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The mediating role of Emotional Exhaustion between Workplace Bullying and Employee Voice in the Banking Sector

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on the Conservation of resources theory, this study tried to establish an empirical relationship between workplace bullying and employee voice with the mediation of Employee emotional exhaustion. This study is quantitative in nature and data was collected from 157 employees from the banking sector of Pakistan. The analysis was done using SPSS-24 and Smart-PLS4 software. The purpose of the study is to stimulate the bullied victims to speak up against this negative act to eradicate it. The study's findings suggest that a significant relationship exists between workplace bullying and employee voice. The negative act of bullying motivates the victims to speak up against it. The relationship between workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion was also significant. Moreover; the intervening effect of emotional exhaustion motivates victims of bullying to speak up and it shows Partial-mediation. It is recommended that organizations must make a "Zero-tolerance" policy against workplace bullying and relevant measures should be taken. The COR theory holds that people work to get, preserve, and safeguard important resources, which might include not only material possessions but also psychological and social resources. Moreover, limitations and future areas of research have also been discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Workplace bullying has been an influential matter in question in recent decades (Holland, 2018). In many different industries, workplace bullying has become a widespread problem that negatively impacts both employee well-being and organizational success (Baixauli et al., 2020). Workplace bullying is defined as the repeated and regular behaviour and activities of a supervisor or colleagues that negatively affect the victimized person over a continuous period (Ståle et al., 2018). Workplace bullying includes Workplace harassment, offensive and Abusive behaviour (Gupta et al., 2020) and social exclusion (Liang, 2021). The victims may also face bullying in terms of intimidating behavior and sexual harassment, from colleagues, subordinates and employers (Liang, 2021). Workplace bullying causes severe damages to the physical as well as psychological health of the employees, employee voice helps in changing this situation. The motivation to choose this topic is to stimulate the bullied victims to speak up against this negative act to eradicate it. Our study also examines emotional exhaustion, a negative emotion which occurs due to excessive work demands and bullying (Liang, 2021). The voice of the bullied victims changes the status quo and reduces the bullied victims' emotional exhaustion (Abdulgalimov et al., 2020). Additionally, This study aims to offer useful insights for organizations and governments to successfully address this pressing issue by reviewing the most recent research and taking into account real-world experiences (Zhang et al., 2021).

Workplace bullying produces adverse outcomes for bullied victims at organizational and individual levels. At organizational level, researches have studied the effect of workplace bullying on organizational productivity like performance and work engagement (Meriläinen et al., 2019), absenteeism, job dissatisfaction and employee turnover itself (Larik & Aziz, 2021). At an individual level, workplace bullied employees face many health issues (Liang, 2021). The bullied employees' work-life satisfaction is affected by job-related health issues (Nauman et al., 2019). These issues significantly lead an employee to physical, emotional and psychological health issues (Gupta et al., 2020; Iftikhar et al., 2021; Liang, 2021) and also to mental illness (Holland, 2018; Naseer & Raja, 2021).

As mentioned above, many studies focus on the negative outcomes of workplace bullying very little research has been done regarding the positive behaviours of bullied victims. The employees' can make use of their voices and to express their viewpoints, to minimize or avoid workplace bullying. Employee voice can be used to change the awful situations at work. Our study focuses on workplace bullying's effect on positive consequences of employee voice. The voice of the employees can be used to change the unpleasant existing conditions within the workplace (Khan et al., 2021).

The objective of our study is to focus on workplace bullying effect on positive consequences of employee voice. The voice of the employees can be used to change the unpleasant existing conditions within the workplace (Khan et al., 2021). This study dominates due to voicing employees. The voice of the bullied victims changes the status quo and reduces the emotional exhaustion (Abdulgalimov et al., 2020). The second objective is to find the relationship among workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion of the employees.

The research will focus and shed light to answer the following questions:

Q1. Is there any relationship between workplace bullying and employee voice?

Q2. Does workplace bullying influence emotional exhaustion of the employees?

Q3. Does emotional exhaustion mediate the relationship between workplace bullying and employee voice?

The banking sector of any country is the backbone of its economy. Bullying is very common in the Banking Sector. The performance of the banks always has been a major factor, in order to sustain within the global market due to its operations (Ali & Butt, 2021; Hassan & Jagirani, 2019). As the performance of employees' deteriorates, so banks' performance decrease? The banking industry, with its hierarchical structure, performance-based appraisals, and fierce competition, fosters a climate where bullying at work can flourish (Gupta et al., 2020). The banking industry is claimed to have a large prevalence of workplace bullying, which has negative impacts on both individuals and organizations (Xiao et al., 2022). However, a thorough understanding of the elements influencing workplace bullying in this particular sector is still lacking. Understanding the unique effects of workplace bullying in the banking industry can help illuminate how urgent it is to solve this problem. As we did not find noticeable work related to bullying and employee voice in banking sector of Pakistan, and banking sector operations are important globally, this urged us for this research. This is our final objective of our study, to see and minimize the phenomenon of bullying by urging the employees of the banks to speak up about it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizations progress towards the success when the employees' perform at their best. If employees face problems at work, their efficiency will be affected. This section addresses the concepts of problems faced by employees like workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion produced in the result of workplace bullying.

Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is the negative act of affecting someone's work tasks by harassing, offending and excluded socially repeatedly and regularly (Khan et al., 2021). This negative act could be criticism, humiliation, harassment, verbal anger, spreading rumors , yelling, excessive workloads and deadlines, imposing excessive responsibilities or other behavioral and physical threats (Liang, 2021). A conflict among two persons (supervisor, subordinate or others) cannot be called bullying. The negative behaviors of the supervisors, subordinates or colleagues causes harm to the health of the victims. The health damage could be physical as well as mental or emotional damage (Finstad et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2020). In the literature relevant to bullying, the person who does bully is referred as Instigator and the person being bullied is referred as Target. The act of bullying provokes the victims to find a solution to the problem of bulling (Cognitive Activation) (Liang, 2021). They think of amending the bullying situation and in this process, they may utilize their voice so that the bullying behavior could be minimized.

Conservation of Resource Theory and its link with Workplace Bullying

To understand the underlying mechanism of bulling process, we are using the "Theory of Conservation of Resources". Theory of conservation of resources (COR) was presented by Steven Hobfall in 1988. Hobfall suggested that individuals use different resources for the completion of their tasks while the resources include personal characteristics, energies or conditions that help the individual to protect other resources or replenish these resources to avoid stress at workplace. In this theory, the conservation of resources means the use of one or more resources to prevent from the loss of other resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). According to COR Theory, people work hard to acquire and hold onto a variety of resources, including those that are relevant to their personal, social, and professional lives because they are essential for well being and efficient functioning (Arshad et al., 2023).

Workplace bullying refers to systematic and ongoing physical, psychological, or social abuse that is done to a person by their superiors or peers (Wu et al., 2020). According to the COR Theory, bullying at work can be viewed as a process of resource loss. Bullying drains people's internal resources, including their sense of self-worth, self-confidence, and emotional stability. As supportive relationships with co-workers and superiors are crucial for psychological and emotional support at work, bullying can also result in the loss of these social resources M. S. Malik et al. (2019). Additionally, bullying at work might interfere with resources associated to the job, such as job security, chances

for professional development, and task effectiveness. Bullying can cause a continual drain on resources, making victims more open to more abuse while also experiencing a drop in their general well-being and level of job satisfaction (Baixauli et al., 2020).

Workplace Bullying and Employee Voice

The employee voice is the mode of communication among each other, within the organization that focuses on the climate of the working environment and meaningful change to the status quo (Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014; Morrison, 2014). According to Van Dyne et al. employee voice are the recommendations and reviews by the employees in an organization. These concerns are for the improvement of the organization, to the management. Constructive voice including promotive or prohibitive voices, foster change and learning within the organizations and to compete with the fast changing culture (Morrison, 2014). The promotive voice includes the suggestions for refinements within the organization, by the employees. Whereas prohibitive voice behaviour is the concern of employees to prevent unhealthy or harmful practices at work (Morrison, 2014). Both the voices perform importantly for the health of the organization. Both change the status quo within the organization and results in the benefit of the organization (Liang, 2021).

Workplace Bullying, Employee Voice and COR Theory

In our study, workplace bullying creates stressful working environment which brings the loss of both personal and job-related resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Employees should maintain their major resources i.e. voice to avoid workplace bullying and other abusive behaviours at work (Khan et al., 2021). The COR Theory sheds light on the connection between employee voice and resource appropriation and preservation (Hobfoll et al., 2018). When employees use their voice, they devote time, knowledge, and other personal resources to help the organisation get better. Employees aim to retain and improve their work-related resources, such as autonomy, influence, and psychological well being through communicating their thoughts and concerns (Aslam et al., 2022). If the employees use their voice positively, their resources will be conserved and their ego will also not be depleted. According to COR Theory, companies that value and encourage employee input foster environments that are resource-rich. Employees have a sense of control and efficacy when they believe that their opinions are valued and that their efforts are recognized, which boosts their motivation, commitment, and enthusiasm for their work. Organizations that stifle employee speech, on the other hand, may foster a

resource-depleting climate that makes it more difficult to acquire and maintain important resources. In conclusion, the COR Theory offers an invaluable framework for comprehending how resource dynamics, employee voice, and workplace bullying are related. Organisations may develop employee voice while effectively resolving and avoiding workplace bullying by recognising the importance of resource acquisition, maintenance, and protection.

Employee voice can also address the threats on the behalf of others. As bullying could cause severe damage to the physical as well as psychological health of the employees, employee voice could change this situation and employees could suggest improvements to relationships among different bully and the bullied victim (Liang, 2021). This will lead towards the development of our first hypothesis:

H1: Workplace bullying and employee voice are positively linked together.

Link between Workplace Bullying and Emotional Exhaustion

When the negative episodes from events in life creates stress and stress creates the feeling of being emotionally tired, fatiguing and physical and psychological drain out. This is called emotional exhaustion (Srivastava & Agarwal, 2020). Emotional exhaustion interchangeably can be used as emotional burnout. Mostly, emotional exhaustion develops over a period of time. The mental state of the victims is being affected by bullying at workplace. When mental health gets affected, it can creates emotional exhaustion consequently. Workplace bullying creates stress, emotional reactions to be uncomfortable and anger (Liang, 2021; M. Malik et al., 2022). Anasori et al. (2020) examined that workplace bullying is positively linked to emotional exhaustion. Workplace bullying affects the social behaviors and emotions of the victims. The victims of bullying feel emotionally exhausted. Workplace bullying depletes the coping resources of the bullied victims and the victims feels physically and emotionally drained and tired and creates emotional exhaustion among the victims. S. Einarsen and Nielsen (2015) also showed that bullied victims experience greater level of emotional exhaustion than non-bullied employees.

Workplace Bullying, Emotional Exhaustion and COR Theory

Emotional tiredness results from people being less able to handle the demands and stresses in their work environment as resources are drained. They experience emotional exhaustion and depletion as a result of the constant exposure to bullying behaviours (Khan et al., 2021). The COR theory also contends that resource loss in one domain may affect resources in other areas.

Bullying at work can deplete resources in ways that go beyond the immediate workplace and have an impact on a person's relationships, health, and general well-being in their personal lives (Wu et al., 2020). In conclusion, according to the Conservation of Resources hypothesis, workplace bullying causes emotional weariness by depleting social and psychological resources. In order to foster a positive and effective work environment, organisations must address workplace bullying and offer help to those who are affected by it (Zhang et al., 2021).

H2: Workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion are positively linked.

Role of Emotional Exhaustion as a Mediator between Workplace Bullying and Employee Voice

The negative events at the workplace affect the emotional states of the victims as well. The negative acts like workplace bullying affects emotional states of the victims and results in emotional exhaustion among victims (M. S. Malik et al., 2019). The employee voice could be used differently to show the emotions of the exhausted victims of bullying. The employees who use their voice against negative acts at the workplace, can also benefit in many ways at the workplace. The benefit, except stopping the bullying, could include taking parts in major decision-making within the organizations (Liang, 2021) while the victims who did not take part in raising their voice could suffer from more emotional exhaustion (Weiss & Morrison, 2019). Moreover, Based on theory of conservation of resources, employees should use their voice to avoid stress and emotional exhaustion (Teo et al., 2021). Therefore, employees could use their voice to avoid emotional exhaustion. Consequently, our study hypothesize:

H3: Emotional exhaustion acts as a mediator between workplace bullying and employee voice.

Literature Gaps

The previous studies did not cover these gaps which our study is covering:

- Workplace bulling and employee voice in terms of positive consequences (Dependent and independent variable gap).

- Exploring the bullying phenomena with respect to positive employee voice in banking sector of Pakistan (Contextual gap).

- This phenomenon of bullying and employee voice has not been described through "Conservation of Resources" and the phenomenon of bullying in earlier studies (Theoretical Contribution).
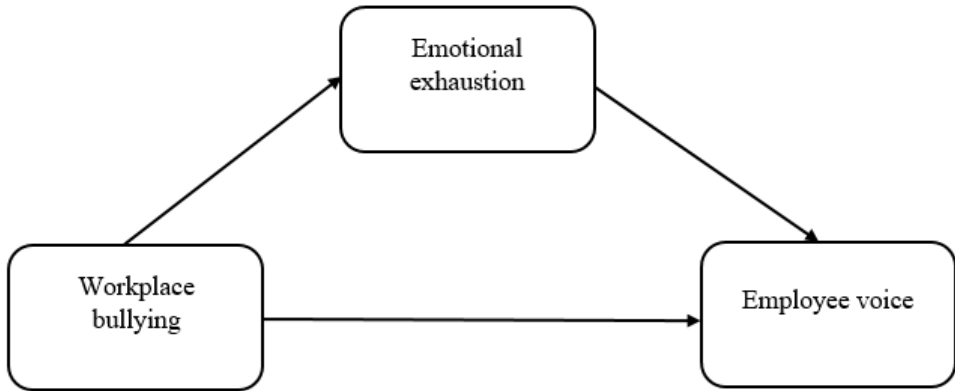
Figure 1: *Theoretical framework*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method which we had used was purposive survey research. The most common methods in survey research are questionnaire and interviews. The primary focus of questionnaire was to gather information from respondents for the purpose of research (Kabir, 2016). The questions in our study were close-ended which allow respondents to choose answers from a number of given options. The questions depict the research aims. The sample size was decided on the basis of G-power formula which explored that our minimum sample size should be 107. G-power formula was used due to its latest calculations for sample size verification (Kang, 2021). We had collected the data from 177 employees of banking sector of Pakistan. Out of which 20 questionnaires were dropped due to irrelevant data and final data consisted on 157 sample size. Some of the questionnaires were filled via online link, others were filled by physically visiting the banks. The data was collected from those banks which have high performance rate based on their total assets, PAT (profit after tax) etc. and their credit rating (AAA to long term). This information was obtained from Pakistan Banking Perspective Report 2022 (for year 2020-2021) by State Bank of Pakistan.

Sources of data

The questionnaire for our study was on 5-poit Likert scale. Our questionnaire consisted of 5- parts. First part was about demographic profile of respondents. The second part included questions regarding workplace bullying. The third part consisted of emotional exhaustion questions. Fourth part was about employee

voice behavior questions. The sources from where we get data are also given below.

The codes for demographic or control variable were: For gender (0=male, 1=Female), Organization type (1=Private,2=Public, 3=Other),for Position (1=Manager, 2=Officer and 3=Other including Teller etc.). For age (1=20-29 years, 2=30-40 and 3= above 40 years), for employment status (0=Permanent and 1=Contract) and finally, Work experience (1=1-3years, 2=3-5years, 3=above 5 years, 4=More than 10 years and 5=others).

For workplace bullying, Negative Act Questionnaire-R (NAQ-R) by (Einarsen et al., 2009) was used, at 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1(Never) to 5(Always). It includes 17 questions. For question 1: "WPB-1" and so on was used. The questions included: Someone withholding information which affects your performance, being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work and being ordered to do work below your level of competence and so on.

For emotional exhaustion, Burnout Self-test Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) questionnaire by (Liang, 2021) was used. It includes 7 questions. For question 1: "EX-1" and so on was used. The questions included: I feel emotionally drained (exhausted) by my work, working with people all day long requires a great deal of effort and I feel like my work is breaking me down and so on.

For Employee Voice Behavior questionnaire by (Van Dyne et al., 2003) was used. From 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), there is a 7-point Likert scale which we have used. It included 6 questions. For question 1: "EV-1" and so on was used. The questions include: I develop and make recommendations to my supervisor concerning issues that affect my work, I speak up and encourage others in my work unit to get involved in issues that affect our work and so on.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Reliability and Validity of Data

The reliability of data could get influenced if the respondents are from different cultures. The cross-cultural differences could lead to wrong interpretation of data or if the questions would be open-ended; the respondent could answer more accurately (Mellinger & Hanson, 2021). The internal reliability of data could be checked by Cronbach Alpha test that will predict the reliability of scales. If the value is greater than 0.7 then the scale is reliable. Our scale are reliable for Workplace bullying whose reliability is 0.845 which is greater than 0.7. Then comes the reliability of Emotional exhaustion scale which is 0.645 which is almost equal to 0.7 and acceptable while the reliability for the scale of voice is 0.5 which is almost acceptable and indicating our overall scale is reliable for analysis.

Table 1.
Reliability Statistics

Variable Name	Cronbach Alpha	No. of Items
Workplace BullyingEmployee Voice	0.845	17
Emotional Exhaustion	0.65	07
Emotional Exhaustion	0.5	06

Demographic Statistics

The analysis of the demographics explored that almost more than 75% of the respondents were male. The organization types were private and public and major respondents were from private banks. The percentage of other banks is given in table 2. 14% of the respondents were Managers, 77.7% were Officers and Others category (including Teller etc.) were 8.3%. 46.5% of the respondents were permanent employees of these banks. 24.2% of the employees were having ages between 20-29years, 45.2% were having ages between 30-40 years and remaining were among the ages above 40 years. 24.2% employees were having the experience between 1-3years, 29% of the respondents were having experience of 4-5years, 28% of the employees were having experience of greater than 5years and 18.5% were having experience of more than 10 years. The table is given on next page.

Common Method Bias

Common method bias (CMB), which undermines study rigor, is a major issue for quantitative researchers nowadays. According to Cooper et al. (2020), Common method bias (CMB) or Common method variance (CMV) happens when data are gathered uniformly across all factors (independent, dependent, moderating, and mediating). In other words, because they are measured using the same technique, the correlations between two or more constructs are biased (Kock et al., 2021).

A post hoc study known as a Harman one-factor analysis is carried out after data collection to determine whether a single factor is responsible for variance in the data (Tehseen et al., 2017). The majority of the time, researchers use this test to look into CMV in their research. This approach loads all components from each construct into a factor analysis to see if a single factor or a single generic factor emerges most of the covariance between the measurements; if no one factor appears, results to It explains the majority of the covariance, demonstrating that CMV is not a widespread problem (Memon et al., 2023)**.** Any study has common method bias if one factor accounts for more than 50% of the total variance. Since

Table 2.

Demographic profiles of the participants

Characteristics	Range/category	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	118(75.2)
	Female	39(24.8)
Organization Type	Private	131(83.4)
	Public	26(16.6)
	Other	—
Position	Manager	22(14)
	Officer	122(77.7)
	Other	13(8.3)
Employment Status	Permanent	73(46.5)
	Contract	84(53.5)
Age	20-29	28(24.2)
	30-40	71(45.2)
	Above 40	48(30.6)
Work Experience	1-3 years	38(24.2)
	4-5 years	46(29.3)
	Above 5 years	44(28)
	More than 10 years Other	29(18.5)
		—

N=157

the total variance recovered by one component is less than the advised threshold of 50% and is just 18.283% in this set of data, there is no issue with common method bias. **Table 7** in Appendix shows these values.

Multicollinearity

When two or more independent variables in a statistical model have a high degree of correlation with one another, this is referred to as multicollinearity. It could make it difficult to interpret the overall model and the regression coefficients. Because the correlated variables have a tendency to "explain" each other's variance when multicollinearity is present, it becomes difficult to separate the unique effects of each independent variable on the dependent variable (Kim, 2019; Shrestha, 2020)

Generally speaking, if the VIF is higher than 4 or the tolerance is lower than 0.25, multicollinearity may exist and additional investigation is required. When the VIF is larger than 10 or the tolerance is lower than 0.1, there is severe multicollinearity that needs to be addressed (Lukman et al., 2023). Our values lie within the acceptable range i.e. VIF values are 1.318 and 1.305 that are less than 4 and greater than 0.25. Moreover, tolerance level also lies within acceptable

range (0.759 and 0.766 are less than 10 and greater than 0.1). Table 3 shows these values.

Table 3.

MultiCollinearity Diagnostics

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Collinearity Statistics	
	β	Std. Error	Beta	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	14.179	1.544			
WPB	0.09	.026	0.28	.759	1.318
EXX	.299	.055	.454	.766	1.305

Dependent Variable: EV
WPB= Workplace Bullying
EXX= Emotional Exhaustion

Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT)

The ratio which is used to estimate the correlation among different constructs is heterotrait-monotrait ratio. These values should be less than 1 indicating dissimilarity of constructs among others. Table 4 given below shows the heterotrait-monotrait ratios of our constructs i.e. workplace bullying, employee voice and emotional exhaustion.

Table 4.

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

	Emotional Exhaustion	Employee Voice	Workplace Bullying
Emotional Exhaustion			
Employee Voice	0.873		
Workplace Bullying	0.685	0.585	

Model Measurement

Smart PLS-SEM is one of the most apt and conventional method for the measurement and structural model results. Structural equation model tests a research model through its reliability. The reliability was checked through factor loading, composite reliability and average variance extracted.

The threshold level for factor loading was its value should be greater than 0.5, for composite reliability (CR) it should be greater than 0.7 and for average variance

extracted it should be 0.5. All of our values are greater than the threshold level or within the acceptable range. The measurement model of the current study is shown in detail inFigure 2. The Figure 2 Shows reliability of the model through factor loadings. The values for the items of workplace bullying and all other variables is greater than 0.5. i.e. V8 (0.657>0.5) and so on. Similarly, the values for composite reliability are greater than 0.7. i.e. the value for CR of Workplace bullying is (0.876>0.7) and so on for other variables. The AVE values for Workplace bullying, Emotional exhaustion and Employee Voice are (0.658, 0.606 and 0.699 > 0.5) are within the acceptable range shows that the model is valid.
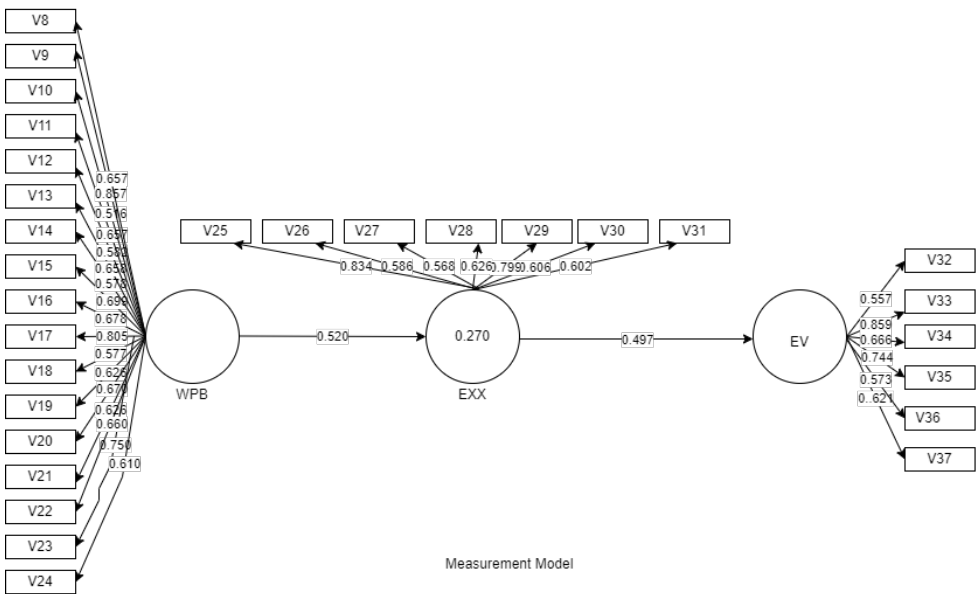

Figure 2: *2: Measurement Model*

Path coefficients and hypotheses testing

Table 5 completely illustrates the direct effects of the constructs. Workplace bullying can motivate the victims to speak-up against this phenomenon. In our case, this result is significant in terms of t-value = 4.124 and p-value=0. Thus, our first hypothesis (H1) is accepted. Then comes the case with emotional exhaustion, emotional exhaustion triggers when the victims face workplace bullying. Same is with the values i.e. t-value of 7.603 greater than 1.96 showing the significance of results and p-value = 0.000 indicating the acceptance of our second hypothesis H2.

Table 5.

Path coefficients and hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Direct Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Path Coefficient	t-Value	P-Value	Results
H1	WPB -> EV	0.344	0.131	4.124	0	Supported
H2	WBP ->EXX	0.517	0	7.603	0.000	Supported

Table 6 shows the mediation effect of the constructs. The mediation analysis, when done on Smart-PLS, shows significant results for workplace bullying **->** Emotional exhaustion **->** Employee Voice i.e. P-value is less than 0.05 indicating that workplace bullying when creates emotional exhaustion, affects employee voice. It creates Partial-mediation path i.e. the relation between dependent variable (Employee Voice) and independent variable (Workplace Bullying) is significant, in the presence of Mediator (Emotional Exhaustion). It shows the acceptance of hypothesis 3.

Table 6.

Mediating effect of emotional Exhaustion

Hypothesis	Specific indirect Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Path Coefficient	t-Value	P-Value	Results
H3	WPB -> EXX -> EV	0.226	0	4.004	0	Supported

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Driven by Conservation of Resources Theory, the present study provided a novel insight into the constructs of workplace bullying of banking employees. Workplace bullying now-a-days difficult phenomenon faced by many employees within their respective organizations. Present study attempted to empirically examine the relationship between workplace bullying and employee voice. Further, this study proposed the intervening role of emotional exhaustion, was also studied. Therefore, to motivate the employees to use their voice against bullying, was the purpose of the study. Employing employee can be beneficial in many ways. First of all, it enables people to voice their worries, share their experiences, and ask for support, all of which can lessen the detrimental effects of workplace bullying on those who are impacted. Second, employee voice enables early reporting and action, enabling organisations to deal with

bullying incidences quickly and put in place the necessary safeguards to stop recurrences. Additionally, employee voice can aid in increasing empathy among co-workers, fostering understanding, and cultivating a group commitment to stop workplace bullying.

Findings suggested that our Hypothesis H1 was supported means significant relationship exists among workplace bullying and employee voice. Our result indicates that the act of workplace bullying motivates the victims to raise their voices or speak up. The victims of workplace bullying when speak up against the act of bullying, this process could be minimized (Liang, 2021). Theory of Conservation of Resources explains this phenomenon. In conclusion, the COR Theory offers an invaluable framework for comprehending how resource dynamics, employee voice, and workplace bullying are related. Then our study suggested that workplace bullying produces emotional exhaustion among the victims (Rosander et al., 2020).

Our second hypothesis got accepted that suggested that workplace bullying creates emotional exhaustion among the victims. The victims of bullying feel emotionally exhausted. Workplace bullying depletes the coping resources of the bullied victims and the victims feels physically and emotionally drained and tired and creates emotional exhaustion among the victims (Srivastava & Agarwal, 2020). Our study is suggesting that bullying victims feel more in control of their circumstances and are given a sense of empowerment when they are encouraged and supported to speak up. They are able to discuss their experiences, ask for help, and get the support they require from their co-workers. The positive impacts of this support can help them recover from the negative effects of bullying on their health. The use of employee voice in addressing workplace bullying has a substantial impact on the health and well being of employees who suffer bullying episodes. Organisations can help to lessen the damaging impacts of bullying on employee emotional health by giving victims the confidence to speak up and ask for help.

Our third hypothesis H3 got accepted which indicated that when the victims face workplace bullying, they get emotionally exhausted and raise their voices to speak up against the bullying act. This result shows partial mediation among our studied constructs. These results are consistent with the results of (Liang, 2021).

Finally, our study tried to answer our research questions. This study concluded that workplace bullying had an impact on raising the voice of the victims of bullying. There may lie some cultural and organizational differences which could resist the victims of bullying to speak up. Workplace bullying creates emotional exhaustion but affects the physical health of the victims negatively indicating workplace bullying deteriorates the health of the victims. This may have effect on

the mental health of the victims. The intervening effect i.e. emotional exhaustion effect, changes the results for employee voice that motivates the employees to speak up against bullying while the result for intervening effect of emotional exhaustion was same as mentioned above. On the whole, this study draws results based on Conservation of resources theory.

In conclusion, organisations can improve the health outcomes of workers who experience workplace bullying by utilising employee voice. Organisations must understand how critical it is to create a welcoming climate where staff members feel empowered to speak up and ask for assistance. Organisations may foster healthier and more productive work environments that are advantageous to both people and the general performance of the organisation by tackling workplace bullying and boosting employee well-being.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The COR theory holds that people work to get, preserve, and safeguard important resources, which might include not only material possessions but also psychological and social resources. Bullying at work can be considered as a stressor that jeopardizes these resources, which has a big impact on employee voice. It frequently takes an investment of time, effort, and social capital to decide to engage in vocal behaviour. Employees may be hesitant to speak up in a setting where bullying is prevalent because they think it will be ineffective or result in greater resource losses.   The interconnectivity of resources is another key component of COR theory. Bullying at work has the potential to upset the resource caravan by depleting social and psychological resources alike. Employees who are bullied may become isolated or rejected, which limits their access to encouraging co-workers or mentors who could support their behaviour. The analysis of workplace bullying and employee voice using COR theory emphasises the crucial function of resource dynamics. The psychological and social resources of employees are threatened by workplace bullying, which increases their reluctance to engage in vocal behaviour. Bullying has a negative impact on resources, so organizations must be aware of this and take proactive steps to lessen its consequences, recover resources, and foster employee voice.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Managers should create an environment where employees feel free to voice their opinions and ideas without worrying about criticism or retaliation. Encourage open discussion, pay attention to their staff's input, and create a welcoming workplace where different viewpoints are valued.   Giving staff members a feeling of ownership and control over their job inspires

them to speak up, take initiative, and contribute to the success of the organization. Managers must implement and enforce a zero-tolerance policy against workplace bullying. The policy should be explained to every employee, and it should be made clear that no form of bullying will be tolerated. To raise understanding of workplace bullying, its impacts, and strategies for preventing and dealing with it, managers should hold training sessions. Establish periodic check-ins, group conferences, or private conversations to promote open communication and give staff members a chance to voice their opinions or share their experiences. Leaders may develop a workplace environment that vigorously combats bullying, values employee feedback, and promotes a collaborative friendly atmosphere for the entire firm by adopting these management repercussions.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

A thorough anti-bullying policy that outlines what behaviour is deemed workplace bullying, what the consequences are, and how to report incidences should be developed and distributed by organisations. Bullying should not be tolerated in workplace environments, according to organisations. This can be accomplished by setting a good example, encouraging open communication, and offering training and awareness campaigns on workplace bullying. Moreover, it's critical to educate all staff members and managers about the warning signs of bullying, its effects on people and the organisation, and response tactics. Offering employees a variety of formal channels through which to voice their thoughts and concerns. Regular surveys, suggestion boxes and focus groups meetings can be used for this, allowing employees to freely express their opinions and offer input on many facets of the company. Organizations can show its appreciation for staff members who speak out and offer insightful commentary. Organisations may develop a workplace culture that effectively resolves workplace bullying and promotes employee voice by putting these practical implications into practise. This will enhance employee well being, engagement, and organisational performance.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This research has several restrictions. First of all, the data was solely gathered from the banking sector, which is a single service sector. Other service sectors and data from other organizations should be included to have good generalizability of the results. Secondly; this study focuses on the effect of workplace bullying at individual level, future study could focus on organizational level. Moreover, the employees can also make the use of their voice if

studied at organizational level. Further, this study was cross-sectional in nature. As the emotions and feelings of the bullying victims could be changed over different periods of time. So, the future study could be done with the aspect of longitudinal nature. Moreover, this study is quantitative in nature. This could limit the depth of perceptions of workplace bullying and employee voice. Future study can be done using qualitative data to provide richer feedback for experiences of individuals.

Future study can be done using qualitative data to provide richer feedback for experiences of individuals. Furthermore, the organizational culture could explore how cultural norms and leadership style impacts workplace bullying and employee voice. Future study could be done, using these variables of organizational culture, leadership style and more, to have more reliable results. In the end, the further study could be done using comparative study of banking sector with other sectors of the industry to enable bench marking against the practices of raising employee voice against bullying. These directions could help in development of effective strategies to promote healthier work environment.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors unequivocally affirm that there are no existing financial or personal conflicts of interest that could influence the outcome of this study. Additionally, no financial assistance or remuneration has been received for the execution of this research or the composition of this article. We also confirm that we have no direct financial or personal affiliations that could potentially bias the results or interpretations presented herein.

APPENDIX

Table 7.
Common Method Variance

	Total Variance Explained					
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.045	18.283	18.283	8.045	18.283	18.283
2	6.773	15.393	33.676	6.773	15.393	33.676
3	3.335	7.580	41.256	3.335	7.580	41.256
4	2.429	5.520	46.776	2.429	5.520	46.776
5	1.923	4.370	51.146	1.923	4.370	51.146

Table 7 continued

	Total Variance Explained					
	Initial Eigenvalues			**Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings**		
Component	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
6	1.615	3.669	54.816	1.615	3.669	54.816
7	1.550	3.523	58.339	1.550	3.523	58.339
8	1.385	3.149	61.487	1.385	3.149	61.487
9	1.200	2.726	64.213	1.200	2.726	64.213
10	1.182	2.686	66.899	1.182	2.686	66.899
11	1.120	2.546	69.445	1.120	2.546	69.445
12	1.092	2.482	71.926	1.092	2.482	71.926
13	1.001	2.274	74.200	1.001	2.274	74.200
14	.928	2.109	76.310			
15	.852	1.936	78.245			
16	.779	1.770	80.015			
17	.727	1.653	81.668			
18	.702	1.595	83.263			
19	.681	1.547	84.810			
20	.601	1.366	86.176			
21	.576	1.309	87.486			
22	.566	1.287	88.773			
23	.514	1.168	89.940			
24	.436	.990	90.930			
25	.427	.970	91.900			
26	.386	.878	92.778			
27	.377	.857	93.635			
28	.355	.808	94.442			
29	.330	.749	95.192			
30	.298	.676	95.868			
31	.286	.650	96.518			
32	.251	.571	97.090			
33	.217	.493	97.583			
34	.212	.482	98.065			
35	.197	.448	98.513			
36	.173	.393	98.906			
37	.159	.361	99.267			
38	.127	.289	99.556			
39	.111	.253	99.809			
40	.084	.191	100.000			

Table 7 continued

	Total Variance Explained					
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
41	-3.690E-17	-8.386E-17	100.000			
42	-6.579E-16	-1.495E-15	100.000			
43	-1.947E-15	-4.426E-15	100.000			
44	-3.293E-15	-7.484E-15	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

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