

Impact of Instrumental Climate on Workplace Bullying and Post-Traumatic Stress: The Moderating Role of Type A Personality

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Abstract

Workplace Bullying has destructive costs for individual victims, teams, and organisations; therefore, it is significant to investigate the factors that might instigate this behaviour at the workplace, along with severe consequences. This research proposes the significance of individual contingency differences in perceptions of being targets of workplace bullying and resulting post traumatic stress. Current Study covers the instrumental climate and person-situation view by a combined study of the mediating role of workplace bullying in linking instrumental climate with job stress and the moderating role of type A personality trait in influencing the mediation. A sample of 298 employees was selected, and this study tested a moderated mediation model. Results were significant with the hypothesised model, in that type A behaviour moderating between instrumental climate and all types of workplace bullying. Similarly, type "A" personality moderates between two types of job stress and workplace bullying relationships. However, there is no mediation found between instrumental climate and job stress through workplace bullying.

Keyword: workplace bullying, instrumental climate, type A and type B personality, post-traumatic stress

Introduction

Workplace bullying is the regular exploitation of a subordinate, co-worker or senior in a hierarchy, which may lead to adverse social, psychological and even physical consequences for the victims (Einarsen, 2000). Leymann (1996) investigated the predictors or antecedents of workplace bullying such as target's personality, envy, job position, aggressor's uncertainty about him/herself, and low moral standards (Einarsen, 1999). Workplace Bullying occurs over time, and it depends on contextual factors as well. For instance, Einarsen (1999) stated that workplace bullying is a time-dependent phenomenon, and it does not occur in isolation; instead, it is contextually based. Initially, the bullies will show mild aggression and the severity of which will rise with time, and it becomes more explicit (Leymann, 1996).

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Workplace Bullying is further divided in three forms, work-related, personal related and physical intimidating bullying (Staale Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). There are severe negative consequences of workplace bullying. The main focus of this study is to work on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It is a negative consequence of workplace bullying and targets of bullying are more expected to have PTSD. Furthermore, another focus of this study is to identify the relationship between the organisational climate and its impact on workplace bullying. It is believed that the organisational climate is relatively more concrete and explicit compared to corporate culture; hence, the instrumental climate (highly politicised environment) will be the main focus of this research. Einarsen (1999) claimed that the probability of workplace bullying behaviour and post-traumatic stress would be significantly low if organisation culture and environment does not encourage and support any such action. However, acceptability, tolerance and interpretation of action depend on organisational culture or climate (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996). Cowie et al., (2002) claimed that the behaviour of bullies would be judged based on the interpretation of organisational climate. Based on the earlier discussion, it can be argued that organisational climate is considered a significant predictor of workplace bullying behaviour. Negative consequences and determinants of bullying can be affected by some contingency factors (Einarsen, 2000). On the other hand, the effectiveness of the organisational climate may depend on individual personalities (such as Type A and Type B personalities). Type A individuals are outgoing, determined, aggressive, impatient, rigidly organised, and competitive, whereas, individuals with Type B personality are usually relaxed, easy-going, care-free and highly flexible. The type A and B personalities are the opposite of each other (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974). Type A personality's hard-driving and go-getter nature make them vulnerable to develop perceptions of being bullied with an increase in job pressures. Whereas Type B individuals do remain untroubled under work pressures as they are more relaxed (Kamdar & Van Dyne, 2007). Presence of an instrumental climate means a highly politicised environment that can discourage Type A personality because they may not only be able to accomplish their goals but at the same time, they cannot resist workplace bullying. Even if Type B individuals are bullied, then they may be less affected and absorb their adverse shocks as compared to Type A individuals. This research aims to investigate both determinants and consequences of workplace bullying within the contingency of target personality traits.

The purpose of this research is to study workplace bullying and its effects on PTSD at supervisor to subordinate level in the context of Pakistan. Based on the literature, we argued that an instrumental climate has an impact on workplace bullying, and Type A personality moderates this relationship. Moreover, job stress is as an outcome of workplace bullying, and the intensity of workplace bullying behaviour and job stress becomes high within the contingency of Type A personality. The outcome of this research will have substantial practical implications regarding HR policies to control workplace bullying that will increase individual and organisational performances. So all the above discussions can be seen in a given moderated-mediated model (see Figure 1).



Figure 1- Moderated-mediated model

In our model, workplace bullying is a mediator between Instrumental Climate and Post-Traumatic Stress and Type A personality moderates the Stress and workplace bullying relationship.

Hypothesis

H1a: Personality moderates the relationship between instrumental climate and work-related bullying behaviour such that this positive relationship will be stronger in case of high Type A individuals.

H1b: Personality moderates the relationship between instrumental climate and personal bullying behaviour such that this positive relationship will be stronger in the case of high Type A individuals.

H1c: Personality moderates the relationship between instrumental climate and physically intimidating bullying behaviour such that this positive relationship will be stronger in case of high Type A individuals.

H2a: The impact of work-related bullying on intrusion stress is stronger in the case of type A personality as compared to type B personality.

H2b: The impact of work-related bullying on avoidance stress is stronger in the case of type A personality as compared to type B personality.

H2c: The impact of work-related bullying on hyperarousal stress is stronger in the case of type A personality as compared to type B personality.

H3a: The impact of personal bullying on intrusion stress is stronger in the case of type A personality as compared to type B personality.

H3b: The impact of personal bullying on avoidance stress is stronger in the case of type A personality as compared to type B personality.

H3c: The impact of personal bullying on hyperarousal stress is stronger in the case of type A personality as compared to type B personality.

H4a: The impact of physically intimidating bullying on intrusion stress is stronger in case of type A personality as compared to type B personality.

H4b: The impact of physically intimidating bullying on avoidance stress is stronger in case of type A personality as compared to type B personality.

H4c: The impact of physically intimidating bullying on hyperarousal stress is stronger in case of type A personality as compared to type B personality.

H5: Workplace bullying (Work, Personal, Physically Intimidating) mediates the positive relationship between instrumental climate and stress (intrusion, avoidance and hyperarousal).

Data Collection

Data collected, through self-administrative questionnaires from middle-level managers working at public and private sector organisations such as banks, hospitals, universities, and pharmaceutical companies operating in Lahore, Pakistan using non-probability convenient sampling technique. Workplace bullying was measured using the Negative Acts Questionnaire consisting of twenty-two items at a five-point Likert-scale (Staal, Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). Victor and Cullen's (1988) developed an ethical climate questionnaire which was used to measure instrumental climate. Moreover, Impact of event scale revised (IES-R) was used to measure post-traumatic stress disorder (job stress) with twenty-two items (Christianson & Marren, 2012). Similarly, Type A behavioural pattern was measured by a twelve item scale (Spence et al., 1987).

Results and Discussion

A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 298 were completed in all aspects and used for analyses, yielding a response rate of 59.6%. The descriptive statistics are given below:

Table 1-Descriptive Statistics

| Variable | Category | Frequen | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------|----------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| Gender | Female | 178 | 59.7 | 59.7 |
| | Male | 120 | 40.3 | 100.0 |
| Age | Below 25 | 75 | 25.2 | 25.2 |
| | 26-35 | 144 | 48.3 | 73.5 |

Workplace Bullying and Post-Traumatic Stress **Ahsan, Alia**

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|----------|--------------|-----|------|-------|
| | 36-45 | 66 | 22.1 | 95.6 |
| | 46-55 | 10 | 3.4 | 99.0 |
| | 56 | 2 | .7 | 99.7 |
| | Below 65 | 1 | .3 | 100.0 |
| Industry | Manufacturin | 75 | 25.2 | 25.2 |
| | Education | 63 | 21.1 | 46.3 |
| | Medical | 160 | 53.7 | 100.0 |

Descriptive statistics reported that 59.7% of the respondents for this study were females, and the majority of the respondents belong to age-group of 26-35 years. Moreover, 53.7% of respondents were from the medical profession. Data normality is one of the crucial issues to generalise the research findings. The values for Kurtosis's and skewness, as reported in Table 2, are between -1 and +1; therefore, it can be assumed that data is normally distributed (see Table 2).

Table 2-Data Normality

| | IC | WB | PB | PyB | IS | AS | HS | Pers |
|----------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Number | 298 | 298 | 296 | 298 | 298 | 298 | 298 | 298 |
| Mean | 2.7966 | 3.1414 | 3.2242 | 3.1913 | 2.6292 | 2.7836 | 2.6862 | 2.7265 |
| Median | 2.8000 | 3.0000 | 3.0909 | 3.0000 | 2.5000 | 2.7500 | 2.6667 | 2.7917 |
| Std.Dev | .92266 | .95418 | .96731 | 1.13359 | .95527 | .88663 | .98696 | .60493 |
| Skewness | -.091 | .221 | .304 | -.011 | .210 | .038 | .065 | -.416 |
| Kurtosis | -.575 | -.950 | -.532 | -1.100 | -.748 | -.763 | -.861 | -.605 |
| Minimum | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.09 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.33 |
| Maximum | 5.00 | 5.00 | 6.18 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 3.92 |

Note:IC= Instrumental Climate, WB= Work Bullying, PB= Personal Bullying, PyB= Physical Bullying, IS= Intrusion, AS= Avoidance Stress, HS= Hyperarousal stress, Pers= Personality.

A method suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2004) was used in this study to test the moderation and mediation. Hierarchical regression was conducted for testing moderation.

Table 3- Moderated regressions of instrumental ethical climate, and type A behaviour on workplace bullying

| | ZWB | | ZPB | | ZPyB | |
|-----------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Beta | P | beta | P | beta | P |
| Constant | 0.014 | 0.940 | -0.107 | 0.587 | 0.147 | 0.482 |
| ZIC | -0.005 | 0.944 | -0.106 | 0.114 | -0.034 | 0.638 |
| ZPer | 0.361 | 0.000 | 0.246 | 0.001 | 0.176 | 0.029 |
| ZIC* ZPer | 0.085 | 0.071 | 0.053 | 0.365 | 0.142 | 0.030 |
| Gend | -0.161 | 0.224 | 0.038 | 0.779 | -0.046 | 0.746 |
| Industry | 0.041 | 0.549 | 0.052 | 0.459 | -0.025 | 0.739 |

| | | | |
|----------------|--------|--------|-------|
| R ² | 0.154 | 0.110 | 0.076 |
| Model F-Value | 12.869 | 10.603 | 8.339 |

Note: ZIC= Z score of Instrumental Climate, ZWB= Z score of Work Bullying, ZPB= Z score of Personal Bullying, ZPyB= Z score of Physical Intimidating Bullying, ZPers= Z score of Personality.

Results showed that ZIC has no relationship with all three types of bullying when the ZPer is zero. The scale used to measure bullying ranges from 1 (Daily Bullying) to 5 (Occasionally Bullying). This variable is then converted to Z-scores that represent the high scores of bullying as less happening of bullying. Thus, we can conclude that an instrumental climate has no relation with workplace bullying, and there are some other factors needed to be explored which can influence workplace bullying in Pakistan setting. Table 3 also explored the significant positive impact of ZPer on all three types of bullying when ZIC scores are zero. We measured personality on a scale ranges from 1 (Type A) to 5 (Type B). This variable of personality is then converted to its Z-scores that changed its mean to zero. Therefore, zero scores of ZPer will represent neither Type A nor Type B. While scores more than zero will be Type B and scores less than zero can be devoted to Type A. Hence, we can interpret the positive impact of ZPer as Type B personality decreases the frequency of work and personal bullying and vice versa. The cross effect of ZIC and ZPer showed significant for work-related, personal and physical intimidating bullying. So based on the above discussion, alternate Hypothesis H1a, H1b and H1c are accepted.

Table 4-Moderated regressions of instrumental climate, workplace bullying, and type A behaviour on job stress.

| | ZIS | | ZAS | | ZHS | |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Beta | P | Beta | P | beta | P |
| Constant | 0.166 | 0.336 | 0.160 | 0.363 | 0.143 | 0.363 |
| ZIC | 0.397 | 0.000 | 0.476 | 0.000 | 0.331 | 0.000 |
| ZWB | -0.403 | 0.000 | -0.336 | 0.000 | -0.372 | 0.000 |
| ZPB | -0.009 | 0.936 | 0.010 | 0.911 | -0.023 | 0.806 |
| ZPyB | 0.125 | 0.176 | 0.106 | 0.189 | 0.014 | 0.871 |
| ZPer | -0.087 | 0.200 | -0.134 | 0.034 | -0.120 | 0.079 |
| ZWB * ZPer | -0.242 | 0.003 | -0.229 | 0.001 | -0.183 | 0.021 |
| ZPB* ZPer | 0.260 | 0.022 | 0.205 | 0.050 | 0.221 | 0.031 |
| ZPyB* ZPer | -0.009 | 0.925 | -0.015 | 0.866 | 0.032 | 0.735 |
| Gend | -0.197 | 0.085 | -0.196 | 0.083 | -0.239 | 0.027 |
| Industry | -0.031 | 0.614 | -0.022 | 0.723 | -0.021 | 0.713 |
| R ² | | 0.419 | | 0.473 | | 0.446 |
| Model F-Value | | 35.197 | | 45.019 | | 45.024 |

ZIS= Z score of intrusion stress, ZAS= Z score of avoidance stress, ZHS= Z score of hyperarousal Stress

Table 4 shows that ZIC is significant for all three types of stress. Conversely, only work bullying (ZWB) is significantly (negative) related to three types of stress while the other two types of bullying showed insignificant betas, assuming zero scores of ZPer. Work bullying increases the stress level, while personal and physical bullying does not affect stress. However, Zper is showing significant negative relation with stress assuming zero scores of ZWB, ZPB, and ZPyB. This concludes Type B personality takes less stress at the workplace as compared to Type A. It is also found that personality only moderates the impact of ZWB and ZPB on ZIS and ZAS and ZHS. The cross effect of ZPer and bullying showed insignificant betas. The three significant moderating cases are explained in Table 5. Three cases of ZPer, i.e. -1, 0 and 1, are selected in this respect. ZWB has insignificant relation with ZIS when ZPer is -1. However, the same relation is negatively significant when ZPer is 0 (-.403, $P > .01$) or 1 (-.645, $P > 0.01$). It is also notable as the ZPer scores are increasing the intensity of the negative relation between ZWB and ZIS is increasing. Table 5 also provides the results of the Johnson-Neyman significance region test. The test explores that the relationship between ZWB and ZIS becomes significant when the ZPer scores increase from -.798. Furthermore, 21.284% observation from selected sample scored less than -.798 for ZPer. Since the scores of ZPer for the majority of observations (78.71%) are more than -.798, therefore ZPer showed significant moderating effect between ZWB and ZIS. The cross-product term of ZWB x Type A personality was significant for H_{2a} and H_{2b} and H_{2c} ($b = -0.242, -0.229, -0.183, p < .01$). Thus, full support was found for H_{2a} and H_{2b} and H_{2c} . The cross-product term of ZPB x Type A personality was significant for H_{3a} and H_{3b} and H_{3c} ($b = 0.260, 0.205, 0.221, p < .01$). Thus, full support was found for H_{3a} and H_{3b} and H_{3c} . Moreover, table 4 results explain no moderating relationship between Physically intimidating bullying and Stress. So H_{04a} , H_{04b} , H_{04c} are accepted and H_{4a} , H_{4a} and H_{4c} are rejected. Furthermore, mediation results found are discussed in Table -5 and Table-6.

Table 5- Regression results for simple mediation

| ZPersona | Int_1 (SF1) | | Int_1 (SF2) | | Int_1 (SF3) | |
|----------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| | Effect | P | Effect | P | Effect | P |
| -1.002 | -.161 | .169 | -.106 | .287 | -.189 | .125 |
| 0 | -.403 | .000 | -.336 | .000 | -.372 | .000 |
| 1.002 | -.645 | .000 | -.566 | .000 | -.556 | .000 |

Workplace Bullying and Post-Traumatic Stress **Ahsan, Alia**

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|--------|---------|--------|------|--------|------|
| Value | -.798 | -.709 | | -.818 | |
| Below | 21.284 | 25.338 | | 21.284 | |
| Above | 78.716 | 74.662 | | 78.716 | |
| Effect | se(HC0) | T | P | LLCI | ULCI |
| .397 | .067 | 5.923 | .000 | .265 | .528 |
| .476 | .063 | 7.582 | .000 | .353 | .600 |
| .331 | .068 | 4.861 | .000 | .197 | .465 |

Results of the direct impact of instrumental climate and stress is given in Table-5 and indirect impact through bullying in Table-6.

Table 6- Regression results for mediation. Workplace Bullying as Mediator between instrumental climate and Job Stress.

| | | SF1 | | | SF2 | | | SF3 | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|----------|----------|--------|----------|----------|--------|----------|----------|--|
| Indirect Effect through BF1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZPersona | Effect | BootLLCI | BootULCI | Effect | BootLLCI | BootULCI | Effect | BootLLCI | BootULCI | |
| -1.002 | .015 | -.012 | .057 | 0.010 | -.014 | .043 | .017 | -.012 | .063 | |
| 0 | .002 | -.050 | .059 | 0.002 | -.042 | .049 | .002 | -.048 | .054 | |
| 1.002 | -.052 | -.176 | .060 | -.046 | -.155 | .054 | -.045 | -.153 | .054 | |
| Indirect Effect through BF2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZPersona | Effect | BootLLCI | BootULCI | Effect | BootLLCI | BootULCI | Effect | BootLLCI | BootULCI | |
| -1.002 | .043 | -.011 | .163 | .032 | -.022 | .134 | .039 | -.013 | .150 | |
| 0 | .001 | -.028 | .036 | -.001 | -.027 | .027 | .002 | -.022 | .034 | |
| 1.002 | -.013 | -.074 | .032 | -.011 | -.061 | .026 | -.010 | -.059 | .023 | |
| Indirect Effect through BF3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZPersona | Effect | BootLLCI | BootULCI | Effect | BootLLCI | BootULCI | Effect | BootLLCI | BootULCI | |
| -1.002 | -.024 | -.080 | .030 | -.021 | -.073 | 0.039 | .003 | -.035 | .083 | |
| 0 | -.004 | -.032 | .016 | -.004 | -.028 | .014 | .000 | -.015 | .017 | |
| 1.002 | .012 | -.037 | .056 | .010 | -.028 | .045 | .005 | -.037 | .041 | |

Relationship between ZIC and all three type of stress (ZIS, ZAS and ZHS) is significant, depicting no direct relation between instrumental climate and stress. ZIC was not found to have an indirect effect on ZIS, ZAS and ZHS through ZWB, ZPB and ZPyB. Thus, H_5 was not supported whereas H_0 is supported. Our findings interpret that individual contingency factors are more relevant to understand the presence of workplace bullying and stress. Whereas, individual contingency factor (Type A personality) is moderating between instrumental climate and workplace bullying and between workplace bullying and job stress. Whereas, no mediation seen between instrumental climate and stress through workplace bullying in the context of Pakistani environment.

Conclusion

The relationship between instrumental climate and workplace bullying with the intervention of personality traits was investigated. Self-administrative questionnaire was used to collect data and index of

moderation mediation approach was used. This article, like (Cullen, Parboteeah, & Victor, 2003) study, supports the view that an organisational climate affects the level of stress, and an instrumental climate is the one that affects it most. The outcome of this research will have substantial practical implications regarding HR policies to control workplace bullying that will increase individual and organisational performance.

Limitations

The findings are based on cross-sectional data, other researchers may use longitudinal data to authenticate the relationship effects. Secondly, our mediating results are not significant and it may be because of a smaller sample size and other contingency variables that are not explored in current research as mentioned in the section of future research.

Future Research

This study used only one variable as a moderator between instrumental climate-bullying stress relationships. Other researchers need to use some other individual contingency variables such as coping strategies, the role of age and gender and also the locus of control. Researchers could also use the big five model of personality (Costa & McCrae, 2008) between climate – bullying and stress relationships. Previous literature highlighted stress, depression as consequences of bullying (Samnani & Singh, 2012). We only used stress as a dependent variable, while future research may also include other consequences of bullying such as emotional exhaustion and perceived bullying in tight and collectivistic society such as Pakistan.

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