WORKPLACE BULLYING AND ITS OUTCOMES IN A SOCIAL EXCHANGE PERSPECTIVE: AN INDIAN CONTEXT

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Abstract: Psychological issues pertaining to workplace were examined in Indian employees (N=100) under the aegis of social exchange theory. The relationship between psychological contract and workplace bullying and its mediation by interactional justice were examined. Hypotheses pertaining to the mediation by psychological contract and moderation by perceived organisational support in the linkages between workplace bullying and job satisfaction, and workplace bullying and well being were also evaluated. The degree of workplace bullying was found to be unrelated to psychological contract. There was no indication of mediation or moderation. The length of association with the organisation, employee age, and certain salient features of Indian culture had a dominant effect on the relationship between workplace bullying and elements of social exchange theory.

Introduction: Literature Review: Workplace bullying is an important phenomenon having several psychological ramifications for the functioning of individuals and organisations. Recent years have witnessed an increase in the effort to understand various factors which influence bullying so that the adverse effects of bullying can be contained and minimized for improving the work culture and efficiency of the organisation (Townend, 2008). This study examines the concept of workplace bullying and its outcomes in the framework of social exchange theory (SET) in the context of Indian culture.

Workplace bullying as Einarsen (1999, pp. 16-27) defines refers to "the repeated actions and practices that are directed to one or more workers, which are unwanted by the victim, which may be done deliberately or unconsciously, but clearly cause humiliation, offence and distress, and that may interfere with job performance and /or cause an unpleasant working environment."

Past research has shown diverse effects of workplace bullying on individuals, organisation and society. Individuals report a disturbing array of reactions and psychological, physical, physiological and psychosomatic symptoms (Sheehan, 2006; Vartia, M., Korppoo, L., Fallenius, S., & Mattila, M., 2003). Continued existence of these problems, either in isolation or as combination can have long-term health and well being consequences for the person who experiences being bullied. Bryant and Buttigieg (2009) suggest that bullying is directly correlated with low job satisfaction, high employee turnover, increased absenteeism, and decreased levels of organisational commitment.

The social exchange theory operates the concepts of psychological contract, perceived organisational support and organisational justice. These concepts help in capturing employees' evaluations of the quality of relationship with the organisation's contributions to the exchange relationship (Parzefall & Salin, 2011). Application of SET based analysis to the bullying experience is likely to enhance the understanding of the concept of workplace bullying. First, by highlighting the importance of subjective perceptions of injustice in workplace bullying, SET based analysis can provide an alternative viewpoint. Second, the justice and the psychological contract perspectives allow us to explore how incidents of bullying may lead to questioning of norms governing relationships at the workplace. Insights from SET can strengthen the argument for appropriate and timely organisational responses in case of bullying. Finally, by integrating the concept of workplace bullying with the key SET elements, it is possible to place bullying more firmly in the mainstream organisational behaviour literature (Parzefall & Salin, 2011).

The psychological contract comprises of an individual's beliefs concerning the reciprocal obligations that exist between the employee and the organisation ,i.e., individual's perceptions regarding what he/she has been agreed by the organisation and what he/she is expected to give the organisation in return (Rousseau, 1989, 1995). Morrison and Robinson (1997) define psychological contract breach as the cognition that one's organisation has failed to fulfil one or more obligations pertaining to the psychological contract. Some researchers have argued that negative events in the exchange relationship may cause fluctuations in emotions and moods of the employees, which may ultimately lead employees to perceive it as a psychological contract breach (Parzefall & Salin, 2011). It has been examined whether using this highly emotional construct is more helpful than explaining things in a more neutral unmet expectations' way. It could be argued that bullying is an emotionally loaded situation and therefore, information derived from psychological contract violation could be relevant to workplace

bullying (Conway & Briner, 2005)

Conway & Briner (2005) questioned the validity of the assumption that psychological contract can be explored by examining what happens when it is violated. This is quite important in research on bullying, as bullying is an interpersonal work relationship that has gone wrong in some way. Therefore, the phenomenon of workplace bullying which is a negative social exchange relationship could be well understood in terms of a psychological contract breach. Exploring the important relationship between psychological contract and workplace bullying forms the basis of Hypothesis 1 in the present study.

Organisational justice is related to employees' perceptions of fairness in terms of distributive (the fairness of resource distribution), procedural (the fairness of the processes by which outcomes are determined), and interactional justice (the fairness of interpersonal treatment). Interactional justice plays a significant role in the experience of workplace bullying. Bullying itself may be a source of injustice perceptions and that is precisely how bullying influences attitudes and behaviours. It is likely that exposure to bullying shatters employees' perceptions of a reasonably just workplace, thereby leading to perceived injustice (Parzefall & Salin, 2011). The role of interactional justice in mediating the linkage between workplace bullying and psychological contract is investigated in the form of Hypothesis 2 in the present study.

The degree and nature of psychological contract affects the impact of workplace bullying on employees' well being and job satisfaction. Different employees are likely to have varying psychological contracts with their organisation (Mazur, 2012) for this will decide the intensity of impact of any negative behaviour in the organisation on their well being and job satisfaction. This perspective provokes the need for testing the mediating role of psychological contract in the linkage between workplace bullying and job satisfaction (hypothesis 3.1), and the linkage between workplace bullying and well being (hypothesis 3.2).

Perceived organisational support concerns the overall quality of the exchange relationship that takes place between the organisation and the employee. When employees perceive their organisation to be supportive and considerate of their needs, employees reciprocate in the form of commitment and loyalty. Although, very limited attention has been paid to the potential of perceived organisational support in the bullying process, there are studies suggesting that particular forms of support may buffer the effects of bullying, resulting in retribution and policy reinforcement, and in turn moderating the negative effects on the organisation and the target (Einarsen & Mikenssen, 2003). It has been observed that organisational support moderates the effects of workplace bullying on individual well being. According to Djurkovic et al. (2004), the way in which employees interpret treatment from the organisation is accountable for the degree to which they anthropomorphise the organisation. Depending on the treatment perceived, employees will either assign positive or negative human-like characteristics to the organisation and will determine the extent to which the organisation values their work contributions, health and well being. Organisational rewards such as pay, recognition, promotions, job security, autonomy and training provided to the employees can be used as a measure in assessing the degree to which employees feel valued within the organisation and their satisfaction with the job. The moderating effect of organisational support on the interface between workplace bullying and its outcomes, namely job satisfaction and employee well being are investigated through hypotheses 4.1 and 4.2 respectively.

In many studies, the effect of elements of SET, i.e., psychological contract, perceived organisational support and interactional justice and their linkages with workplace bullying have been studied in isolation from each other. However, these elements are likely to interact with each other while influencing workplace bullying and its outcome measures, namely job satisfaction and employee well being. Therefore, it is important to study how each element acts in the link between the other element and workplace bullying. This is the main objective of the present study.

The following hypotheses have been proposed in this study:

Hypothesis 1: *Workplace bullying has a significant impact on the psychological contract with employees' organisation.*

Hypothesis 2: *Interactional justice mediates the linkage between workplace bullying and psychological contract.*

Hypothesis 3.1: *Psychological contract mediates the impact of workplace bullying on job satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 3.2: *Psychological contract mediates the impact of workplace bullying on well being.*

Hypothesis 4.1: *Perceived organisational support plays a moderating role in the linkage between workplace bullying and job satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 4.2: *Perceived organisational support plays a moderating role in the linkage between workplace bullying and well being.*

Method:

Sample and Procedure: The data were collected from June 2013 to July 2013 from an automobile company located in North India. Participants comprised 100 adults who had a work experience of at least 6 months in their current organisation and were fluent in English. The participants were part of different business divisions such as human resource, marketing, supply chain management, strategic sourcing and operations and, were of different hierarchical levels (executive to manager level) within the organisation. Average age of the participants was 34.6 years (SD = 8.32). They reported an average organisational tenure of 2.87 years (SD = 0.93). Of this final sample, 53% were females. A packet including a cover letter and the measures of interactional justice, workplace bullying, perceived organisational support, psychological contract, general well being and job satisfaction were given to employees in person. The cover letter explained to the employees the purpose of the study with emphasis on the importance of responding to the questionnaire and provided assurance of anonymity and confidentiality of the data. Follow up letters were continuously sent to the organisation stressing the value of the survey and the importance of their participation.

Measures:

Workplace Bullying: Workplace bullying was measured using Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ) proposed by Einarsen et al. (2009). Respondents were asked how often they experienced negative acts at work over the past six months (e.g., spreading of gossip and rumours about you; being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work), on a 5- point scale (never, now and then, monthly, every week and daily). Items were referred in terms of behavioural encounters. Therefore, no overt reference to bullying was made in order to prevent participants from labelling themselves as a "bullied victim" or from feeling reluctant to answer. Studies have shown that internal stability of the scale is high, ranging from 0.87 to 0.93 as measured by Cronbach Alpha.

Psychological Contract: The Psychological Contract Scale by Rousseau (1989, 1995) consisting of 29 items was used to study the psychological contract that employees have with their organisation. Participants were provided with a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all' to 'a very great extent'. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they believed their employer was obligated to provide a range of items. These obligations included long term job security, good career prospects, up to date training and development, pay increases to maintain standards of living and fair pay in comparison to employees doing similar work in other organisations,

necessary training to do job well, support to learn new skills, fair pay for responsibilities in the job and fringe benefits that are comparable to employees doing similar work in other organisations. The approach used to measure the psychological contract fulfilment or breach involved asking respondents to indicate the degree to which the employer has fulfilled its obligations along a scale ranging from 'not at all' to 'very well fulfilled'. This method of measurement has been adopted in a number of studies (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Arguably, the limiting issue with this method is that there is no indication of the extent to which an obligation was perceived. For example, an individual who responds that the employer has fulfilled an obligation very well may reflect two possible scenarios: an item was not perceived to be obligated yet was well fulfilled by the employer or an item was highly obligated and well fulfilled by the employer.

Organisational Support: Organisational support was measured using 7 items taken from a 36 item scale developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986). The measure assesses how employees judge or evaluate the support of the organization and the discretionary actions the organisation might take in situations that would harm or benefit the employee. The former is captured by, for example, 'the organisation values my contribution to its well being' and 'the organisation cares about my general satisfaction at work'. The latter component is assessed for example by 'even if I did the best job possible, the organisation would fail to notice' and 'the organisation is willing to help me when I need a special favour'. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which their organisation supports them using a six point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). In the scale's source publication (Eisenberger et al., 1986), principal components analysis conducted on 360 respondents in nine organisations revealed a single factor accounting for 48% of the total variance. Cronbach's alpha of the items of this scale is 0.90.

Interactional Justice: Moorman's (1991) justice measure was used to measure interactional justice. Six items in the scale measure the interactional justice perceived by respondents in the manner in which the organisation's procedures are carried out. Items in this scale focused on the interpersonal behaviour of the supervisor towards subordinates (Moorman, 1991). All the justice measures use a 5 point Likert scale with response categories ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. Sample items include 'My immediate supervisor considers my viewpoint' and 'My immediate supervisor suppresses personal biases'. Cronbach's alpha of the items of this scale is 0.95.

General Well being: General well being was

measured using the general well being questionnaire designed by Cox et.al. (1983). the general well being questionnaire had 13 items pertaining to the worn-out factor and 15 items pertaining to the uptight factor. The items assess the psychological well being of the employees and the measures use a four point Likert scale with response categories (1 = Never and 4 = Always). Sample items include 'has you face got flushed?' and 'Have you got bored easily'. The items of general well being questionnaire have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81 (Cox et. al., 1983).

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction was measured using the job satisfaction Scale proposed by MacDonald and MacIntyre (1997). Some sample items were 'I receive recognition for a job well done', 'I feel close to people at work', I feel good about working at this company' and 'I feel secure about my job'. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement by responding to a 5 point Likert scale with response categories ranging from 1 = Strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree. The job satisfaction scale had 10 items having an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.77.

Results: Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations and correlations among the study variables. The correlation between workplace bullying and psychological contract was r (98) = -0.09, p>0.05. There was a negative relationship between workplace bullying and job satisfaction r (98) = -0.33, p<0.01, workplace bullying and organisational support r (98)= -0.39, p<0.01 and a positive relationship between workplace bullying and general well being r (98) = 0.43, p<0.01 (note that high scores on the general well being items indicate low levels of general well being).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix (N=100)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gender									
Age	0.15								
Tenure	0.11	0.04							
Job satisfaction	-0.02	-0.08	-0.10	(0.53)					
Workplace bullying	-0.04	-0.11	-0.08	-0.33**	(0.58)				
Organisational Support	-0.05	0.13	-0.02	0.24	-0.39**	(0.60)			
Interactional Justice	-0.05	-0.08	0.09	0.28**	-0.18	0.16	(0.50)		
Psychological Contract	-0.03	- 0.07	-0.07	0.23*	- 0.09	0.38**	0.56**	(0.65)	
General Well being	-0.04	-0.11	-0.17	-0.14	0.43**	-0.41**	-0.15	-0.27**	(0.60)
Mean	1.54	36.4	2.87	33.56	2.59	27.01	20.05	96.78	2.20
SD	0.50	8.32	1.09	6.85	0.83	6.66	4.41	17.64	0.57
**p<0.01; *p<0.05; Cronbach's alphas are provided in parentheses on the diagonal									

To test the Hypothesis 2, 3.1 and 3.2, the following recommendations of Baron and Kenny (1986) were followed to test for mediation. According to them, three conditions must hold to establish a significant mediation effect:

- The predictor must significantly impact the mediator.
- The predictor must impact the criterion.
- The mediator must impact the criterion variable and the impact of predictor on criterion must either become non-significant or must become less significant in the third equation when the criterion is regressed on both the independent and the mediator variable.

It is evident from Table 1 that, interactional justice and workplace bullying are not significantly correlated (r = -0.18, p>0.05). Hence, there was no need to run a further mediation analysis to check whether interactional justice mediates the relationship between workplace bullying and psychological contract as the first condition of Baron and Kenny's mediation rules (1986) was rejected. Hypothesis 2 is therefore rejected in this study.

Workplace bullying and psychological contract are also not correlated (r = -0.09, p>0.05) which rejects the second condition of Baron and Kenny's mediation rules (1986). Hence, there was no need to run the further mediation analysis to check whether psychological contract mediates the relationship between workplace bullying and job satisfaction and the relationship between workplace bullying and well being. Hypotheses 3.1 and 3.2 were therefore rejected.

The observed correlations in relation to different hypotheses are also illustrated in Figure 1.

Hypothesis 4.1 predicted that organisational support acts as a moderator in the relationship between workplace bullying and job satisfaction. Following Aiken and West (1991), the independent variable (workplace bullying) and the moderator variable (organisational support) were centered, and the product term was calculated using the standardized scores. In the first step, demographic variables namely age, gender and tenure were included to check that they do not contribute to the variance of the criterion. In the second step, workplace bullying, organisational support, and the demographic variables were included as predictors and job satisfaction was included as the criterion variable. At the third step, interaction between workplace bullying and organisational support was included in the regression equation as the predictor and job satisfaction was included as the criterion variable. As shown in Table 2a , Hypothesis 4.1, namely perceived organisational support plays a moderating role in the linkage between workplace bullying and job satisfaction was not supported (β= 0.20, t= 0.41, R^2 = 0.16).

Variables	B	β	t	p	R^2	Adjusted R^2	ΔR^2	F
Table 2a: Testing the moderating effect of organisational support in the relationship between workplace bullying and job satisfaction
Step 1								
Age	-0.07	0.08	0.07	0.08	0.02	0.01	0.01 0.59	0.59
Gender	-0.63	-0.05	-0.45	0.66				
Tenure	-0.65	0.10	-1.02	0.31				
Step 2								
Age	-0.11	-0.14	-1.43	0.16	0.12**	0.13**	3.62	
Gender	- 0.01	-0.07	0.77	0.45				
Tenure	-0.80	-0.13	- 1.33	0.19				
OS	-0.14	0.14	1.33	0.19				
WB	-2.54	-0.31**	-2.98	0.00				
Step 3								
Age	-0.11	-0.13	-1.36	0.17	0.16	0.11*	-0.01*	3.02
Gender	0.98	0.07	0.74	0.46				
Tenure	0.81	0.13	1.35	0.18				
OS	0.17	0.16	1.33	0.19				
WB	4.01	0.49	0.09	0.28				
OSxWB	0.0	0.20	0.41	0.68				
Note: **p<0.01; *p<0.05, β= standardized coefficient, WB = Workplace bullying; OS= Organisational Support;

OS X WB = Interaction between organisational support and workplace bullying; R^2 = explanation rate, ΔR^2= change in explanation rate in each step, gender was coded as 1= male, 2= female

Hypothesis 4.2 predicted that organisational support acts as a moderator in the relationship between workplace bullying and general well being. Following Aiken and West (1991), the independent variable (workplace bullying) and the moderator variable (organisational support) were centered, and the product term was calculated using the standardized scores. At the first step, age, gender and tenure were included to check that they do not contribute to the variance of the criterion. In the second step, workplace bullying, organisational support and the demographic variables were included as predictors and general well being was included as the criterion variable. At the third step, interaction between workplace bullying and organisational support was included in the regression equation as the predictor and general well being was included as the criterion variable. As shown in Table 2b, Hypothesis 4.2 namely that perceived organisational support acts as a moderator in the relationship between workplace bullying and well being, was not supported (β= -0.15, t= -0.34, R^2 = 0.27, p>0.05).

Variables	B	β	t	p	R^2	Variables Adjusted R^2	ΔR^2	F

Table 2b: Testing the moderating effect of organisational support in the relationship between workplace bullying and well being

Variables	B	β	t	p	R^2	Variables Adjusted R^2	ΔR^2	F
Step 1								
Age	-0.00	--0.06	0.63	0.53	0.03	0.00	0.00	1.08
Gender	-0.04	-0.03	-0.31	0.76				
Tenure	-0.09	-0.17	-1.68	0.10				
Step 2								
Age	0.00	0.01	0.12	0.91	0.27	0.24**	0.24**	7.07
Gender	0.01	0.01	0.07	0.94				
Tenure	- 0.80	-0.15	-1.67	0.10				
OS	-0.03	-0.29	-3.01	0.00				
WB	0.21	0.31*	3.81	0.02				
Step 3								
Age	0.00	0.01	0.07	0.94	0.27	0.23***	-0.01***	5.85
Gender	0.01	0.00	0.05	0.96				
Tenure	-0.08	-0.15	-1.64	0.11				
OS	-0.03	-0.31*	-2.68	0.01				
WB	0.31	0.44	1.07	0.29				
OSxWB	- 0.00	-0.15	-0.34	0.73				

Note: **$p<0.01$; *$p<0.05$, β= standardized coefficient, WB = Workplace bullying; OS= Organisational Support;

OS X WB = Interaction between organisational support and workplace bullying; R^2 = explanation rate, ΔR^2= change in explanation rate in each step, gender was coded as 1= male, 2= female

Discussion: Psychological contract did not mediate the link between workplace bullying and job satisfaction and the link between workplace bullying and well being. The lack of mediation in the present study is likely to be a result of lack of relationship between workplace bullying and psychological contract. According to Mazur (2012), psychological contract has diverse meanings for different groups of age and seniority. Most of the employees from whom the data was collected in this study were relatively young (M= 36.44, SD= 8.32) and had worked in the organisation for only around 2-3 years (M= 2.87, SD= 1.09). Any experience that younger employees encounter on a personal level will most likely not be viewed with reference to the organisation that they are working for, hence it does not transform into psychological contract with their organisation. According to Bod et. al. (2011), the more is the age of the employee, more the recognition of bullying is enhanced. Since most of the participants in the study belonged to relatively younger age group, they are likely to recognize bullying at a less explicit level, making its impact on psychological contract less likely. Also, less work experience is likely to make the

respondents feel less empowered to take strong action against any perceived negative behaviour and ignore these to maintain a safe status in the organisation and their economic stability in the early stages of their career. The present study was carried out in a period of downturn in the Indian economy with gross domestic product at its lowest value in the last 10 years. It is likely that the uncertain economic situation and fear of loss of job may have caused the employees to react less strongly towards any negative behaviour in the organisation. This will weaken its impact on the psychological contract towards the organisation less likely.

As workplace bullying is an intense social exchange phenomenon, the cultural aspects can have a strong impact. Tayeb (1988) found that in comparison to the British, Indians are submissive, more obedient to the seniors and more dependent on others. This is a manifestation of the desire of the typical Indian employee for comfort within a hierarchical relationship. Therefore, negative behaviours are less likely to cause any effect on the psychological contract that employees have with their organization. According to Tayeb (1988), the relational orientation

is prominent in Indian employees. This aspect of relational orientation implies respect for authority and behaviors displaying conformity, dependence and approval-seeking. These qualities are likely to make Indian employees react less explicitly and less strongly towards any negative behaviour in the organisation, making the experience likely to impact the psychological contract that employees have towards their organisation.

The results need to be viewed within the perspective of Indians' preference of personalized relationship (Hofstede, 1980). A typical Indian employee is less concerned with work and productivity that are extrinsic to the relationship. Subtle forms of bullying in other cultures might be simply perceived as 'leg-pulling' or 'friendly- teasing' from close colleagues by Indian employees. Forms of subtle bullying in the organisation are less likely to be perceived as negative acts by the Indian employees and thus are less likely to cause any difference in the psychological contract that employees have towards their organisation.

With the dominance of the disposition of excessive tolerance and sense of duty (Fusilier & Durlabji, 2001) and harmony (Sinha, 1999) that Indians possess, their threshold for bullying might be higher in comparison with employees of other countries such as the UK and USA, in which there is a greater focus on individual assertiveness and achievement (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001). This can lead to Indian employees not reacting explicitly to any form of negative behaviour towards them, which in-turn diminishes the relationship between workplace bullying and psychological contract.

According to Harvey and Heames (2006), the blend of individuals from a variety of cultures with different beliefs, values, and attitudes, who are required to work together in hyper-competitive high- stress work environments, provides a fertile climate for conflict and bullying to arise. However, in the present study, since all the respondents were from the same culture and moreover, a culture that is labelled as a collectivist culture (Hofstede, 1980; Sinha & Verma, 1987), bullying is less likely to occur.

As per Table 1, the correlation between workplace bullying and well being was positive with   r = 0.43 (p<0.01). On the well being scale used, the higher well being scores reflect poorer well being. It follows that more the bullying, lesser would be the well being of the affected employee. The correlation between workplace bullying and job satisfaction was negative with r= -0.33 (p<0.01). Workplace bullying has negative effects on both employee well being and health (Einarsen and Mikkelsen, 2003), and on employee attitudes and behaviours, such as job satisfaction (Hoel and Cooper, 2000). The present data supported the existing literature.

Lack of mediation by interactional justice in the link between workplace bullying and psychological contract indicates that the impact of workplace bullying on the psychological contract is not accounted for the degree of respect and dignity with which the employees are treated by their colleagues. Interactional justice might influence the link between workplace bullying and psychological contract by some other route. The lack of mediation in this case can be a resultant of the relationship between interactional justice and psychological contract not being significant in the present study.

The collectivist orientation of Indians makes them more likely to render support to their colleagues and expect support back from them (Hofstede, 1980). Kumar and Singh (1976) suggested that Indians' preference for personalized relationship manifests in social consideration of one's own self and others. This further implies that Indians feel comfortable if they are members of preferred groups comprising of colleagues and friends. The cultural context of the organisation thus accounts for higher degree of organisational support in the organisation in the present study. Dekker and Barling (1995) argued that individuals feel less valued in large organizations, due to the highly formalized policies and procedures which may reduce flexibility in dealing with employees' individual needs. The current organisation from where the data was collected was a small establishment which gives a better opportunity for the organisation to personally provide support to the individual employees resulting in more organisational support in the organisation. The organisational support results in a strong and positive impact on the employees' psychological contract and reduces the impact of any negative element of workplace bullying which might exist in the organisation. The above discussion shows that different facets of Indian culture, young age of the employees and the economic condition may have affected the psychological contract of the employees with the organisation in a positive way. This has probably weakened the negative relationship between workplace bullying and psychological contract. In contrast, the positive correlation between organisational support and psychological contract has probably been strengthened by the positive effect of the cultural aspects on the psychological contract.

As shown in Table 2a and 2b, perceived organisational support did not moderate the link between workplace bullying and well being, and workplace bullying and job satisfaction. The present data did not support the literature. Where social support functions as a moderator within a stressor-strain relationship, it acts to moderate the negative effects of stress on well being in two different ways :-

social support could either induce the secondary appraisal of the events that were initially perceived as stressful (Cobb, 1976), or social support could interfere between stress and the onset of symptomology by providing a "solution to the problem, reducing its perceived importance by tranquilising the neuroendocrine system such that individuals become less reactive to stress and by facilitating healthful behaviours" (Cohen & Wills, 1985, p. 313). The availability of co-workers with whom an individual is able to discuss personal problems can decrease the thoughts that act to maintain chronic maladaptive responses to stressful events (Cohen et al, 2004). Thus, the moderating effect may operate through secondary appraisal, whereby onset of detrimental psychological and physiological responses to perceptions of stressors is disrupted. To sum up, social support may therefore buffer or eliminate the importance of stressful events, reduce or nullify the negative effects of stress on health, and may additionally enhance the general and psychological health and well-being of individuals (Hausser et al., 2008).

Implications: One of the most important result of this study is that cultural context plays a very important role in the relationship between workplace bullying and psychological contract. It has been argued that the submissive and obedient nature of typical Indian employees and general tendency to follow hierarchical relationships results in increase in the threshold of employees towards workplace bullying. It results in reduced chance of negative experiences impacting the psychological contract of employees towards the organisation. The cultural features along with the young age of the employees, less work experience within the organisation and

economic situation, resulted in no significant relationship between workplace bullying and psychological contract. Absence of relationship between workplace bullying and psychological contract resulted in absence of mediation in hypotheses 2, 3.1 and 3.2. There was also not any observed moderation of perceived organisational support in the link between workplace bullying and job satisfaction, and workplace bullying and well being. Workplace bullying research has been predominantly western- centric in terms of its sample and research locations. These results help in theoretical and practical advancements by exploring the concept of workplace bullying in a non western country.

Limitations and suggestions for future research: Obtaining data from other sources could enhance generalisability of the findings. Further, since all the data was cross- sectional and was collected at a single point of time, causality can only be assumed but not confirmed. A longitudinal investigation based on assessment at regular intervals of time could provide additional perspectives and enhance the findings of the present study. Bennett and Robinson (2003) have suggested that event sampling, critical incident method and peer reports may provide additional useful, in-depth data for increasing our understanding of hostile interpersonal behaviours. Since the study was based in only one industry in India, this may raise concerns about issue of generalizability. However, obtaining data from a single industry eliminates problems that may emerge from industry differences (Hartline et al., 2000). To enhance the generalizability of these conclusions, the study needs to be replicated in other industries, nations and employment situations.

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