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# [Workplace Bullying and its Influence on Innovative Work Behavior: Exploring the Mediating Role of Perceived Organizational Support]

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the impact of workplace bullying on innovative work behavior (IWB), with perceived organizational support (POS) as a mediator, grounded in Conservation of Resources theory. A cross-sectional survey of 336 employees from the public banking sector in Rawalpindi and Islamabad was conducted. Using Hayes' Process Model 4, results revealed that workplace bullying significantly reduces IWB. Additionally, POS significantly mediates this relationship—employees who perceive low organizational support experience stronger negative effects of bullying, further inhibiting innovation. The findings highlight the need for a supportive work environment to foster employee innovative work behavior and mitigate the harmful effects of bullying. The study offers valuable implications for organizational leadership, HR practices, and future research directions aimed at enhancing workplace well-being and innovation.

**Keywords:** Workplace Bullying, Innovative Work Behavior, Perceived Organizational Support, Conservation of Resource Theory.

**Introduction**

Workplace bullying has become an increasingly prominent issue in organizations globally. Bullying in the workplace, first formally introduced in the 1980s by Leymann, is defined as a form of psychological terror or mobbing where aggressive and unethical behavior is systematically directed at an individual by one or more perpetrators. This definition has since evolved and workplace bullying is now widely recognized as a deliberate and repetitive pattern of harassment or mistreatment leading to negative consequences for both the individual and the organization (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996). Bullying is a significant part of work life, bullying in the workplace has gained attention in management research over the past 20 years (Einarsen et al., 2009). Bullying is regarded as an undesirable behavior that puts a person's interests in danger in any circumstance on a global scale (Omari & Paul, 2015).

According to the researchers, workplace bullying can be characterized as hostility, emotional assault, intimidation and lower-level brutality (Timo et al., 2004).

Bullying at work is a serious problem that no organization is ought to handle it casually. According to researchers, the prevalence of workplace bullying is receiving greater focus, and substantial studies indicate that it negatively impacts both individual and organizational outcomes. Bullying leads to elevated turnover, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, downturns, and significant resignations, all of which can impair productivity and performance (Einarsen, Copper, 2011). However, one significant yet underexplored consequence of workplace bullying is its effect on employee innovative work behavior.

As environmental instability and dynamism increased in the twenty-first century, organizations are depending more and more on innovation to maintain or boost efficiency and competitiveness. Innovation is a key driver of organizational success, particularly in a rapidly evolving business environment where adaptability and creative solutions are essential.

# **Journal of Management & Social Science**

## **VOL-2, ISSUE-2, 2025**

Innovative work behaviour involves an individual's proactive efforts to develop, introduce, and apply novel ideas contributing to their organization's goals. Workplace stress, such as bullying reduces intrinsic drive which in turn restricts creative output. Such behavior compromises the organizational staff's capability to innovation and proficiency (Liao, Lui & Lio, 2010).

This research investigates how workplace bullying directly impacts employee innovative work behaviour (IWB), with perceived organizational support (POS) as a mediator. Previous research has addressed the detrimental effects of bullying on various variables including organizational performance, intent to leave, leadership effectiveness and productivity of workers. However, in compliance with the Pakistani-specific context, little research has been conducted on the impact of workplace bullying on employees' innovative work behaviour. Studies on workplace bullying should consider its broader context and multifaceted impact, spanning individual, job related, organizational and national levels (Samnani & Singh, 2012).

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is a central factor that mediates workplace bullying's impact on innovative work behaviour. As suggested by (Zhou, X., Rasool, S.F., and Ma 2020), investigating this association is crucial for understanding its impact on innovative work behaviour. The term Perceived Organizational Support describes how employees believe their organization values their contributions and cares about their betterment (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). When employees face bullying in the workplace, their perception of organizational support often declines, lead them to feel that the organization does not care about their wellbeing or efforts to address the mistreatment. This perceived lack of support may further exacerbate the adverse effects of bullying, creating a vicious cycle where the absence of organizational support leads to disengagement, reduced motivation and, ultimately, a decline in innovative work behaviour. When employees experience bullying and perceive the organization as indifferent or unsupportive in addressing the issue, they may internalize the belief that their efforts to innovate will go unrecognized or undervalued. The lack of support intensifies frustration and helplessness and discourages employees from investing time and effort in creative problem-solving or idea generation. Innovation, which requires a sense of psychological safety, collaboration, and trust, becomes nearly impossible in such a hostile environment. This decline in innovative behaviour ultimately affects the organization's ability to compete, adapt and thrive in the marketplace. In view of this, bullying at work is a persistent problem that has an impact on the bedrock of each organization (Sheehan, McCabe & Garavan, 2018). This study advances the literature by integrating the Conservation of Resources theory, making a substantial contribution to the management field and paving the way for future research and practical applications in organizational behavior. In addition to individual effects, workplace bullying and a perceived lack of organizational support also have broader organizational implications; bullying creates a toxic work environment characterized by fear, distrust, and a lack of collaboration, all of which are antithetical to a culture of innovation.

Despite the extensive literature on workplace bullying, limited research has explored how bullying directly impacts innovative work behaviour, particularly in the Pakistan, settings. In the Pakistani public sector, where hierarchical structures and rigid

policies often dominate, the likelihood of workplace bullying is heightened, and the perception of organizational support may be particularly fragile. Employees in such environments may feel especially powerless and unsupported when they face bullying, which further undermines their motivation to engage in innovative work behaviours. To effectively prevent and handle workplace bullying and its detrimental impacts on organizational performance, it is imperative to comprehend these dynamics. This study offers a novel contribution to the literature by identifying specific conditions under which workplace bullying hinders or alters innovative work behaviour among employees. The findings of this research allow organizations and their management to not only address bullying but also to nurture a culture of innovation, trust, and psychological safety. By offering actionable strategies for HR to combat bullying and foster supportive work environments, the research empowers organizations to improve employee wellbeing, creativity, and overall performance.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Workplace Bullying and Innovative Work Behavior**

Bullying can be defined as repeated, unwanted conducts directed at individuals, which might be intentional or unintentional but consistently cause embarrassment, irritation, and anxiety. These actions can disrupt execution of tasks; also create an antagonistic work atmosphere (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997). In a toxic work environment, bullying can erode an individual's confidence and self-esteem, leading to profound psychological distress and physical harm, further impacting their overall wellbeing (Attell et al., 2017). Though workplace bullying is a complex phenomenon with no universally agreed definition, it includes behaviours such as verbal abuse, social isolation, spreading rumors, physical assault, and task rejection (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). It often stems from power imbalances between the bully and the victim, leading to an environment of hostility (Einarsen et al., 2011; Timo et al., 2004). Workplace bullying is characterized by unreasonable and cruel conduct that occurs regularly over time, with a significant power disparity between the perpetrator and the victim (Branch et al., 2007). Cowie et al., (2002) state that bullying can be defined as even one instance of unfavorable behavior with the employee. Workers who witness wrongdoing from their supervisors and coworkers will be unwilling to execute their usual tasks, their performance and morale will decline and they are more likely to display negative attitudes like less innovative work practices or decreased originality (Sidle, 2009).

In today's dynamic and fiercely competitive workplace, there is an increasing expectation for employees to contribute distinctive and practical ideas for new procedures, amenities and products (Zhou & Hoever, 2014). Innovative behavior is essential for an organization's success and survival as well as for improving customer satisfaction and retention (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009).

Participating in discretionary behaviors such as innovative work behavior constitutes a vital dimension of employee contribution that optimizes organizational processes and production (Agarwal et al., 2012). As a result, organizations are constantly prepared to set rules that can encourage more innovative work behavior from employees (Frah, Huang & Gong, 2009). Bullying inflicts serious harm on nearly every organization, drawing intensified research efforts due to its widespread occurrence and

# Journal of Management & Social Science

## VOL-2, ISSUE-2, 2025

profound impact (Leon-Perez & Arenas, 2015). Workplace bullying has been linked to reduced performance, lower organizational commitment and diminished citizenship behavior. However, its effect on employee innovative behavior that is defined as generating and applying useful, novel ideas in work contexts remains underexplored (Amabile, 1988). Understanding the factors that influence innovation in the presence of bullying is essential (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010) Extensive research has highlighted the harmful outcomes of bullying in the workplace, yet few studies have specifically investigated its impact on employees' innovative behavior (Sharifirad, 2016).

Employees who experience harassment are less likely to participate in creative processes, as their psychological and emotional resources are depleted, leading to a decline in their ability to innovate (Zhou & Hoever, 2014; Liao et al., 2010) Additionally, a stressful workplace takes up a lot of their time and attention, depleting their resources also reducing their ability to be creative (Podsakoff et al., 2007) Thus, because resources are confined, a reduction in ingenuity may occur during workplace bullying and might be seen as an employee's trying to conserve resources by exerting less efforts (Agarwal, & Rai 2018). Previous studies have linked workplace hostility with innovative work practices, showing that bullied employees experience disrespect and lose their dignity and self-worth, which hinders their productivity and creativity and is detrimental to both the employees and the company they work for (Ghosh, 2017). Consequently, bullying at work creates an antagonistic atmosphere that stifles employee innovativeness (Zhang et al., 2014).

In this way, it is proposed that

**H1:** Workplace bullying is negatively associated with innovative work behavior.

### **Workplace Bullying and Perceived Organizational Support**

People's assessments of how their company recognizes and appreciates their efforts through just remuneration and awards make up the (POS) construct (Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Rhodes & Eisenberger, 2002). Those who witness brutal treatment from their managers often convict the company for malfeasance and develop a negative opinion of organization's assistance (Eisenberger, Shoss Restubog & Zagenczyk, 2013).

The way that managers, coworkers guide and assess their subordinates is a moral and statutory responsibility of the organization. Levinson (1965) contended that workers often accuse the organization of treating them poorly. Moreover, a prior study found that workers who experience stressful situations, like bullying, are more inclined to experience a lack of organizational support, which could result in worse outcomes for survivors ( McLaughlin , Cassidy & McDowell, 2014).

Employees are more inclined to perceive organizational support positively when their manager or supervisor treats them well. However, unfair and degrading behaviours like bullying can signal to employees that they are neither regarded nor valued (Stinglhamber & Vandenberg, Eisenberger, 2013). Those who experience exploitation, adversarial treatment come to feel that their employer doesn't care about their psychological well-being and these negative events are being carried out on purpose to harm them. As a result, their perception of organizational support declines (Naseer Saima & Usman Raja, 2019). According to Taylor (2011), perpetrators of bullying report inadequate support from their coworkers. Employees subjected to bullying may blame

the perpetrator and perceive supervisors or coworkers as complicit, resulting in reduced trust and perceived support. Employees may consider reporting bullying to be futile when the offender is a supervisor, whose role is expected to align with organizational protection rather than perpetration of harm (Longo & Sherman, 2007) As a result of the abovementioned literature, it is proposed that workplace bullying may result in lower interpretations of organizational support; individuals might view the environment as toxic if the organization fails to address such harmful behavior, people may view the environment as disastrous and think their managers are unsupportive.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that

**H2:** Workplace bullying is negatively associated with perceived organizational support.

### **Perceived Organizational Support and Innovative Work Behavior**

When organizations recognize employees' efforts, acknowledge their ideas, and support their achievements, it positively impacts work attitudes and behaviours (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). POS is particularly crucial in fostering innovative behaviour within employees, as it enhances their motivation to generate creative ideas and solutions. Organizational support helps employees feel appreciated, leading to increased creativity and productivity, thus giving organizations a competitive advantage in a fast paced business world (Leonard-Barton, 1992). Gregory (2010) explained how employees are more likely to come up with innovative and ground breaking ideas, explore more possibilities, resolve impending challenges, and operationalize their ideas when they believe their company values them, doesn't criticize them, and encourages them to do so. As a result, their innovative output increases. It is imperative for employees to develop a profound and resilient perception of both managerial and supervisor support in order to exhibit IWBs. This can be accomplished by giving them resources and work autonomy, encouraging group role behaviors to exchange ideas and build support, and also encouraging individual role behaviors that demonstrate flexibility, risk-taking, loyalty, and self-confidence (Lee et al., 2014). Organizational support acknowledges employee ideas and suggestions for improvement at work

According to Imran et al. (2020), Perceived organizational support (POS) is an employee in the absolute sense that the company genuinely cares for them, values their efforts, and attends to their wants and socio-emotional requirements. Consequently, employees reciprocate with respect, recognition, and commitment to the organization. Additionally, employee innovation and the company's success may both be enhanced by perceived organizational support. The previously indicated point of view is in concordance with the empirical literature, particularly the contributions of (Aslan, 2019 & Margaretha et al., 2020), which asserts perceived organizational support (POS) as a pivotal organizational resource that foster, sustains and enhance employees' propensity to exhibit innovative work behavior. Innovative work behaviour on the part of employees is closely linked to their workplace, the organization also influences independently creative ideas and inventions, which motivates workers to strive for their psychological well-being and favorably aids in achieving goals (Darwish et al., 2020; MA Islam et al., 2020). An essential indicator of organizational support for professional staff is a pleasant work environment (Allen & Shanock, 2013)

Because it serves as a hub for all employees, researchers have sometimes referred to the

organizational environment as the employee's second home and also referred corporate climate as an "umbrella" for all employees, offering a consistent climate grounded in respect, quality and value (Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2015). Employees may be more inclined to work if their economic needs are addressed (Palupiningdyah et al., 2014). POS is an attempt to promote innovative work behaviour. Based on literature, it is stated that.

**H3:** Perceived organizational support is positively associated with innovative work behaviour.

### **The Mediating Role of Perceived Organizational Support**

Individuals at work who sense organizational support are aware of the actions taken by their employer in their favor, feel a greater sense of stability, and perceive the organization as being committed to their well-being (Fasolo & Lamastro, 1990) while substantial research supports the notion that fair treatment enhances perceived organizational support, the influence of unfair treatment has received comparatively little attention. Moreover, the extent to which employees' perceptions of organizational support are influenced by adverse experiences encountered by valued colleagues or supervisors remains largely unexplored (Shoss, Restubog, Eisenberger, Zagenczyk, 2013). The study identifies POS as a central mediating construct that explains how exposure to workplace bullying can lead to declines in positive employee outcomes, particularly innovative work behavior. Workplace bullying undermines a positive organizational climate, which in turn diminishes employees' perceptions of organizational support (Johnson et al., 2018). Survivors of bullying may perceive their workplace as unsafe, and these negative events can ripple across departments, affecting the attitudes and behaviors of witnesses or those who hear about the bullying (Schat & Kelloway et al., 2003) Consequently, workplace bullying can significantly undermine key employee outcomes. Studies have demonstrated that it severely disrupts employees' well-being, hampers their performance, reduces productivity, and stifles their capacity for innovative thinking (Ahmad et al., 2015; N. Li, Zhang et al., 2019). Most employees suffer from workplace bullying but avoid speaking out due to fear of discrimination, which can lead to a decline in their productivity, creativity and overall engagement with their work and the organization. Moreover, their performance deteriorates due to a toxic work environment, fueled by destructive behavior and hostility among coworkers and peers (Evans-Lacko; Knapp et al., 2018). When employees experience bullying, they develop a hostile view of the workplace, which cripples their productivity and stifles their creativity. According to the conservation of resources the resource loss is highly stressful, compelling employees to protect their current resources and minimize further investments to avoid additional risks (DeClercq et al., 2004).

Restoration is the primary way to recover lost resources. When employees encounter harmful conditions like workplace bullying, they lose valuable resources, which weakens their perception of organizational support. Chronic stressors, such as workplace bullying, steadily drain employees' resources, fostering negative perceptions of the organization. As their view of organizational support deteriorates, they become less capable of managing further resource loss, leading to heightened stress and a significant decline in innovative work behavior. Previous research has shown that workplace bullying affects perceived organizational support. Low levels of organizational

support may actually contribute to bullying; creating a cycle that undermines the organization by eroding employee creativity (Bassman, 1992). Higher POS would enhance their accountability in achieving organizational goals, especially when they rely on coordinators, peers and supervisors for assistance and guidance. Meanwhile, their job roles are continually evolving (Shore & Wayne, 1993) Therefore, when perceived organizational support is lacking or unpleasant, employees will behave unpredictably or less successfully due to negative attitudes and feelings about it. Victimized individuals frequently perceive a lack of concern from coworkers, organizational leaders, and representatives regarding their well-being which can result in resource scarcity.

Linking this with Conservation of resource theory, Hobfoll (2002) asserts that perceived organizational support (POS) is a critical resource. Individuals with lower POS are more vulnerable to depletion of resources and demonstrate low level of creativity. Research has consistently shown that when employees perceive low organizational support, their engagement in innovative activities is significantly reduced (Bosnehes et al., 2017). Victims of workplace bullying with low perceived organizational support may experience profound difficulty to cope with ongoing attrition of resource loss, which can hinder their capacity for innovative behaviour. Accordingly, it is proposed that

**H4:** Perceived organizational support mediates the association between workplace bullying and perceived organizational support.

#### **Conservation of Resource Theory (COR)**

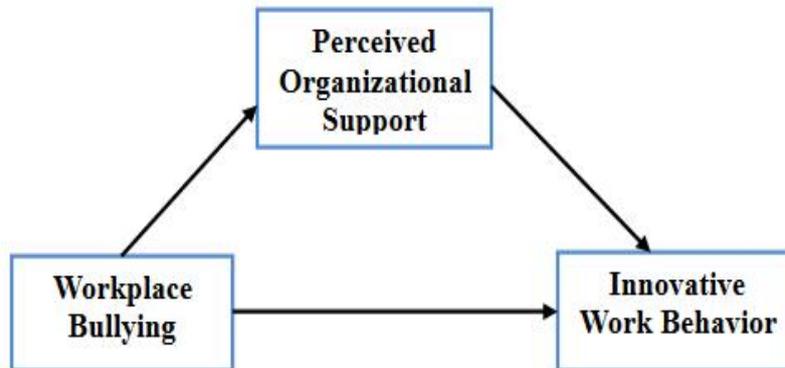
The theory that underpins and powerfully advocates for proposed model is the Conservation of Resource theory, which offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the intricate relationships between all the variables in the study. By emphasizing the critical role of resource acquisition, preservation, and protection, COR theory explains how workplace bullying depletes vital resources, impeding innovative work behaviour, while highlighting the mediating influence of perceived organizational support .

Hobfoll (2002) defines a resource as the full capacity an employee possesses to meet their fundamental needs. This involves two key processes: accumulation, where employees use their available resources to meet demands and gain control over their environment, and protection, which focuses on safeguarding resources to prevent direct (primary) and indirect (secondary) losses. When individuals experience a loss of these resources, they tend to become stressed.

COR emphasizes that the depletion of resources is far more impactful than the acquisition of new ones, creating a vicious cycle where resource depletion in one area leads to further losses in others, intensifying the stress experience. In workplace bullying, employees face a continuous erosion of their resources, such as emotional wellbeing, social support, and perceived organizational support (POS). As bullying undermines their self-esteem and security, employees are unable to focus on their tasks and innovative behaviour, hindering creativity and productivity. The theory underscores the importance of resource accumulation—where employees utilize their available resources to manage stress—and the protection mechanism, which focuses on defending resources from further depletion. Therefore, the conservation of resources theory implies the connection between workplace bullying, innovative work behaviour, and perceived

organizational support through a strong path.

**Conceptual Framework**



**Fig no1 : Theoretical framework**

**Methods**

Data were collected through surveys via email, online platforms, and printed questionnaires, using convenience sampling from employees in the public banks of Pakistan, primarily in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Participants were informed about the study's purpose and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. After removing duplicates, outliers, and incomplete data, we retained 336 valid responses for analysis.

**Measures**

**Workplace Bullying**

It was assessed using a seven-item scale adapted from Einarsen et al. (2009), employing a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Sample items include: “I am being exposed to an unmanageable workload. “I am subjected to insulting or offensive remarks about my habits, attitudes. “I am being ignored or excluded from work-related social gatherings,”.”Cronbach's alpha of workplace bullying scale is 0.8.

**Perceived Organizational Support**

Perceived organizational support (POS) was examined as the mediating variable in this study. It was measured using an eight-item scale developed by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002). The scale assesses the extent to which employees believe their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Sample items include: “My organization values my contribution to its well-being,” “My organization cares about my well-being,” and “My organization cares about my general satisfaction at work. Cronbach’s alpha of perceived organizational support is 0.7

**Innovative Work Behaviour**

Innovative work behaviour is the dependent variable. A 10-item scale created by (De Jong & den Hartog, 2010) was used to examine innovative work behaviour. The items for innovative work behaviour include "I always pay attention to the issues that are not part of my daily work." "I wonder how things can be improved." Cronbach's alpha of innovative work behavior is 0.8

**Journal of Management & Social Science**  
**VOL-2, ISSUE-2, 2025**

**Data Analysis**

After collecting data, SPSS software was used to assess reliability of the measures and correlation among variables. To rigorously test the proposed mediation framework; Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 4) was applied, allowing for precise estimation of the indirect effects through perceived organizational support.

**Frequency Analysis**

The demographic profile of the study includes participants, age, gender, educational and professional experience. These demographic factors may influence the study outcomes by affecting the variables under investigation and their interrelationships. Table 1 presents a detailed summary of the respondents' demographic characteristics.

**Table 1: Frequency Analysis of Participants**

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	153	45.5
Female	183	54.5
<b>Age</b>		
20-23	72	21.4
24-27	113	33.6
28-31	54	16.1
32-35	53	15.8
36-39	44	13.1
<b>Education</b>		
BS	182	54.2
MS	141	42
PHD	13	3.9
<b>Experience</b>		
Less than 1 year	82	24.4
1-3	108	32.1
4-6	64	19
7-9	51	15.2
10-12	31	9.2

**Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics summarize key data characteristics, including the mean, standard deviation, and sample size. The mean indicates respondents' overall agreement with study statements, with higher values reflecting stronger agreement. Standard deviation measures the variation of responses around the mean, showing how spread out the data is. Table 2 shows the range of mean and standard deviation values for the study variables. Higher mean scores indicate agreeableness, while lower scores reflect disagreement of the respondents. Standard deviations highlight the variability in responses.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	Sample	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dv
WB	336	1	5	3.01	0.82
POS	336	1	5	3.21	0.58

**Journal of Management & Social Science**  
**VOL-2, ISSUE-2, 2025**

IWB	336	1	5	3.59	0.86
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**Reliability Analysis**

Reliability of the scales were assessed to ensure that they produce consistent results across different time points. Cronbach’s alpha was used to evaluate internal consistency, with values exceeding 0.7 indicating that the scales are reliable and provide accurate measurements of the intended constructs.

**Table 3: Reliability Analysis**

Variable	Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Workplace Bullying	7	0.853
Perceived Organizational Support	8	0.712
Innovative Work Behavior	10	0.861

**Correlational Analysis**

Correlational analysis is a statistical approach that evaluates the intensity of a relationship among the variables. Correlational analysis was conducted to explore how workplace bullying, perceived organizational support and innovative work behaviour are interrelated. This analysis provides initial evidence of potential associations among the key constructs.

**Table 4: Correlational Analysis**

Variables	1	2	3
Workplace Bullying	1		
Perceived Organizational Support	-.158**	1	
Innovative Work Behavior	-.144**	.409**	1

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

Findings reveal that there is a negative and significant correlation between perceived organizational support and workplace bullying ( $r = -.158^{**}$  at  $p < 0.01$ ) and that workplace bullying has a negative and significant relationship with innovative work behavior ( $r = -.144^{**}$  at  $p < 0.01$ ). There is a positive and significant correlation between innovative work behavior and perceived organizational support ( $r = .409^{**}$  at  $p < 0.01$ ).

**Regression Analysis**

In order to explain the statistical relationship between two variables, regression analysis employs the following coefficients: the t value shows the difference in standard error units, the p value indicates that the relationship is statistically significant, and the standard error of regression (SE) is the coefficient.

**Simple Regression**

Regression analysis is performed to determine the causal relations between variables. Specifically, simple linear regression was used to assess the impact of workplace bullying on innovative work behaviour, highlighting how changes in the independent variable influence the dependent variable.

**Table 5: Simple regression**

IV TO DV	B	T	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>
WB to IWB	-0.202	-3.765	0.041	0.038

The results of regression analysis in Table 5 shows that workplace bullying is negatively associated with innovative work behaviour and is significant as the beta value = -0.202 and  $p < 0.001$ . So, the negative beta coefficient indicates that an increase in workplace bullying corresponds to a decrease in innovative work behavior and the  $p$ -value  $< 0.001$  shows that it is strongly significant. The  $R^2$  value of 0.041 implies that bullying at workplace accounts for approximately 4.1% of the variance in innovative work behaviour. So our hypothesis 1 is accepted, that is

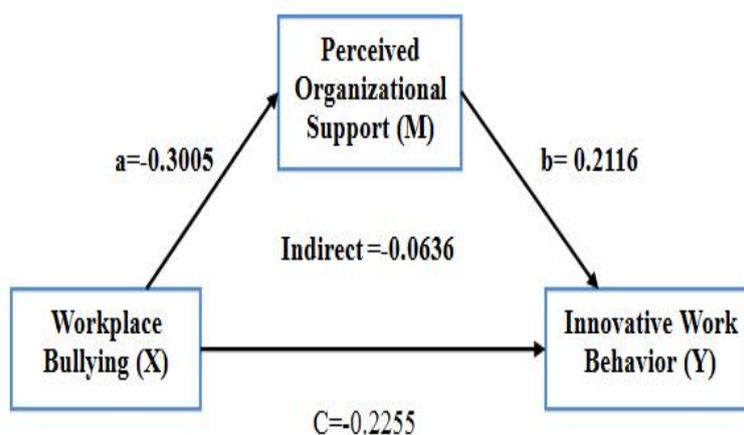
**H1: Workplace bullying is negatively associated with innovative work behaviour**

**The Mediating Role of Perceived Organizational Support**

We use SPSS to undertake Preachers and Hayes (2004) model 4 to analyze mediation between workplace bullying and innovative work behaviour relationship. A mediation test is conducted to determine whether perceived organizational support acts as a mediator between the independent variable (workplace bullying) and the dependent variable (innovative work behaviour). Specifically, the mediation model tests the following paths: **path a** represents the effect of workplace bullying (X) on perceived organizational support (M); **path b** indicates the influence of perceived organizational support (M) on innovative work behaviour (Y); **path c** refers to the total effect of workplace bullying (X) on innovative work behaviour (Y); and **path c'** (the direct effect) measures the impact of workplace bullying on innovative work behaviour and indirect effect reflects the impact of workplace bullying (X) on innovative work behaviour (Y) through perceived organizational support (M).

As shown in Table 6, the path (a) reveals a significant negative relationship between WB and POS ( $\beta = -0.3005$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This indicates that workplace bullying significantly reduces employees' perceptions of organizational support and the  $p$ -value is less than 0.01 indicates a strong statistical significance. So hypothesis 2 is accepted, which states that,

**H2: Workplace bullying is negatively associated with perceived organizational support**



**Figure: 3 Indirect Path**

**Journal of Management & Social Science**  
**VOL-2, ISSUE-2, 2025**

**Table 6: Direct And Indirect Path**

Paths	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Path a WB to POS	-0.3005	0.0933	-3.2206	0.001	-0.4840	-0.1169
Path b POS to IWB	0.2116	0.0436	4.8544	0.000	0.1259	0.2973
Direct effect WB(X) to IWB (Y) Path c'	-0.2255	0.755	-2.9883	0.003	-0.3739	-0.0771
Total Effect WB (X) to IWB (Y) Path c	-0.2891	0.0768	-3.7647	0.000	-0.4401	-0.1380
Bootstrap for indirect effect <b>POS</b>	<b>B</b> <b>-0.0636</b>	<b>SE</b> <b>0.0250</b>	<b>LLCI</b> <b>(95%)</b> <b>-0.1179</b>	<b>ULCI</b> <b>(95%)</b> <b>-0.0207</b>		

The coefficient reported is the unstandardized regression coefficient. The bootstrap sample size was 5,000, with a total sample of N = 336. Significance level is denoted as follows: \*\*\*p < 0.001, \*\*p < 0.01, and \*p < 0.05. LL refers to the Lower Limit, UL to the Upper Limit, and CI represents the Confidence Interval.

Table indicates that perceived organizational support (M) positively influences innovative work behaviour (path b), with a beta value of 0.2116 and p < 0.001. This demonstrates a highly significant relationship between the two variables. This effect demonstrated that our hypothesis 3 is supported as a significant and positive association exists between perceived organizational support (M) and innovative work behaviour (Y). So, hypothesis 3 is accepted which is

**H3: Perceived organizational support is positively associated with innovative work behaviour**

The direct effect of workplace bullying on innovative work behaviour is negative and statistically significant ( $\beta = -0.2255$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating a significant direct path (c'). The total effect is also negative and significant ( $\beta = -0.2891$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming that workplace bullying adversely impacts innovative work behaviour. Additionally, indirect effect (path a \* path b) is negative and significant, with a beta value of -0.0636, reinforcing the overall negative relationship. Bootstrap has a 95% confidence interval with a lower limit of -0.1179 and an upper limit of -0.0207.

Bootstrap limits have the same signs, so the indirect effect is significant. Results show that perceived organizational support has a mediating role. Hypothesis 4 is supported that is;

**H4: Perceived organizational support mediates the relationship between workplace bullying and innovative work behaviour**

**Theoretical Contribution**

This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive framework to understand how workplace bullying influences innovative work behaviour, specifically through the lens of the (COR) theory which suggests that individuals are motivated to protect and preserve their valuable resources, and losing them, such as emotional energy, social support, and psychological safety, is more detrimental than gaining new resources.

# **Journal of Management & Social Science**

## **VOL-2, ISSUE-2, 2025**

In the context of workplace bullying, employees' resources are depleted as they endure the negative effects of bullying, particularly the loss of perceived organizational support (POS), which is crucial for employee wellbeing and engagement. Such experiences undermine employees' psychological safety, thereby suppressing their motivation to pursue innovative practices. The study builds on previous research that has linked bullying with various adverse outcomes, such as mood disorders, job strain, burn out and low job satisfaction, but it extends the literature by focusing on how bullying specifically affects innovation. This study's contribution lies in examining the mechanisms through which bullying affects innovation, emphasizing the role of POS, which has not been explored in depth in previous research. This research provides valuable insights for organizations to develop strategies that mitigate the harmful effects of bullying and promote a supportive environment conducive to innovation.

### **Practical Implications**

The study contributes to practice by highlighting key areas for organizational intervention and improvement. This study presents concrete strategies that enable organizations and leaders to proactively prevent workplace bullying while strengthening employees' capacity for innovative work behaviour. To effectively combat bullying, organizations must proactively recognize and address such behaviours, fostering a zero-tolerance environment where employees feel empowered to report incidents with full confidentiality and assurance of protection. Leadership must engage at all levels, implementing robust reporting systems and ensuring impartial, competent teams handle complaints swiftly and decisively. Furthermore, organizations should refine their recruitment processes, emphasizing psychological assessments to identify candidates with the emotional resilience to withstand potential bullying. Targeted interventions, including advanced emotional intelligence training and comprehensive counseling programs, will fortify employees' ability to navigate toxic work environments.

Creating a supportive framework that prioritizes employee wellbeing through counseling services and strategic recovery time is crucial for replenishing the depleted resources of those affected by bullying. By taking these bold, strategic actions, organizations mitigate the damaging effects of bullying and ignite a climate of innovation, resilience, and sustained organizational success.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

While adhering to professional research standards within available resources, this study has several limitations. Due to resource constraints, a convenience sampling method was used, resulting in a modest sample size that may not fully represent all bullied workers in Pakistan's organizational settings. Later studies are recommended to consider longitudinal method for a clearer, more precise understanding of workplace bullying and its effects. Additionally, this study's cross-sectional design, limited to a six-month timeframe, may not capture the full scope of bullying, which is often a repeated, long-term issue. Expanding the sample to include private organizations and diverse industries, such as commercial banks, textiles, and hospitality, would provide a more comprehensive view of workplace bullying's impact across different work environments. Future research should explore personality traits, such as neuroticism and agreeableness, openness to experience, and locus of control as a moderator to understand influence of workplace

# Journal of Management & Social Science

## VOL-2, ISSUE-2, 2025

bullying on innovative work behaviour. Investigating its relationship with other workplace behaviours like job engagement and organizational commitment would provide a broader perspective. Additionally, studying stress intervention measures and mechanisms like organizational justice could offer solutions to mitigate bullying's effects. Examining gender differences in bullying prevalence and impact, as well as cross-gender versus same-gender bullying, would add valuable insights.

### Conclusion

Workplace bullying undermines innovative behaviour with perceived organizational support that declines as a result of bullying. This reduction in POS further exacerbates the negative impact on innovation. Organizations should prioritize anti-bullying measures and support systems to sustain employee innovation. By fostering a supportive work environment and implementing anti-bullying strategies, organizations can enhance employee engagement, retain top talent, and create a more dynamic, innovative culture that drives sustained growth and success. Eliminating workplace bullying is key to empowering employees and unleashing their innovative capabilities. Future research could explore longitudinal designs and diverse sectors.

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