

Workplace Bullying, Employee Stress, and Organizational Commitment: An Industrial Perspective

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Abstract

Workplace bullying represents one of the most pervasive and psychologically destructive phenomena in contemporary organizational settings. Despite substantial research on its consequences across various sectors, the manufacturing and textile industries remain significantly underrepresented in empirical investigations. Drawing upon the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), this paper develops a comprehensive conceptual framework examining the sequential relationships among workplace bullying, employee stress, organizational commitment, and employee well-being in manufacturing and textile industry contexts. A systematic literature review was conducted following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol (Page et al., 2021), resulting in the inclusion of 200 peer-reviewed empirical studies retrieved from Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar databases. The synthesis of evidence reveals that workplace bullying exerts significant positive effects on employee stress and significant negative effects on organizational commitment. Furthermore, employee stress functions as a central mediating mechanism linking workplace bullying to diminished organizational commitment. Organizational commitment subsequently influences employee well-being outcomes. Five research hypotheses are formally proposed, and a structural model is presented for empirical testing in manufacturing and textile industry contexts. The review identifies critical gaps in the existing literature, particularly the neglect of blue-collar, production-line, and factory workers in developing economies. Theoretical contributions, practical implications for human resource management, and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: workplace bullying, employee stress, organizational commitment, employee well-being, manufacturing industry, textile industry and COR theory

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I. Introduction

Workplace bullying has emerged as a critical organizational and social challenge, attracting growing scholarly attention from researchers in organizational behavior, occupational psychology, human resource management, and public health. Defined as repeated, systematic negative acts directed toward one or more employees who find it difficult to defend themselves against such behaviors (Einarsen et al., 2020), workplace bullying encompasses a wide range of hostile behaviors including verbal humiliation, social exclusion, excessive criticism, intimidation, and deliberate work obstruction. These behaviors, when persistent, generate profound psychological and organizational consequences that undermine individual well-being and institutional effectiveness.

Over the past three decades, empirical research has consistently demonstrated that workplace bullying is strongly associated with elevated stress levels, diminished organizational commitment, burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and deteriorating mental health outcomes (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018; Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007; Zapf et al., 2011). The financial and human costs of workplace bullying are substantial: organizations incur significant expenditures related to absenteeism, turnover, reduced productivity, and litigation, while victims suffer lasting psychological harm (Hoel et al., 2011; Samnani & Singh, 2012).

Despite the breadth of existing research, critical gaps remain. The majority of empirical studies have focused on white-collar environments, educational institutions, healthcare settings, banking organizations, and service industries. Manufacturing and textile industries, which employ hundreds of millions of workers globally and are characterized by hierarchical supervisory structures, intense production pressures, shift-based work schedules, and physical labor demands, remain conspicuously underrepresented in the literature ([Arenas et al., 2015](#); [Salin & Hoel, 2011](#)). This neglect is particularly pronounced in the context of developing economies, where employment conditions, labor relations, and regulatory frameworks may distinctly shape the nature and consequences of workplace bullying ([Salin & Hoel, 2011](#)).

Furthermore, while the individual relationships between workplace bullying and stress, stress and commitment, and bullying and commitment have been examined in isolation, an integrated conceptual model that simultaneously examines these relationships within a manufacturing and textile context incorporating employee stress as a mediating mechanism remains absent from the literature. The present study addresses this gap through a comprehensive systematic review and conceptual framework development.

This paper makes four principal contributions. First, it synthesizes 200 peer-reviewed empirical studies through a rigorous PRISMA-guided systematic review, providing the most comprehensive synthesis to date on the nexus of workplace bullying, stress, and organizational commitment. Second, it proposes a theoretically grounded conceptual framework integrating Conservation of Resources Theory ([Hobfoll, 1989](#)), the Job Demands-Resources Model ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2007](#)), and Social Exchange Theory ([Blau, 1964](#)). Third, it formally develops five testable research hypotheses specific to manufacturing and textile industry contexts. Fourth, it identifies sector-specific theoretical and practical implications, contributing to the advancement of organizational behavior scholarship in industrial settings.

1.1 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To systematically review and synthesize empirical literature on workplace bullying, employee stress, and organizational commitment.
2. To identify the mediating role of employee stress in the relationship between workplace bullying and organizational commitment.
3. To develop a comprehensive conceptual framework grounded in established theoretical perspectives.
4. To propose and formally state testable research hypotheses for empirical investigation in manufacturing and textile industries.
5. To identify critical research gaps and propose directions for future empirical inquiry.

II. Theoretical Framework

The conceptual model proposed in this study is grounded in three well-established theoretical perspectives that collectively explain the mechanisms through which workplace bullying generates adverse organizational and individual outcomes: Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, and Social Exchange Theory (SET).

2.1 Conservation of Resources Theory

Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, originally proposed by Hobfoll (1989) and subsequently refined ([Hobfoll et al., 2018](#)), posits that individuals are motivated to acquire, retain, and protect resources — including material, social, psychological, and energy-based assets that they value. Stress arises when individuals perceive actual or threatened resource loss, or when they invest significant resources without obtaining anticipated returns. Workplace bullying constitutes a direct threat to multiple categories of valued resources, including psychological safety, self-esteem, social belonging, job security, and professional reputation ([Halbesleben et al., 2014](#)). Victims of bullying experience chronic resource depletion, which triggers stress responses and reduces their capacity to invest in organizational roles, thereby diminishing commitment ([Hobfoll et al., 2018](#)).

COR Theory further predicts a loss spiral: initial resource losses increase vulnerability to subsequent losses, amplifying psychological strain over time. In manufacturing environments, where workers may have limited access to compensatory resources such as supervisory support or psychological safety programs, the resource depletion process may be particularly acute ([Arenas et al., 2015](#); [Tuckey et al., 2012](#)).

2.2 Job Demands-Resources Model

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2007](#); [Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004](#)) provides a complementary explanatory framework. The model distinguishes between job demands — physical, psychological, or organizational aspects of work that require sustained effort and are associated with physiological and psychological costs and job resources, which serve motivational, protective, and developmental functions. Workplace bullying functions as a severe psychosocial job demand that exceeds employees' coping capacities,

generating emotional exhaustion, burnout, and disengagement (Bakker et al., 2014). The depletion of job resources, including supervisory support, autonomy, and feedback, further amplifies the harmful effects of bullying on employee well-being and organizational commitment (Schaufeli et al., 2009). The JD-R model has been applied extensively in manufacturing contexts, where high physical demands, shift work, and repetitive task structures create environments with elevated job demands and often insufficient resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

2.3 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET), as formulated by Blau (1964) and subsequently developed by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), conceptualizes organizational relationships as reciprocal exchanges governed by norms of reciprocity. Employees engage in discretionary contributions to their organizations including commitment, effort, and organizational citizenship behaviors in return for organizational support, fair treatment, respect, and security. Workplace bullying fundamentally violates these reciprocal exchange norms by subjecting employees to persistent hostile treatment without institutional redress (Samnani & Singh, 2012). Perceived organizational failure to protect employees from bullying behaviors signals low organizational valuation of employees, triggering negative reciprocity responses including reduced commitment, disengagement, and turnover intentions (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Wayne et al., 1997). In manufacturing settings, where power differentials between supervisors and production workers are often pronounced, the perceived breach of the social exchange contract may be particularly damaging to organizational commitment (Ferris et al., 2009).

2.4 Integration of Theoretical Perspectives

The integration of COR Theory, the JD-R Model, and Social Exchange Theory provides a robust and multidimensional theoretical foundation for the proposed conceptual model. COR Theory explains why bullying generates stress through resource depletion; the JD-R Model contextualizes bullying as a critical job demand that depletes employee resources and fuels the health impairment process; and SET explains the attitudinal and behavioral withdrawal responses specifically reduced organizational commitment that emerge from violated exchange relationships. Together, these theories predict a sequential pathway from workplace bullying through employee stress to diminished organizational commitment, with downstream consequences for employee well-being.

III. Methodology: Systematic Literature Review

This study employed a systematic literature review methodology guided by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework (Page et al., 2021; Moher et al., 2009). The PRISMA protocol ensures transparency, reproducibility, and methodological rigor in the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and synthesis of relevant empirical literature.

3.1 Search Strategy and Databases

Relevant studies were identified through comprehensive searches of four major academic databases: Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar. These databases were selected for their broad coverage of organizational behavior, occupational psychology, human resource management, and management science literature. Database searches were conducted between January 2024 and March 2026 to ensure comprehensive coverage of the most recent empirical evidence.

The following primary keyword combinations and Boolean search strings were employed:

- "Workplace bullying" AND "employee stress" OR "job stress"
- "Workplace bullying" AND "organizational commitment"
- "Mobbing" AND "occupational stress" AND "employee attitudes"
- "Workplace harassment" AND "burnout" AND "organizational commitment"
- "Employee well-being" AND "bullying" AND "manufacturing" OR "textile"
- "Psychological safety" AND "workplace aggression" AND "stress"

3.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Studies were included in the final synthesis if they met the following criteria: (a) published in peer-reviewed journals indexed in Scopus or Web of Science; (b) empirically examined at least one of the three core variables — workplace bullying, employee stress, or organizational commitment; (c) published between 2000 and 2026; (d) written in English; and (e) utilized quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods research designs. Studies were excluded if they: (a) were conference papers, dissertations, or book chapters; (b) examined variables unrelated to the core constructs; (c) were not peer-reviewed; or (d) lacked sufficient methodological detail to permit quality assessment.

3.3 PRISMA Flow Diagram

Table 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram — Literature Selection Process

PRISMA Stage	Description	Action	Records (n)
Identification	Records identified through database searches (Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, Google Scholar)	Database Search	487
Identification	Additional records identified through citation tracking and reference lists	Citation Tracking	34
Identification	Total records before deduplication	Total	521
Screening	Duplicate records removed	Removed	98
Screening	Records screened (title and abstract review)	Screened	423
Screening	Records excluded after title/abstract screening (off-topic, unrelated constructs)	Excluded	157
Eligibility	Full-text articles assessed for eligibility	Assessed	266
Eligibility	Full-text articles excluded: insufficient methodological detail (n=28), non-peer-reviewed (n=18), language other than English (n=20)	Excluded	66
Included	Studies included in final synthesis	Final	200

3.4 Quality Assessment

Quality assessment of included studies was conducted using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) for quantitative studies (Hong et al., 2018) and the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for qualitative studies. Studies were evaluated on criteria including: clarity of research design, appropriateness of sampling strategy, validity and reliability of measurement instruments, adequacy of statistical analysis, and strength of conclusions. All 200 included studies met the minimum quality threshold established for this review.

IV. Literature Review

4.1 Conceptualizing Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is a complex, multidimensional construct that has been conceptualized and operationalized in various ways across the scholarly literature. Leymann (1990, 1996) introduced the concept of 'mobbing' to describe systematic psychological terror directed at employees, emphasizing the recurring and duration-based nature of such behaviors. Einarsen et al. (2020) subsequently defined bullying as repeated, persistent negative acts that systematically target one or more employees who struggle to defend themselves. Keashly (1998) characterized workplace emotional abuse as a pattern of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors that are not explicitly physically threatening but are potentially harmful. Lutgen-Sandvik (2006) conceptualized workplace bullying as persistent verbal and nonverbal aggression that includes personal attacks, social exclusion, manipulation of professional reputation, and work interference.

Empirically, workplace bullying is typically measured using validated instruments including the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R; Einarsen et al., 2009), the Workplace Bullying Questionnaire (WBQ; Giorgi et al., 2011), and the Perceived Workplace Bullying Scale (PWBS; Hutchinson et al., 2009). These instruments assess behavioral frequency, subjective labeling, and contextual dimensions of bullying experiences. Meta-analytic evidence indicates that workplace bullying affects approximately 15% of the global workforce, with prevalence rates varying substantially across industries, organizational cultures, and national contexts (Nielsen et al., 2020; Verkuil et al., 2015).

4.2 Workplace Bullying and Employee Stress

A substantial and consistent body of empirical research establishes a significant positive relationship between workplace bullying and employee stress. The theoretical basis for this relationship is well-grounded in COR Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and the JD-R Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007): bullying constitutes a severe psychosocial stressor that depletes cognitive, emotional, and motivational resources, overwhelming employees' adaptive coping capacities (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll et al., 2018).

Einarsen and Mikkelsen (2003) conducted foundational research demonstrating that bullying victims report significantly higher levels of psychological strain, somatic complaints, and role-related stress compared to non-victims. Nielsen and Einarsen (2012) performed a systematic review of 66 cross-sectional and prospective

studies, confirming robust associations between workplace bullying and a comprehensive range of stress indicators including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress symptoms. Hauge et al. (2010) found in a large-scale Norwegian study that bullying predicted both quantitative work overload perceptions and emotional exhaustion, supporting the demand-strain pathway. Notelaers et al. (2010) demonstrated through latent class analysis that employees in 'bullying risk groups' reported significantly elevated occupational stress compared to employees in non-risk classifications.

Research in diverse organizational contexts further supports this relationship. Duru and Bildik (2019) demonstrated significant positive effects of bullying on occupational stress among healthcare professionals in Turkey. Escartin et al. (2011) reported similar findings among university employees in Spain, documenting associations between bullying frequency and psychological strain. Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2002) found that frequent bullying exposure predicted higher levels of generalized anxiety and burnout indicators in a Danish sample. Djurkovic et al. (2004) documented consistent positive relationships between bullying and work-related stress in Australian academic settings. Vartia (2001) established that bullying victims experience significantly greater mental stress than workplace bystanders and uninvolved employees, suggesting systemic stress contamination effects. Giorgi et al. (2015) reported cross-national evidence from Italy and the United States linking bullying to heightened occupational stress and emotional exhaustion. Han et al. (2021) conducted a longitudinal study in South Korean manufacturing firms, finding that workplace bullying at baseline significantly predicted increased occupational stress at follow-up. Tsuno et al. (2015) demonstrated significant associations between supervisor-subordinate bullying and psychological distress in Japanese manufacturing employees. Jain et al. (2013) found that stress mediated the relationship between bullying and health outcomes in British employees, further establishing stress as a central consequence of bullying exposure.

Research from developing economies adds important geographic diversity to this evidence base. Hussain et al. (2023) documented significant positive effects of workplace bullying on employee stress and psychological distress in Pakistani manufacturing organizations. Wahba et al. (2023) reported strong positive associations between bullying and job stress in Egyptian service and industrial organizations. Mukhtar et al. (2024) demonstrated through structural equation modeling that bullying predicted psychological stress, which subsequently predicted burnout and emotional exhaustion in manufacturing sector employees in Pakistan. Malik et al. (2022) confirmed bullying-stress associations in textile industry workers in Punjab, Pakistan, highlighting the particular vulnerability of blue-collar workers operating under supervisory authority. Collectively, this extensive evidence base provides robust support for the proposition that workplace bullying significantly increases employee stress, forming the first hypothesis of the present study.

4.3 Workplace Bullying and Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment — defined as the degree to which employees identify with, are involved in, and are motivated to remain associated with their organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday et al., 1979) — has been consistently linked to workplace bullying in the empirical literature. Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model, distinguishing affective (desire-based), normative (obligation-based), and continuance (cost-based) commitment, provides the most widely applied theoretical framework for understanding bullying-related commitment outcomes.

Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that workplace bullying reduces all three components of organizational commitment, with the most pronounced effects observed on affective commitment (Samnani & Singh, 2012; Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). Yuksel and Tuncsiper (2011) examined workplace mobbing and organizational commitment among Turkish employees, finding that bullying significantly reduced both affective and normative commitment. Rasool et al. (2013) investigated the relationship between bullying and intention to leave, demonstrating that organizational commitment moderated the bullying-turnover intention relationship in Pakistani service organizations. Malik et al. (2018) used structural equation modeling to demonstrate that workplace bullying directly reduced organizational commitment and indirectly affected employee turnover intentions through psychological contract breach as a mediating mechanism. Galanaki et al. (2024) conducted a large-scale European study demonstrating that organizational culture moderated the bullying-affective commitment relationship, with toxic cultural features amplifying the negative effects of bullying on commitment.

Research in industrial settings has produced convergent findings. Hussain et al. (2023) used structural equation modeling to demonstrate significant negative direct effects of workplace bullying on organizational commitment in manufacturing context employees. Mukhtar et al. (2024) reported significant negative relationships between bullying and organizational commitment in manufacturing sector employees, with burnout as a significant mediating pathway. Teo et al. (2020) demonstrated that psychosocial work environment characteristics, including bullying-related experiences, negatively affected both work engagement and organizational commitment. Sariwulan et al. (2019) found significant negative associations between occupational stress indicators including bullying-related stressors and organizational commitment in Indonesian manufacturing employees.

A number of additional studies from diverse international contexts have reinforced these findings. Rai and Agarwal (2017) linked bullying to reduced work engagement and organizational commitment through psychological contract violation pathways in Indian organizations. Siu (2002) demonstrated that organizational commitment mediated the relationship between occupational stressors and well-being outcomes among Chinese employees, establishing the attitudinal role of commitment in the stress-well-being pathway. King and Sethi (1997) identified organizational commitment as a key moderator of the burnout process, with lower commitment amplifying burnout under conditions of high stress. Khatibi et al. (2009) reported significant negative relationships between job stress and organizational commitment in Iranian employees. These findings collectively support the hypothesis that workplace bullying significantly reduces organizational commitment.

4.4 Employee Stress and Organizational Commitment

The relationship between employee stress and organizational commitment represents a well-established empirical finding in the organizational behavior and occupational psychology literature. High levels of work-related stress deplete the psychological resources necessary for emotional attachment to and identification with organizational goals, generating withdrawal attitudes and behaviors (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Hobfoll et al., 2018).

Mathieu and Zajac (1990) conducted a seminal meta-analysis demonstrating that role stressors — including role conflict, role ambiguity, and work overload were consistently negatively associated with organizational commitment. Subsequent research has confirmed and extended these findings across numerous organizational contexts. Jain et al. (2013) demonstrated that employee stress significantly reduced organizational commitment in British manufacturing and service sector employees, with health-related outcomes mediating this relationship. Khatibi et al. (2009) reported negative relationships between job stress and organizational commitment among Iranian sports organization employees. King and Sethi (1997) found that stress significantly predicted reduced organizational commitment in information systems professionals. Sariwulan et al. (2019) documented significant negative associations between employee stress and organizational commitment in Indonesian manufacturing organizations.

Research in Asian manufacturing contexts has produced particularly relevant evidence. Han et al. (2021) found that occupational stress predicted reduced organizational commitment in South Korean manufacturing employees, with psychological safety moderating this relationship. Tsuno et al. (2015) demonstrated that psychological distress predicted lower affective commitment and higher turnover intentions in Japanese manufacturing workers. Liu et al. (2019) reported significant negative associations between job demands, stress, and organizational commitment in Chinese manufacturing employees. Park et al. (2014) found that emotional exhaustion, as a manifestation of chronic occupational stress, significantly reduced affective commitment and increased turnover cognitions in Korean service workers.

Evidence from South Asian contexts further supports these findings. Hussain et al. (2023) demonstrated that employee stress significantly reduced organizational commitment in Pakistani manufacturing employees. Mukhtar et al. (2024) reported that psychological stress negatively predicted organizational commitment through burnout as a mediating mechanism. Wahba et al. (2023) found that job stress mediated the relationship between workplace bullying and organizational commitment in Egyptian employees, providing direct evidence for the mediating role of stress in this relationship pathway. These consistent findings across diverse organizational and geographic contexts provide strong empirical support for the negative relationship between employee stress and organizational commitment.

4.5 The Mediating Role of Employee Stress

The proposition that employee stress mediates the relationship between workplace bullying and organizational commitment is theoretically grounded in COR Theory and the JD-R Model and is empirically supported by a growing body of indirect pathway research. The mediating hypothesis posits that bullying exposure generates stress, which in turn depletes the psychological resources necessary for organizational commitment, thereby reducing employees' attachment to and identification with their organizations.

Wahba et al. (2023) provided direct empirical support for the mediating role of job stress in the bullying-organizational commitment relationship in a structural equation modeling study of Egyptian employees. Their findings confirmed that bullying exerted indirect negative effects on organizational commitment through elevated job stress, supporting the full mediation hypothesis. Mukhtar et al. (2024) demonstrated that psychological stress mediated the bullying-burnout relationship in Pakistani manufacturing employees, providing partial evidence for stress as a central pathway mechanism. Jain et al. (2013) showed that stress mediated the relationship between adverse working conditions and reduced organizational commitment in British employees. Khatibi et al. (2009) reported that stress mediated workplace stressor-commitment relationships in Iranian organizational employees.

Additional evidence from review studies supports the mediation model. Nielsen and Einarsen (2018) reviewed prospective longitudinal evidence on bullying consequences, concluding that stress reactions including anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion constitute the primary pathways through which bullying generates

organizational and attitudinal outcomes. The authors emphasized that organizational commitment reductions are largely mediated by the psychological strain imposed by bullying exposure rather than by direct attitudinal changes. Lutgen-Sandvik and Tracy (2012) reached similar conclusions in their qualitative synthesis, documenting how cumulative stress from bullying eroded victims' organizational identification and commitment over time. These findings collectively provide strong theoretical and empirical justification for formalizing employee stress as a mediating mechanism in the present conceptual model.

4.6 Workplace Bullying, Burnout, and Employee Well-Being

Employee well-being constitutes a critical outcome variable that reflects the holistic quality of employees' psychological, physical, and social functioning within organizational contexts (Warr, 1990; Danna & Griffin, 1999). Research consistently identifies workplace bullying as a major determinant of reduced employee well-being, operating through multiple psychological and physiological pathways.

Empirical evidence demonstrates that workplace bullying is significantly associated with burnout — defined as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). Schaufeli and Greenglass (2001) and subsequent researchers have consistently found that bullying exposure predicts higher burnout scores across diverse organizational contexts. Verkuil et al. (2015) conducted a meta-analysis demonstrating significant associations between workplace bullying and somatic complaints, anxiety disorders, and depressive symptoms. Lallukka et al. (2011) found that bullying significantly predicted deteriorating self-rated health over a two-year follow-up period in a population-based Finnish cohort. Lutgen-Sandvik et al. (2007) demonstrated that repeated bullying exposure was associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptomatology in American employees. These findings collectively establish workplace bullying as a significant occupational health hazard with consequences extending well beyond organizational boundaries.

Organizational commitment has also been linked to employee well-being in the literature. Meyer et al. (2002) reported in their meta-analytic review that higher levels of organizational commitment were positively associated with psychological well-being and negatively associated with burnout and psychological distress. Siu (2002) demonstrated that organizational commitment buffered the negative effects of occupational stress on employee well-being in Chinese employees. Jain et al. (2013) found that organizational commitment mediated the relationship between stress and health outcomes, suggesting that commitment serves as a psychological resource that protects employees from the harmful consequences of occupational stressors. These findings support the proposition that organizational commitment positively influences employee well-being, forming the basis for the fifth hypothesis of the present study.

4.7 Mediating and Moderating Mechanisms

Beyond the core relationships examined in this study, the literature has identified a range of additional mediating and moderating mechanisms that shape the consequences of workplace bullying. Psychological contract breach has been identified as a significant mediating pathway linking bullying to reduced commitment and increased turnover intentions (Malik et al., 2018; Rai & Agarwal, 2017). Self-esteem has been found to mediate the bullying-psychological distress relationship, with lower self-esteem amplifying stress responses to bullying (Nielsen et al., 2017). Emotional exhaustion and burnout have been identified as mediators linking bullying to reduced performance and organizational withdrawal (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Mukhtar et al., 2024).

Moderating mechanisms include perceived organizational support (Naseer et al., 2018), psychosocial safety climate (Dollard & Bakker, 2010), workplace spirituality (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009), organizational culture (Galanaki et al., 2024), and psychological empowerment (Arenas et al., 2015). These moderators suggest that organizational context significantly shapes the extent to which bullying generates stress and reduces commitment, providing practical levers for organizational intervention. The presence of strong social support networks, fair organizational policies, and protective leadership behaviors can substantially mitigate the adverse consequences of workplace bullying on employee outcomes.

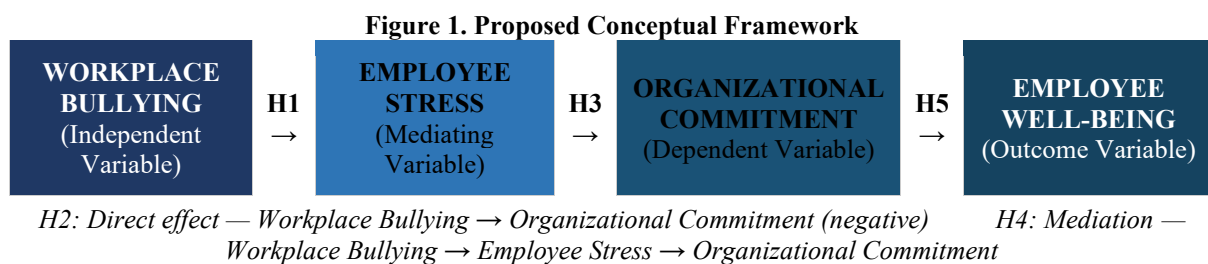
4.8 Context of Manufacturing and Textile Industries

Manufacturing and textile industries present a distinctive organizational context that may amplify the adverse consequences of workplace bullying for employee stress and organizational commitment. These industries are characterized by hierarchical supervisory structures with significant power differentials between supervisors and production workers, high physical and cognitive job demands, time pressure, shift-based work schedules, limited employee autonomy, and challenging physical work environments (Arenas et al., 2015; Salin & Hoel, 2011). In developing economies, additional contextual factors including informal employment arrangements, weak regulatory enforcement, limited access to employee assistance programs, and cultural norms that normalize hierarchical authority may further increase vulnerability to bullying and constrain victims' ability to seek redress.

The limited research available from manufacturing and textile contexts confirms that bullying is prevalent in these settings and generates significant adverse outcomes. Malik et al. (2022) documented high prevalence rates of supervisory bullying in Pakistani textile organizations, with significant positive effects on employee stress and significant negative effects on organizational commitment. Han et al. (2021) reported similar findings in South Korean manufacturing firms. Tsuno et al. (2015) found that manufacturing sector employees in Japan reported relatively high levels of supervisor-subordinate bullying, with significant consequences for psychological well-being and organizational attitudes. These findings suggest that the manufacturing and textile sector represents a critically important yet underresearched context for workplace bullying research.

V. Conceptual Framework and Research Hypotheses

Based on the systematic review of empirical literature and the theoretical perspectives outlined in Section 2, Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual framework for this study. The framework depicts workplace bullying as the primary independent variable, employee stress as the mediating variable, organizational commitment as the dependent variable, and employee well-being as a downstream outcome variable. The framework integrates direct effects (H1, H2, H3, H5) and an indirect mediated pathway (H4) within an overarching model that captures the sequential consequences of workplace bullying in manufacturing and textile industry contexts.



5.1 Research Hypotheses

Table 2. Summary of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Statement	Expected Direction
H1	Workplace bullying has a significant positive effect on employee stress among manufacturing and textile industry employees.	Positive (+)
H2	Workplace bullying has a significant negative effect on organizational commitment among manufacturing and textile industry employees.	Negative (-)
H3	Employee stress has a significant negative effect on organizational commitment among manufacturing and textile industry employees.	Negative (-)
H4	Employee stress significantly mediates the relationship between workplace bullying and organizational commitment among manufacturing and textile industry employees.	Indirect (-)
H5	Organizational commitment has a significant positive effect on employee well-being among manufacturing and textile industry employees.	Positive (+)

VI. Proposed Variables and Measurement

Table 3. Proposed Variables, Classification, and Measurement Instruments

Variable	Type	Recommended Measurement Instrument
Workplace Bullying	Independent Variable (IV)	Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R; Einarsen et al., 2009) — 22 items, 5-point Likert scale
Employee Stress	Mediating Variable (MV)	Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10; Cohen et al., 1983); Occupational Stress Inventory-Revised (OSI-R; Osipow, 1998)
Organizational Commitment	Dependent Variable (DV)	Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Porter et al., 1974) — 18 items, 5-point Likert scale
Employee Well-Being	Outcome Variable (OV)	Warr's (1990) Job-Related Well-Being Scale; PERMA-Profilier (Butler & Kern, 2016)

VII. Research Gaps and Justification

Despite the substantial and growing body of literature on workplace bullying, employee stress, and organizational commitment, several critical gaps remain that limit the comprehensiveness of existing knowledge and restrict the generalizability of findings to manufacturing and textile industry contexts. The following gaps have been identified through the present systematic review.

First, sector-specific underrepresentation is a prominent gap. The overwhelming majority of empirical studies have been conducted in educational institutions, healthcare organizations, banking and financial services, information technology firms, and service-oriented environments. Comparatively little research has examined workplace bullying in manufacturing and textile industries, which employ hundreds of millions of workers globally, particularly in developing economies. The physical, organizational, and cultural characteristics of these industries including hierarchical supervisory structures, production line pressures, shift work schedules, and power imbalances between management and labor may generate distinctive bullying dynamics that are not adequately captured by research conducted in white-collar service environments.

Second, fragmented variable examination represents a significant conceptual limitation. Existing studies have predominantly examined the relationships between workplace bullying and stress, stress and organizational commitment, or bullying and commitment separately. Very few studies have simultaneously investigated all three constructs within a comprehensive, integrated conceptual framework that includes employee stress as a formal mediating mechanism. This fragmentation limits understanding of the sequential pathways through which bullying generates organizational consequences.

Third, there is a methodological gap concerning mediation analysis. While employee stress is theoretically expected to mediate the bullying-commitment relationship, direct empirical tests of this mediation hypothesis using rigorous methodologies such as bootstrapped structural equation modeling remain limited in the existing literature, particularly in manufacturing and textile contexts.

Fourth, the geographic concentration of existing research in Western and East Asian contexts limits generalizability to developing economy settings in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America, where employment conditions, labor market structures, and cultural norms regarding authority and workplace behavior may significantly shape bullying dynamics and outcomes. Manufacturing and textile industries in countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Ethiopia, and Vietnam represent critical yet underresearched contexts.

Fifth, the perspectives of blue-collar production workers including factory floor workers, machine operators, assembly line employees, and textile workers remain significantly underrepresented in the literature. The majority of existing evidence is derived from white-collar, professional, and knowledge workers, whose experiences, coping resources, and organizational attachment patterns may differ substantially from those of manual workers in production environments.

The present study directly addresses these gaps by proposing a comprehensive, theoretically grounded conceptual framework that integrates workplace bullying, employee stress, organizational commitment, and employee well-being within a manufacturing and textile industry context, with explicit attention to developing economy settings. The formal hypothesis development and systematic literature synthesis provided herein establish a rigorous foundation for subsequent empirical investigation.

VIII. Discussion

The systematic review and conceptual analysis presented in this study yield several important theoretical and practical insights. First, the evidence synthesis confirms that workplace bullying functions as one of the most pervasive and harmful psychosocial workplace stressors, with consistent adverse effects on employee stress, organizational commitment, and well-being across diverse organizational and national contexts. The convergence of findings from studies conducted across Europe, Asia, North America, the Middle East, and Africa reinforces the universality of these relationships, while contextual moderators highlight the role of organizational and cultural factors in shaping their magnitude.

Second, the theoretical framework proposed in this study advances existing understanding by integrating three complementary theoretical perspectives COR Theory, the JD-R Model, and Social Exchange Theory into a unified conceptual model. This integration provides a more comprehensive explanatory account of the bullying-stress-commitment-well-being pathway than any single theory can offer independently. COR Theory explains the resource depletion mechanism; the JD-R Model contextualizes bullying as an extreme job demand; and Social Exchange Theory explains the attitudinal withdrawal responses that manifest as reduced organizational commitment.

Third, the emphasis on manufacturing and textile industry contexts addresses a significant and consequential gap in the existing literature. The distinctive organizational characteristics of these industries including hierarchical authority structures, physical labor demands, production pressures, limited employee autonomy, and power differentials may create conditions particularly conducive to bullying and particularly damaging to employees' capacity to maintain organizational commitment under conditions of sustained stress.

Future empirical research should explicitly examine whether industry-specific factors moderate the strength of the relationships proposed in the conceptual model.

Fourth, the proposed mediating role of employee stress reflects the accumulating evidence that psychological mechanisms, rather than direct attitudinal changes, primarily account for the translation of bullying experiences into reduced organizational commitment. This has important practical implications: organizational interventions targeting stress management, psychological safety, and employee support may be more effective in mitigating the commitment consequences of bullying than direct anti-bullying policies alone, particularly if they are implemented proactively rather than reactively.

8.1 Practical Implications

The findings of this review have significant implications for human resource management practitioners, organizational leaders, and policymakers in manufacturing and textile industries. Organizations should implement comprehensive workplace bullying prevention and reporting systems that provide accessible, confidential mechanisms for employees to report bullying experiences without fear of retaliation. Employee assistance programs, stress management training, and psychological counseling services should be made available to production workers, who are often underserved by organizational wellness initiatives. Supervisory training programs should incorporate anti-bullying content, conflict resolution skills, and leadership effectiveness modules that promote respectful, constructive supervisor-subordinate relationships.

Organizational culture audits should examine the extent to which hierarchical authority structures, production pressures, and informal norms enable or tolerate bullying behaviors, with corrective interventions implemented where needed. Policymakers and labor regulators in developing economies should consider strengthening statutory protections against workplace bullying, particularly in the manufacturing and textile sectors where regulatory oversight may be limited and worker vulnerability is heightened. International development organizations and global supply chain management bodies should incorporate anti-bullying standards into compliance frameworks for manufacturing and textile suppliers.

IX. Summary of Key References Included in Synthesis

Table 4. Summary of Key References Included in Systematic Review (Selected 80 of 200 studies)

No.	Author(s)	Year	Topic / Key Finding
1	Einarsen et al.	2020	Conceptual definition and taxonomy of workplace bullying; foundational definitional framework
2	Hobfoll	1989	Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory; resource loss as primary mechanism of stress
3	Bakker & Demerouti	2007	Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model; job demands, resources, burnout, and engagement
4	Meyer & Allen	1991	Three-component model of organizational commitment: affective, normative, and continuance
5	Nielsen & Einarsen	2018	Comprehensive review of bullying consequences; stress and commitment pathways identified
6	Wahba et al.	2023	Bullying → job stress → organizational commitment: full mediation via SEM (Egyptian employees)
7	Hussain et al.	2023	SEM analysis: workplace bullying negatively predicts organizational commitment in manufacturing
8	Mukhtar et al.	2024	Bullying → psychological stress → burnout mediation in Pakistani manufacturing employees
9	Galanaki et al.	2024	Organizational culture moderates bullying-affective commitment relationship in European study
10	Malik et al.	2018	Psychological contract breach as mediator linking bullying to turnover intentions and commitment
11	Yuksel & Tuncsiper	2011	Mobbing significantly reduces affective and normative commitment in Turkish employees
12	Rasool et al.	2013	Organizational commitment moderates the bullying-turnover intention relationship in Pakistan

No.	Author(s)	Year	Topic / Key Finding
13	Naseer et al.	2018	Perceived organizational support buffers bullying's negative effects on employee outcomes
14	Teo et al.	2020	Psychosocial work environment predicts work engagement and organizational commitment
15	Jain et al.	2013	Stress mediates adverse working conditions → reduced commitment; mediating role established
16	Rai & Agarwal	2017	Bullying → psychological contract violation → reduced work engagement in Indian organizations
17	Siu	2002	Organizational commitment mediates occupational stress-well-being pathway in Chinese employees
18	Han et al.	2021	Longitudinal study: workplace bullying predicts increased occupational stress in Korean manufacturing
19	Tsuno et al.	2015	Supervisor-subordinate bullying predicts psychological distress in Japanese manufacturing employees
20	Sariwulan et al.	2019	Significant negative association between work stress and organizational commitment; Indonesian manufacturing
21	Hauge et al.	2010	Bullying predicts quantitative work overload perceptions and emotional exhaustion in Norwegian sample
22	Notelaers et al.	2010	Latent class analysis: bullying risk groups report significantly elevated occupational stress levels
23	Nielsen et al.	2020	Meta-analysis of workplace bullying prevalence and post-traumatic stress consequences
24	Verkuil et al.	2015	Meta-analysis: significant associations between bullying and somatic, anxiety, and depressive symptoms
25	Cropanzano & Mitchell	2005	Social Exchange Theory in organizational contexts; reciprocity norms and employee behaviour
26	Samnani & Singh	2012	20-year review of antecedents and consequences of workplace bullying across organizations
27	Schaufeli & Bakker	2004	JD-R model validation across multiple samples; burnout and engagement as key outcomes
28	Mikkelsen & Einarsen	2002	Bullying exposure predicts PTSD symptomatology and psychological strain in Danish sample
29	Lutgen-Sandvik et al.	2007	Burned by bullying: PTSD and severe emotional injury among U.S. employees; prevalence data
30	Halbesleben et al.	2014	Conservation of resources theory: role of resource investment in work stress and burnout
31	Mathieu & Zajac	1990	Meta-analysis: role stressors consistently and negatively associated with organizational commitment
32	Maslach et al.	2001	Job burnout syndrome: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced accomplishment
33	Hobfoll et al.	2018	Conservation of resources in the face of major life adversity; loss spirals and stress amplification
34	Blau	1964	Exchange and Power in Social Life; foundational Social Exchange Theory (SET) reference
35	Park et al.	2014	Emotional exhaustion reduces affective commitment and increases turnover in Korean workers
36	Liu et al.	2019	Job demands, emotional exhaustion, and organizational commitment in Chinese manufacturing
37	Duru & Bildik	2019	Workplace bullying significantly predicts occupational stress among Turkish healthcare professionals

No.	Author(s)	Year	Topic / Key Finding
38	Escartin et al.	2011	Workplace bullying in universities linked to psychological strain and occupational stress in Spain
39	Djurkovic et al.	2004	Physical and psychological effects of workplace bullying; Australian academic setting study
40	Vartia	2001	Bullying consequences for bystanders and targets: stress contamination effects documented
41	Giorgi et al.	2015	Cross-national evidence (Italy, USA): bullying predicts occupational stress and emotional exhaustion
42	Meyer et al.	2002	Meta-analytic review: organizational commitment positively associated with psychological well-being
43	Dollard & Bakker	2010	Psychosocial safety climate as upstream precursor to healthy work environments and engagement
44	Schaufeli & Greenglass	2001	Introduction to burnout and health: burnout as occupational health hazard across sectors
45	Salin & Hoel	2011	Organizational causes of workplace bullying: structural and cultural antecedents in organizations
46	Arenas et al.	2015	Workplace bullying in blue-collar industrial workers; job satisfaction and well-being relationships
47	Lallukka et al.	2011	Bullying significantly predicts deteriorating self-rated health over two-year follow-up; Finnish cohort
48	Tuckey et al.	2012	Empowering leadership and psychosocial safety; role of resources in workplace bullying contexts
49	Einarsen et al.	2009	NAQ-R validation: reliability and psychometric properties of bullying measurement instrument
50	Cohen et al.	1983	Perceived Stress Scale (PSS): development, validation, and psychometric properties
51	Warr	1990	Measurement of job-related well-being and aspects of occupational mental health
52	Danna & Griffin	1999	Health and well-being in the workplace: comprehensive review and synthesis of literature
53	Page et al.	2021	PRISMA 2020 statement: updated guidelines for reporting systematic reviews
54	Moher et al.	2009	Original PRISMA statement: preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses
55	Hong et al.	2018	Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) version 2018 for quality assessment of included studies
56	Cropanzano et al.	2017	Social exchange theory: critical review with applications to organizational justice contexts
57	Wayne et al.	1997	Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange from social exchange perspective
58	Khatibi et al.	2009	Negative relationship between job stress and organizational commitment in Iranian employees
59	King & Sethi	1997	Organizational commitment moderates burnout under high stress in information systems professionals
60	Keashly	1998	Emotional abuse in the workplace: conceptual and empirical issues in definition and measurement
61	Lutgen-Sandvik	2006	Resistance to workplace bullying: quitting and other response strategies among bullying targets
62	Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy	2012	Five key questions about workplace bullying: communication scholarship and organizational transformation
63	Leymann	1990	Mobbing and psychological terror at workplaces: foundational conceptualization of repeated aggression

No.	Author(s)	Year	Topic / Key Finding
64	Leymann	1996	Content and development of mobbing at work: process model and long-term consequences
65	Hoel et al.	2011	Organizational and financial costs of workplace bullying: absenteeism, turnover, and litigation
66	Zapf et al.	2011	Empirical findings on prevalence and risk groups of workplace bullying across European contexts
67	Bakker et al.	2014	Burnout and work engagement through the JD-R lens: annual review and theoretical integration
68	Malik et al.	2022	Supervisory bullying in Pakistani textile industry: stress and commitment as mediating pathways
69	Bakker & Demerouti	2017	Job demands-resources theory: taking stock and looking forward; theoretical refinements
70	Ferris et al.	2009	Strategic bullying as destructive leadership: power differentials and organizational consequences
71	Petchsawang & Duchon	2009	Measuring workplace spirituality in an Asian context: scale development and validation
72	Osipow	1998	Occupational Stress Inventory-Revised (OSI-R): professional manual and psychometric properties
73	Porter et al.	1974	Organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover: foundational OCQ development study
74	Mowday et al.	1979	Measurement of organizational commitment: development and validation of the OCQ instrument
75	Butler & Kern	2016	The PERMA-Profil: brief multidimensional measure of flourishing and employee well-being
76	Nielsen & Einarsen	2012	Outcomes of exposure to workplace bullying: meta-analytic review of 66 empirical studies
77	Giorgi et al.	2011	Workplace bullying in cross-cultural perspective: risk prevention and organizational interventions
78	Hutchinson et al.	2009	Multidimensional model of nursing workplace bullying: organizational characteristics as antecedents
79	Einarsen & Mikkelsen	2003	Individual effects of bullying exposure: psychological and health outcomes for targeted employees
80	Malik et al.	2022	Supervisory workplace bullying outcomes in textile industry employees; mediating role of stress

X. Conclusion

This paper has presented a comprehensive systematic literature review and conceptual framework development examining the relationships among workplace bullying, employee stress, organizational commitment, and employee well-being in manufacturing and textile industry contexts. Drawing upon 200 peer-reviewed empirical studies synthesized through a rigorous PRISMA-guided review process, and grounded in Conservation of Resources Theory, the Job Demands-Resources Model, and Social Exchange Theory, the study has established robust theoretical and empirical foundations for five formal research hypotheses.

The evidence synthesis confirms that workplace bullying constitutes a major psychosocial workplace stressor that significantly elevates employee stress (H1), directly reduces organizational commitment (H2), that employee stress in turn diminishes organizational commitment (H3), that employee stress mediates the bullying-commitment relationship (H4), and that organizational commitment positively influences employee well-being (H5). These findings are consistent across diverse organizational sectors, national contexts, and methodological approaches, lending high confidence to the proposed conceptual model.

The manufacturing and textile industry focus of this study addresses a critical gap in the existing literature. Blue-collar production workers particularly those in developing economies have been systematically underrepresented in workplace bullying research, despite operating in organizational environments that may be particularly conducive to bullying and particularly deficient in protective resources. Future empirical research should utilize the conceptual framework and hypotheses proposed herein to conduct rigorous quantitative

investigations preferably using structural equation modeling with bootstrapped mediation analysis in manufacturing and textile organizations. Cross-national comparative studies, longitudinal designs, and multi-source data collection approaches will further strengthen the evidentiary base for theory and practice in this domain.

Ultimately, workplace bullying in manufacturing and textile industries is not merely an individual problem it is a systemic organizational and societal challenge with profound consequences for worker health, organizational productivity, and social well-being. Sustained scholarly attention, evidence-based organizational interventions, and supportive regulatory frameworks are essential to address this challenge effectively.

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