Kolb, & Kim, 2013) and is favourably correlated with organizational commitment (Abu-Shamaa, Al-

Rabayah, & Khasawneh, 2015; Al-Dossary, 2022; Kim et al., 2017; Yandi & Havidz, 2022), job satisfaction (Anselmus Dami et al., 2022; Gordon & Adler, 2022; Yandi & Havidz, 2022) psychological well-being (Tesi, Aiello, & Giannetti, 2019; Wang, Derakhshan, & Azari Noughabi, 2022).

A psychological condition known as organisational commitment characterises the bond between workers and the organisation and may have an impact on workers' decisions to stay or leave the organisation (Sheldon, 1971). It is a reflection of the mental contract that exists between workers and the company and serves to support job security. Three aspects of organisational commitment were identified by Allen and Meyer: "affective continuous and normative commitment". Employees' emotional reliance, positive psychological inclination, and sacrifices made for the company are all considered aspects of affective commitment. Continuance commitment is a reflection of understanding the costs associated with leaving the company. Normative commitment refers to the way in which workers are constrained by societal standards and hence grow to feel obligated to remain with the company (Meyer & Allen, 1991). According to a research, those who are called to a certain field tend to feel more accountable and responsible for their work and organisations than people who are not. They could be devoted to their organisation because it provides a particular setting in which they can fulfil their vocation (Afsar, Shahjehan, Cheema, & Javed, 2018). Keeping in view the above literature, we develop:

H1: Workplace bullying is negatively related to workplace engagement among Teachers of Public Sector Universities, Pakistan (TPSUP).

H2: Workplace bullying is negatively related to organizational commitment among TPSUP.

H3: Organizational commitment is positively related to workplace engagement among TPSUP.

H4: Relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement among TPSUP is mediated by organizational commitment.

Research Methodology

Data collection

Data were collected from 394 teachers of four public sector universities, namely, University of Malakand, University of Swat, University of Peshawar and Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan working in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. Five hundred questionnaires were physically distributed to the faculty members including professors, associate professors, assistant professors and lecturers. Three hundred and ninety four questionnaires which were hundred percent complete were received from the respected faculty members of all the above four universities during 45 days. The participants were 340 male and the remaining 54 were female. Thirty five (N=35) professors, eighty (N=80) Associate Professors, one hundred and two (N=102) Assistant Professors and one hundred and seventy seven (N=177) Lecturers participated in this research voluntarily.

Measurement

Work engagement

Work engagement was gauged through the 9-item shortened version Utrecht WE Survey (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004). This survey is composed of 3 facets which are "vigor, dedication, and absorption". A few items of work engagement include "At my work, I feel bursting with energy" (vigor), "I am proud on the work that I do" (dedication) and "I am immersed in my work" (absorption). The participants' comments were gathered using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 denotes strong disagreement and 5 indicates strong agreement.

Table 1: Reliability of Vigor, Dedication and Absorption

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alfa
Vigor	.91
Dedication	.87
Absorption	.93

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment was gauged through organizational commitment scale (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Organizational commitment is composed of 3 facets which are "affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment". A few items of organizational commitment include "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization." and "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own" (Affective Commitment), "It would be very hard for me to leave my job at this organization right now even if I wanted to" and "I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization" (Continuous Commitment) and "Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave" and "I would feel guilty if I left this organization now" (Normative Commitment). The participants' comments were gathered using a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 denotes strong disagreement and 7 indicates strong agreement.

Table 2: Reliability of Affective, Continuous and Normative Commitment

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alfa
Affective Commitment	.95
Continuous Commitment	.90
Normative Commitment	.88

Workplace bullying

Workplace bullying was gauged through a negative act questionnaire (Staale Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). We have used 2 dimensions which are work-related and individual-related behaviors in this study. The participants' comments were gathered using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 denotes never and 5 indicates always. Example of work-related behavior includes "Being ordered to do work below your level of competence". Example of individual-related behavior includes "being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work".

Table 3: Reliability of Work-related and individual-related behaviors

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alfa
Work-related	.91
Individual-related	.87

Table 4: Correlations among Workplace Bullying, Organizational Commitment and Workplace Engagement

		Workplace Bullying	Organizational commitment	Work engagement
Workplace Bullying	Pearson Correlation	1	-.395**	-.351**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	394	394	394
Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	-.395**	1	.518**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	394	394	394
Work Engagement	Pearson Correlation	-.351**	.518**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	394	394	394

"**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)."

Table 4 shows the correlation among workplace bullying, organizational commitment and workplace engagement. The results of table 4 revealed a significant negative relationship between workplace bullying and organizational commitment, workplace bullying and work engagement while a positive relationship
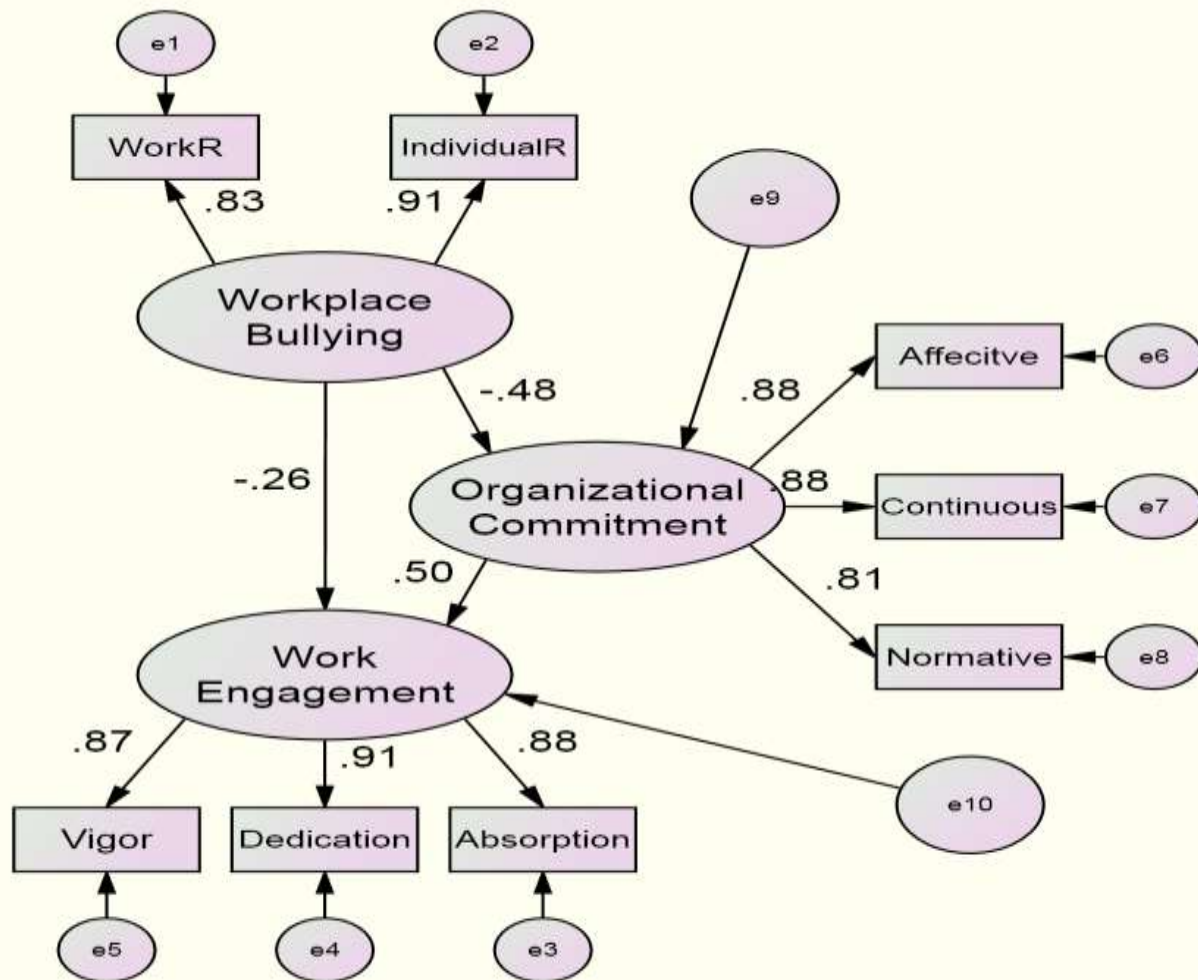
between organizational commitment and work engagement. So we accept:

H1: Workplace bullying is negatively related to workplace engagement among TPSUP.

H2: Workplace bullying is negatively related to organizational commitment among TPSUP.

H3: Organizational commitment is positively related to workplace engagement among TPSUP.

Research Model: Relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement through organizational commitment

In this work, the validity of the three-factor model—workplace bullying, organizational commitment, and work engagement—was investigated by the application of structural equation modelling. Chi Square was 43.717, degrees of freedom were 17, CMIN/DF was 2.572, AGFI was.942, RMSEA was.063, comparative fit index was .988, RMR was.050, p-value was.000, and the Goodness of Fit Index was 0.973, all of which showed how well the model fit the data. The study showed that workplace bullying negatively affected work engagement, with a regression value of -.26. Moreover, organizational commitment had a regression value of .50 with work engagement, indicating a strong impact on work engagement. A high

negative relationship between the workplace bullying and organizational commitment is indicated by a regression coefficient of -.48. The workplace bullying, organizational commitment and work engagement variables' regression coefficients fall within a permissible range of values. Workplace bullying's influence on work engagement diminished when organizational commitment was included as a mediator; as a result, the coefficient dropped from -0.49 to -0.26. Thus, the present investigation endorses the subsequent hypotheses:

H1: Workplace bullying is negatively related to workplace engagement among TPSUP.

H2: Workplace bullying is negatively related to organizational commitment among TPSUP.

H3: Organizational commitment is positively related to workplace engagement among TPSUP.

H4: Relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement among TPSUP is mediated by organizational commitment.

Table 5: Values of GFI, CFI, AGFI, RMR, CMIN/Chi Square, and RMSEA

Indices	Values
CMIN	43.717
DF	17
CMIN/DF	2.572
P	.000
RMR	.050
GFI	.973
AGFI	.942
CFI	.988
RMSEA	.063

Table 5 displays the CMIN/Chi Square, AGFI, probability, GFI, CFI, RMR, and RMSEA values. Chi Square, 43.717; degrees of freedom, 17; CMIN/DF, 2.572; AGFI, .942; RMSEA, .063; comparative fit index, .988; RMR, .050; p-value, .000; and the Goodness of Fit Index, 0.973 are among the acceptable values. We therefore support the three-factor research model of workplace bullying, organizational commitment, and work engagement.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement among teachers of public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, while considering organizational commitment as a mediator. Data were collected from 394 teachers of four public sector universities, namely, University of Malakand, University of Swat, University of Peshawar and Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan working in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. Amos and SPSS were the statistical tools used to help in analyzing the data. The results revealed a significant negative relationship between workplace bullying and organizational commitment, workplace bullying and work engagement while a positive relationship between organizational commitment and work engagement was revealed. Workplace bullying's influence on work engagement diminished when organizational commitment was included as a mediator; as a result, the coefficient dropped from

-0.49 to -0.26. Thus organizational commitment was proved to be a partial mediator in the relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement.

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