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**BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE  
ASSESSING THE CONSEQUENCES ON JOB PERFORMANCE  
AT SUI SOUTHERN GASS COMPANY LIMITED, PAKISTAN**

**Dr. Abdul Rasheed Kalwar**

*Sui Southern Gas Company Limited Head Office, Karachi*

Email: [a.rasheedkalwar@gmail.com](mailto:a.rasheedkalwar@gmail.com)

**Dr. Abdul Lateef Kalwar**

*Sui Southern Gas Company Limited Head Office, Karachi*

Email: [alkalwar70@gmail.com](mailto:alkalwar70@gmail.com)

**Dr. Abdur Rasheed**

*School of Public Health, Dow University of Health Sciences*

Email: [abdur.rasheed@duhs.edu.pk](mailto:abdur.rasheed@duhs.edu.pk)

**ABSTRACT**

*This study examines the multifaceted impact of workplace bullying on employee performance, analyzing its effects on Task Performance (TP), Contextual Performance (CP), and Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB). In our cross-sectional exploration we collected data from 140 experienced SSGCL employees who had served for a minimum of one year. The Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised was used to evaluate workplace bullying exposure. Individual employees' performance was measured through Individual Work Performance Questionnaire assessments. The study results demonstrate how bullying drastically harms Task performance, because more than 86.7% of occasional victims and 72.7% of chronic victims fail to meet performance expectations while no high performers ( $\geq 4$ ) exist among the bullied pairs. Contextual Performance decreases by 86.7% from proactive behaviours among employees who have been bullied, though 18.2% of victims show increased Contextual Performance possibly indicating that they compensate with extra work. Counterproductive Work Behaviour happens rarely in victims because all victims had scores less than or equal to 2 as well as indicating that stress does not produce emotional reactions which helps support the internalized stress explanation instead of retaliation. The research illustrates that bullying generates wide-reaching yet hidden cost effects on performance so organization require policies which deal with both the apparent and concealed results.*

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**Keywords:** Workplace bullying, Task performance, Contextual performance, Counterproductive work behaviour

## **INTRODUCTION**

Workplace bullying - defined as persistent exposure to workplace interpersonal aggression and mistreatment from colleagues, supervisors, or co-workers - stands as a critical organizational problem in today's work environments yielding substantial detrimental effects to the workforce and organizations at large (S. Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003). The malicious setting extends beyond common workplace disputes to embody professional devaluation and psychological threat that produces significant damage to personnel and functional operations of organizations (S. V. Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2020).

Research has shown that workplace bullying takes different explicit and subtle forms including verbal harassment together with social rejection and task-related destruction and online harassment (Branch, Ramsay, & Barker, 2013). Behaviours that operate insidiously frequently generate both anxiety and helplessness for employees when leadership figures conduct such acts or organizational systems adopt productivity standards that overlook employee safety and welfare (Salin & Hoel, 2013).

As a result, numerous scientific teams have been employing researched methodologies to fully document serious workplace violence by systematically measuring its occurrence and identifying groups which are at risk in different work settings (Zapf, Einarsen, Hoel, & Vartia, 2003). While numerous studies have examined bullying rates across different national contexts and professional fields, critics contend that this area of research has frequently prioritized substantive findings over methodological rigor in study design and measurement (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001; Niedhammer, David, Degioanni, & Physicians, 2007).

The field has produced numerous self-report instruments measuring workplace bullying exposure, though most have seen limited application beyond initial development studies (Jennifer, Cowie, & Ananiadou, 2003). Notable exceptions include the Negative Acts Questionnaire (S. Einarsen & Raknes, 1997) and Leymann Inventory of Psychological Terror (Leymann, 1997). Many available measures suffer from methodological limitations, including: (1) modified versions of existing scales with unestablished psychometric properties (Salin, 2001), (2) impractical length for organizational

surveys (e.g., WAR-Q's 60 items; (Keashly & Neuman, 2004), and (3) inappropriate target populations - ranging from undergraduate samples (Keashly, Trott, & MacLean, 1994) to clinical diagnostic tools like the LIPT (48 items) designed for severely traumatized individuals.

Workplace bullying reduces psychological health while also harming work productivity levels. The evidence concerning bullying at work needs additional research through standard measurement tools such as the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R). The Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R)

Developers created the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R) as an empirically validated and short workplace bullying assessment tool which works effectively across all occupational fields. Researchers combined original NAQ methodological elements with conceptual analysis and empirical data gathered from 11 UK focus groups (N=61) representing multiple occupations and different organizational levels (Hoel, Cooper, & Faragher, 2001) to produce an instrument that through iterative refinement moved from 29 items to 22 final items (S. Einarsen, 2001; M. Nielsen et al., 2008) and maintained an optimal balance of comprehensive assessment with practical application for organizational contexts.

### **Individual work performance (IWP)**

Individual work performance (IWP) describes the concept of employee behaviors which serve organizational objectives as defined through Campbell's 1990 definition. The evolving theoretical framework for this construct has resulted from multiple scholarly models' research (Campbell, 1990; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). Occupational health research bases its work around health-related productivity losses (sickness absenteeism/presenteeism) whereas work psychology has kept its focus on core job task performance levels--or "the proficiency in executing core job tasks" (Koopmans et al., 2011). Contemporary consensus identifies three IWP dimensions: (1) task performance (technical job requirements), (2) contextual performance (behaviours sustaining organizational/social infrastructure) (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993), and (3) counterproductive work behaviour (actions detrimental to organizational well-being).

Given the varied conceptualizations of individual work performance (IWP), researchers have developed multiple measurement tools assessing different aspects of this construct. The operationalization of IWP encompasses diverse behavioural indicators, outcomes, and productivity measures (Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, de Vet, & van der Beek, 2014b). Within occupational health research, common instruments focus on health-related productivity loss, including the Work Productivity and Impairment Questionnaire (Reilly, Zbrozek, & Dukes, 1993), Work Limitations Questionnaire (Lerner et al., 2001), and WHO Health and Performance Questionnaire (Kessler et al., 2003). Similarly, organizational psychologists have created specialized scales measuring core IWP dimensions: task performance (Williams & Anderson, 1991), contextual performance (P. M. Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1989), and counterproductive work behaviour (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Despite their widespread use, existing IWP measures share several critical limitations. First, no single instrument comprehensively assesses all key IWP dimensions, resulting in incomplete performance evaluation. Second, content overlap between scales measuring different dimensions (through antithetical items) creates artificial correlations, compromising content validity (Dalal, 2005). Third, most tools lack generalizability, having been developed either for specific populations (e.g., employees with health conditions (Kessler et al., 2003; Lerner et al., 2001; Reilly et al., 1993) or occupational groups (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; P. M. Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1989; Williams & Anderson, 1991). These constraints highlight the need for a more robust, universally applicable IWP measure.

The absence of standardized conceptualization and measurement of IWP presents significant challenges, as valid assessment is fundamental for identifying performance predictors and evaluating intervention effectiveness. To address these limitations, researchers developed the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) (Koopmans et al., 2012; Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, Van Buuren, et al., 2014). Inspired by a thorough three-dimensional framework established through occupational health and psychology and management literature systemic reviews (Koopmans et al., 2011) the IWPQ features task performance alongside contextual performance and counterproductive work behaviour in its structure. IWPQ as a

universal tool shows functionality across occupational groups and health conditions surpassing earlier tools that worked only with certain population subsets.

### **Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL)**

Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL) ranks among the biggest natural gas distribution companies of Pakistan which delivers services across Sindh and Baluchistan to millions of domestic homes as well as commercial and industrial consumers. Established in 1954, SSGCL plays a vital role in Pakistan's energy sector, managing transmission, distribution, and sale of natural gas. The company operates an extensive pipeline network and is committed to ensuring reliable energy supply while adhering to safety, efficiency, and corporate governance standards. SSGCL is a publicly listed company on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) and works under the regulatory oversight of the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA).

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Data for this analytical cross-sectional study were collected from 140 employees currently working at various positions at Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL) through non-probability convenience sampling technique during January to February 2025. Inclusion criteria: individual must be permanent staff of SSGCL, individual must have at least one year worked experience to ensure they have sufficient workplace exposure, employees from various departments (HR, Operations, Finance, Engineering, etc.) to ensure diverse perspectives, employees whose job performance records (appraisals, productivity reports) are accessible for analysis. Exclusion criteria: former employees, interns, or trainees not under a formal employment contract, employees who refuse to sign the consent form or withdraw participation, employees in highly sensitive roles (e.g., legal, top executives) where participation may pose confidentiality risks, employees with missing or inaccessible job performance records. The data were collected using two questionnaire The Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R) and Individual Work Performance Questionnaire.

**The Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R):** Exposure to workplace bullying was assessed using the Negative Acts

Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R; Einarsen et al., 2009). This 22-item scale evaluates the frequency of specific negative behaviours experienced at work over the past six months. Respondents rated each behaviour on a 5-point scale: 1 ("Never"), 2 ("Now and then"), 3 ("Monthly"), 4 ("Weekly"), 5 ("Daily").

**Scoring and Interpretation:** Scores below 33 indicate no exposure to bullying, between 33–45 suggest occasional bullying and above 45 classify respondents as victims of workplace bullying. The NAQ-R is a well-validated tool widely used in organizational research to assess workplace harassment and bullying behaviours.

**Measurement of Individual Work Performance:** Individual work performance was assessed using the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) [14,15]. This 18-item tool evaluates performance across three dimensions: Task performance (5 items), Contextual performance (8 items), and Counterproductive work behaviour (5 items). The IWPQ uses a 3-month recall period and a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from: 0 (“seldom”) to 4 (“always”) for task and contextual performance and 0 (“never”) to 4 (“often”) for counterproductive behaviours.

**Scoring Method:** For each subscale, a mean score (ranging from 0 to 4) was calculated by summing the item responses and dividing by the number of items. A better task and contextual performance are signaled by higher scores but a higher counterproductive score shows particular negative actions more often. The IWPQ performs well for reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.78 for task performance, 0.85 for contextual performance, 0.79 for counterproductive behaviour). Also, the instrument has proven to be valid establishing face, structural, convergent and discriminative validity. (Koopmans et al., 2012; Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, De Vet, & Van Der Beek, 2014a; Koopmans, Bernaards, et al., 2014b; Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, Van Buuren, et al., 2014), making it a robust measure for workplace performance assessment.

#### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data were entered in and analyzed by using SPSS version 27.0. Qualitative variables were displayed as frequencies and percentages. Non-parametric chi-square test was used to identify association of bullying victimization and demographic characteristic. Furthermore,

Fisher Exact test was used to assess the potential effect of bullying victimization on employee job performance. P-value  $\leq 0.05$  is considered as significant.

## RESULTS

In the study, gender, age, and work experience were considered as demographic variables. Male employees constituted the majority of respondents (77.1%, n = 108), while female employees represented a smaller proportion (22.9%, n = 32). Most participants (62.9%) fell into the 43–60 years age group, while 37.1% were aged 25–42. Employees with 6–20 years of experience were slightly more prevalent (54.3%) than those with 21–35 years (45.7%).

**TABLE 1: ITEM WISE DISTRIBUTION (%) OF NEGATIVE ACT QUESTIONNAIRE REVISED (NAQ-R)**

	Never	Now and then	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
<b>Work-related bullying</b>					
1. Someone withholding information which affects your performance	50	38.6	10	1.4	
2. Being ordered to do work below your level of competence	47.1	31.4	12.9	5.7	2.9
3. Having your opinions ignored	50	37.1	2.9	5.7	4.3
4. Being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines	42.9	42.9	8.6	4.3	1.4
5. Excessive monitoring of your work	74.2	15.7	2.9	4.3	2.9
6. Pressure not to claim something to which by right you are entitled (e.g. sick leave, holiday entitlement, travel expenses)	64.3	20	10	2.9	2.9
7. Being exposed to an unmanageable workload	77.1	11.4	8.6		2.9
<b>Person-related bullying</b>					
8. Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	65.7	27.1	1.4	4.3	1.4
9. Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks	67.9	19.3	11.4		1.4
10. Spreading of gossip and rumours about you	67.1	17.1	8.6	2.9	4.3
11. Being ignored or excluded	65	25	4.3	2.9	2.9
12. Having insulted or offensive remarks made about your person, attitudes or your private life	62.9	22.9	2.9	5.7	5.7
13. Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job	63.6	20	10.7	4.3	1.4
14. Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes	64.3	21.4	5.7	7.1	1.4
15. Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach	58.6	31.4	5.7	1.4	2.9
16. Persistent criticism of your errors or mistakes	70	21.4	8.6		
17. Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with	71.4	14.3	4.3	2.9	7.1
18. Having allegations made against you	74.3	11.4	4.3	1.4	8.6
19. Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm	74.3	18.6	4.3		2.9
<b>Physically intimidating bullying</b>					
20. Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger	58.6	31.4	8.6		1.4
21. Intimidating behaviours such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking your way	74.3	12.9	5.7	4.3	2.9
22. Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse	81.4	2.9	7.1	2.9	5.7

The table 1 presents the frequency distribution (%) of 22 negative workplace behaviours categorized into work-related, person-related,

and physically intimidating bullying, as reported by employees at SSGCL.

### **Work-related Bullying**

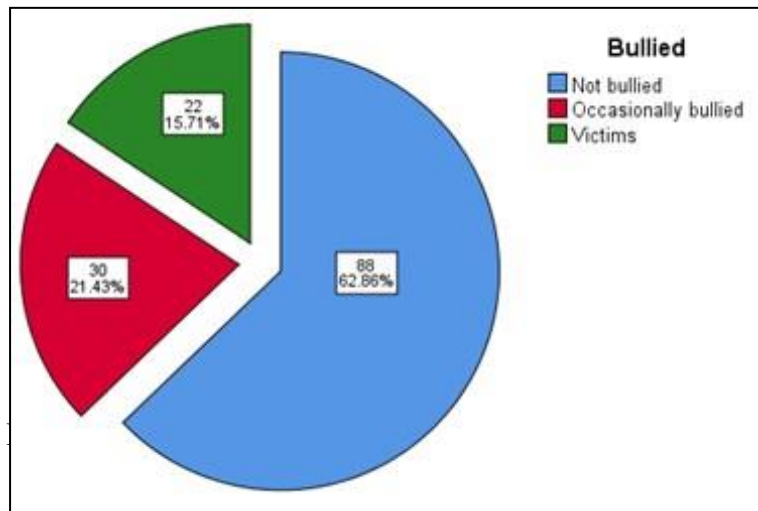
This section highlights bullying behaviours related to job duties or working conditions. The percentages indicate how frequently respondents experience these behaviours: Commonly experienced (more frequent): Being ordered to do work below your level of competence (Daily: 2.9%, Weekly: 12.9%). Being exposed to an unmanageable workload (Monthly: 11.4%, Weekly: 8.6%) Less common behaviours: Excessive monitoring of your work (Never: 74.2%) Having opinions ignored and being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines are experienced by some on a monthly or weekly basis, though less frequently than the above.

### **Person-related Bullying**

These behaviours target the individual rather than their work: Most common behaviours: Being ignored or excluded (Monthly: 5.7%, Weekly: 2.9%, Daily: 5.7%) Spreading of gossip and rumours (Monthly: 8.6%, Weekly: 2.9%) Hints or signals from others that you should quit (Monthly: 4.3%, Weekly: 5.7%). Less common behaviours: Having allegations made against you and being subject to excessive teasing and sarcasm are mostly reported as "Never" by over 70% of respondents.

### **Physically Intimidating Bullying**

These involve physical or threatening actions: Least common but still present: Threats of violence or actual abuse (Never: 81.4%, but 5.7% report it happens daily) Being shouted at or the target of anger (Never: 58.6%, but 1.4% report it happens daily) Intimidating behaviours like finger-pointing, blocking way (Daily: 2.9%, Weekly: 4.3%).



**FIGURE - 1: DISTRIBUTION OF BULLYING VICTIMIZATION AMONG EMPLOYEES OF SSG**

Above figure 1 shows that 62.86% of the respondents reported that they have not been bullied, 21.43% are classified as occasionally bullied and 15.71% are identified as victims of bullying.

In general, the most types of bullying are reported as "Never" by most respondents, suggesting that many workplaces may not have systemic bullying. However, a notable minority experience frequent bullying, especially in the form of: Being ignored/excluded, being overloaded with work, being forced to work below competence level, Gossip and rumours. These could indicate cultural or managerial issues in some workplaces and may warrant attention or policy adjustments.

**TABLE 2**  
**ASSOCIATION OF BULLYING VICTIMIZATION**  
**AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC**

		<b>Not bullied</b>	<b>Bullied occasionally</b>	<b>Victims</b>	
		n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	P-value
<b>Gender</b>	Male	74 (68.5)	20 (18.5)	14(13)	0.038*
	Female	14(43.8)	10 (31.3)	8 (25)	
<b>Age (years)</b>	25-42	30 (57.7)	12(23.1)	10(19.2)	0.575
	43-60	58(65.39)	18(20.5)	12(13.6)	
<b>Experience (years)</b>	6--20	38(50)	24(31.6)	14(18.4)	0.001*
	21--35	50(78.1)	6(9.4)	8(12.5)	

\*p-value  $\leq 0.05$  considered as significant (chi-square test)

The above table 2 presents the distribution of bullying victimization among participants based on gender, age, and work experience, along with p-values from statistical chi-square tests assessing association between bullying victimization and demographic characteristics. Males were more likely to report no bullying (68.5%) compared to females (43.8%). Females had higher rates of occasional bullying (31.3%) and victimization (25%) than males (18.5% and 13%, respectively). Both age groups (25-42 and 43-60) had similar distributions: 25-42 years: 57.7% not bullied, 23.1% occasionally bullied, 19.2% victims. 43-60 years: 65.9% not bullied, 20.5% occasionally bullied, 13.6% victims. Those with 6–20 years of experience had higher rates of occasional bullying (31.6%) compared to those with 21–35 years (9.4%). Those with 21–35 years of experience were more likely to report no bullying (78.1%). It is cleared that gender and experience of the employees at SSGCL were found to be significantly associated with bullying victimization p-values  $< 0.05$ .

**TABLE 3**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOUR**  
**ACROSS TASK PERFORMANCE, CONTEXTUAL PERFORMANCE**  
**AND COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR**

Task Performance	n	%
< 3 (Below expectation)	66	47.14
3-3.9 (Meets expectation with room for improvement)	72	51.43
>=4 (consistently exceeds expectations)	2	1.43
Contextual Performance	n	%
< 3 (minimal initiative)	72	51.43
3-3.9 (Adequate but no exceptional)	50	35.71
>=4 (proactive, goes beyond job duties)	18	12.86
Counterproductive Behaviour	n	%
<=2 (rarely engage in negative behaviours)	124	88.58
2.1-3 (Occasional issues)	16	11.42

Table 3 shows the distribution of employee performance and behaviour across three categories: Task Performance (TP), Contextual Performance (CP), and Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB). Nearly half of employees struggle with core job tasks. Very few are high performers, suggesting potential gaps in training, motivation, or role clarity. Over half do the bare minimum in teamwork/helping colleagues. Few employees (12.86%) demonstrate strong organizational citizenship. Most employees behave appropriately. However, ~11% exhibit occasional counterproductive actions (e.g., absenteeism, conflict, inefficiency).

**TABLE 4**  
**EFFECT OF BULLYING VICTIMIZATION ON**  
**EMPLOYEE JOB PERFORMANCE**

	Task Performance			Contextual Performance			Counterproductive Work Behaviour	
	<3 (Below expectation)	3-3.9 (Meets expectation with room for improvement)	>=4 (consistently exceeds expectations)	<3 (minimal initiative)	3-3.9 (Adequate but no exceptional)	>=4 (proactive, goes beyond job duties)	<=2 (rarely engage in negative behaviours)	2.1-3 (Occasional issues)
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)
Not bullied	24(27.3)	62(70.5)	2(2.3)	30(34.1)	44(50)	14(15.9)	74(84.1)	14(15.9)
Bullied occasionally	26(86.7)	4(13.3)	0(0)	26(86.7)	4(13.3)	0(0)	28(93.3)	2(6.7)
Victims	16(72.7)	6(27.3)	0(0)	16(72.7)	2(9.1)	4(18.2)	22(100)	0(0)
P-value	<0.001* F			<0.001* F			0.076F	

\*p-value ≤ 0.05 considered as significant (Fisher Exact Test)

Table 4 examines how bullying victimization relates to: Task Performance (TP), Contextual Performance (CP) and Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB). Fisher Exact test was used to identify statistical association between bullying victimization and TP, CP and CWB. Bullying is strongly associated with poor task performance. Non-bullied employees perform significantly better. Bullied employees are less likely to help colleagues or go beyond duties. Victims show slightly more proactive behaviours than occasionally bullied employees—possibly a coping mechanism. Bullying does not lead to increased counterproductive behaviours. Victims may internalize stress rather than act out.

**DISCUSSION**

This study examined the impact of workplace bullying on SSGCL employee performance (task and contextual) and counterproductive work behaviours (CWB), while also considering demographic influences such as gender and work experience. The findings align with and extend previous research, highlighting critical organizational and psychological implications.

**Bullying and Task Performance (TP)**

The dramatic decline in TP among bullied employees - with 86.7% of occasionally bullied and 72.7% of chronic victims underperforming - presents a stark picture of bullying's detrimental

effects. This finding strongly supports the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), suggesting that bullying acts as an excessive job demand that depletes employees' cognitive and emotional resources. The constant vigilance required to anticipate potential harassment, coupled with the emotional labour of managing distress, leaves fewer cognitive resources available for task execution.

Notably, the complete absence of high performers ( $\geq 4$ ) among bullied employees suggests bullying may create a "performance ceiling" effect. Even those who manage to meet basic expectations (13.3% of occasionally bullied and 27.3% of victims in the 3-3.9 range) appear unable to achieve excellence. This aligns with research on cognitive bandwidth (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013), which shows that chronic stressors reduce mental capacity for complex tasks. The finding that occasional bullying shows nearly identical performance impacts to chronic victimization raises important questions about dosage effects - it may be that even intermittent bullying creates sufficient anticipatory anxiety to impair performance consistently.

### **Bullying and Contextual Performance (CP)**

The suppression of proactive behaviours among bullied employees (86.7% showing minimal initiative) provides strong support for Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). When employees perceive the organization as failing to provide basic protection from harassment, they rationally withdraw discretionary efforts. Both sides never repay each other's positive behaviours and therefore team members fail to engage in such behavior and suffer reduced team effectiveness (N. P. Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume 2009).

This finding draws special significance given that 18.2% of victim participants revealed active CP behaviours. According to D'cruz and Noronha (2013) this can be interpreted as victims trying to turn themselves into an unavoidable part of the workplace through a strategic "work their way out" approach. Walker's research (2018) suggests these over-compliant behaviours show typical characteristics of trauma responders' fawning reactions to appease aggressors. The group likely includes individuals who perform well at work due to suppressing deep psychological problems which makes them highly susceptible to burnout.

### **Bullying and Counterproductive Behaviours (CWB)**

The virtually complete lack of CWB among victims of bullying breaks down the Stressor-Emotion Model (Spector & Fox, 2005) which claims workplace challenges cause workers to respond aggressively. The evidence supports the theory of "silent suffering" (M. B. Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012) which says people who suffer because power differentials prevent them from showing their disapproval publicly.

These results present essential consequences for managing organizational surveillance systems.

Traditional CWB measures may completely miss bullying's impacts, as victims are more likely to engage in presenteeism (showing up but not functioning fully) or withdrawal behaviours than overt retaliation. The finding that 100% of chronic victims showed minimal CWB suggests organizations need more sophisticated metrics to detect bullying's consequences, potentially including measures of work engagement or psychological withdrawal.

The lack of significant CWB among bullied employees (100% of victims rarely engaged in negative acts) challenges the "aggression displacement" hypothesis (Spector & Fox, 2005). Instead, our data suggest victims internalize stress, consistent with the "learned helplessness" model (Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002). This has critical implications: organizations cannot assume bullying manifests visibly through conflict; silent suffering may be the norm.

Gender: Women's higher bullying rates (25% vs. 13% for men) mirror global trends likely tied to power imbalances and gender role stereotypes. Experience: Junior employees' vulnerability (31.6% bullied vs. 9.4% of seniors) reinforces the "power gradient" theory

(Gloor, 2014), where hierarchical disparities enable abuse.

Research studies suggest that performance is impacted by bullying through two different mechanisms: The Direct Route operates at the level of cognition because bullying depletes mental resources thus decreasing TP. As an Indirect motivational mechanism bullying destroys trust leading to reduced CP and simultaneously powerlessness leads to reduction in CWB.

### **CONCLUSION**

Employees at SSGCL who experience bullying (occasional or frequent) show dramatically lower task performance (TP) compared to

non-bullied peers. 86.7% of occasionally bullied employees and 72.7% of victims underperform, versus only 27.3% of non-bullied employees. Almost no bullied employees (0%) exceed expectations, highlighting bullying's corrosive effect on productivity.

Bullied employees at SSGCL are far less likely to engage in contextual performance (CP), such as helping colleagues or taking initiative. 86.7% of occasionally bullied employees show minimal initiative, compared to 34.1% of non-bullied staff. Surprisingly, some victims (18.2%) remain proactive, suggesting resilience or coping strategies—a potential area for further study.

Contrary to assumptions, bullied employees at SSGCL do not retaliate with negative behaviours. 100% of victims and 93.3% of occasionally bullied employees rarely engage in CWB, indicating they internalize stress rather than act out.

Gender disparities exist, with women more frequently bullied (25% victims vs. 13% of men). Less experienced employees (6–20 years) face higher bullying rates (31.6%) than veterans (9.4%), suggesting seniority may offer protection.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Cross-sectional design limits causal inferences: longitudinal studies could track bullying's long-term effects. Self-reported data may underrepresent bullying due to stigma.

### **Practical Implications**

The study's practical implications emphasize a multi-tiered approach to addressing workplace bullying, beginning with preventive measures such as mandatory anti-bullying training for managers to ensure early intervention (Rayner & Cooper, 2006) and implementing anonymous reporting systems to mitigate victims' fear of retaliation (Namie & Namie, 2009). Support for victims should include restorative HR practices like mentorship programs to rebuild confidence (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2013) and regular mental health screenings to identify and address internalized stress proactively (Kivimäki et al., 2003). The introduction of respectful behaviours through leadership modelling becomes a vital foundation for establishing psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) as it creates employee feelings of security and appreciation. The combined

strategies perform three key functions which strive to decrease bullying occurrences while providing assistance to those victims and improving the organization's work environment.

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