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MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The impact of workplace bullying on project success as mediated through individual organizational citizenship behavior: a study in Pakistan

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between workplace bullying and project success in project based organizations in Pakistan. Additionally, this relationship was studied through the mediating effect of organizational citizenship behavior—individual (OCBI). Using a quantitative research method, data were collected from a number of project-based organizations in Pakistan. Based on the data collected from 254 respondents from different nongovernment organizations of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, findings suggest that project success is significantly associated with workplace bullying and OCBI. In addition, it was also revealed that employees who face more bullying at workplace have low level of OCBI at work. The study contributes to the current literature in organizational behavior and project management by exhibiting how that workplace bullying relates to project success, through mediating effect of OCBI.

Subjects: Public Administration & Management; Work & Organizational Psychology; Business, Management and Accounting

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

When employees perform in an organization, their performance is dependent on a multiple factors other than the monetary benefits they get. Additionally, employees have different nature; hence, few of them may dominate and bully others. In order to study this particular aspect and its impact, we have examined the impact of workplace bullying on project success in Pakistan. Additionally, we studied this relationship with the mediating role of organization citizenship behavior—Individual (OCBI). This study was conducted in the NGO sector in Pakistan. Based on quantitative data collected from 254 employees in Pakistan, results suggest that workplace bullying has a negative impact on project success and this relationship is partially mediated by the OCBI. These results may facilitate organizations to create a positive work environment that enhances collaboration among employees and discourage deviant behaviors among them so that workplace bullying may be minimized.

| Keywords: **Workplace bullying; organizational citizenship behavior; project success**

1. Introduction

Over the last decade, a lot of researchers have been investigating the causes of project failure and have identified that number of increasing conflicts among employees is one of the major barriers (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009; Einarsen, 1999; Vartia, 1996). With the increase in number of projects, chances of conflicts increase since people from different cultures work together to complete those projects. Conflict is the lack of harmony in values, expectations, processes, or outcomes between one or more groups or people (Ting-Toomey, 1994). Conflicts in workplace have been considered as one of the major reasons that lead to workplace bullying. As a result of large number of conflicts, one of the consequences is the "bullying" resulting in a number of factors like distress, demotivation, intention to leave, absenteeism, and project misreporting (Bryant & Buttigieg, 2009) that ultimately reduce project success. Although most of the previous studies studied the concept of bullying as a whole, however, recent studies are focused particularly on understanding the concept of "workplace bullying" (Ariza-Montes, Arjona-Fuentes, Law, & Han, 2017). Workplace bullying is a persistent and deliberate exposure to destructive actions at work (Einarsen, 2000; Leymann, 1996; Notelaers, Einarsen, De Witte, & Vermunt, 2006). Workplace bullying is defined in terms of organized and orderly negative behaviors directed over time which push the targets to a position where they are unable to defend themselves and feel insecure, ultimately causing harm to the targets (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011). Workplace bullying causes harm to the targets as well as to the witness (Hogh, Hoel, & Carneiro, 2011) and to the organization (Hoel, Sheehan, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2011). Many studies show that workplace bullying is widespread in many organizations in internationally arena (Einarsen et al., 2011). Despite the prevalent acknowledgement of the problem, workplace bullying is not effectively being addressed (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). Multiple factors may lead to workplace bullying, e.g., ego, financial interests, status cautiousness, manipulation, violence, aggression, exploitation, threats, personality clashes, masculine superiority, gender politics, power play, patterns lay down in childhood, liking and disliking. In 2009, Buttigieg and Bryant proffered a suggesting dictating that bullying can affect the employees manifold, such as it can cause to lower the job satisfaction, rapid changeover of the employees, high rate of absenteeism and decrease the organizational commitment (Ariza-Montes et al., 2017). One of the recent articles on bullying suggests its long-term negative consequences on life of victims (Mumtaz, 2018a).

Despite many endures by different human rights organizations and general awareness through social media, many organizations are still unable to address workplace bullying which have very negative effects on the employees and certainly, it creates many impediments to accomplish the objectives. Like many other factors which may affect the overall productivity of an organization vis-a-vis employees output, workplace bullying is more significant in the context of its adverse and severe consequences. It is a form of social stressor that lays a foundation of very bad psychosocial work environment which bring devastating effects not only on the employees but also to the organization (Hauge, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2010). Past studies imply that project success in any organization is directly linked with the attitude and behavior of employees. Therefore, the relationship between workplace bullying and project success specific to project-based Pakistani organizations needs to be explored. In addition, the role of organizational citizenship behavior—individual (OCBI) as a mediating factor on the relationship of workplace bullying and project success has been taken under consideration. In a latest research carried out by Creasy and Carnes in 2017 with the subject heading "The effects of workplace bullying on team learning, innovation and project success as mediated through virtual and traditional team dynamics," a model has been suggested for future factual testing. According to this article, their model requires factual validation by assessing the different factors which includes workplace bullying and project success. Many researchers have suggested a comprehensive work is required to explore the relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and resultantly how they influence project performance and ultimately affecting the project success.

2. Literature review

With the continuous growth in businesses and the competitive pressure and speed product processing, fulfilling customers demand is becoming more crucial for organizational success; hence, project success is becoming a major research area in multiple domains (Carvalho & Rabechini, 2017). Over the last decade, a lot of researchers have been investigating the causes of project failure and have identified occurrence of conflicts as one of the major causes (Baillien et al., 2009; Einarsen, 1999; Vartia, 1996; Zapf & Gross, 2001). Conflict is unavoidable in personal as well as organizational life and it must be managed. Workplace bullying is a persistent and deliberate exposure to destructive actions at work (Einarsen, 2000; Leymann, 1996; Notelaers et al., 2006). It is considered to be an unethical behavior and results in many other unethical consequences, e.g., project misreporting which may affect the success of the project negatively. In the current study, we have investigated the relationship between project success and bullying at workplace and role of OCBI which is considered to be affected by bullying.

Workplace bullying is being elaborated, as an unethical and aggressive behavior of an individual to other in a workplace usually by a supervisor to his subordinate. This includes treating one with undue discourse and creating an atmosphere where he can be embarrassed, humiliated, and subjected to extra fatigue, over burden, violence, threats, etc. (Dierickx, 2004; Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2003). As per different definitions of workplace bullying, there are many unpleasant behaviors which are included in bullying at work, i.e., passing remarks which can embarrass someone, physical smack, denying him with the responsibilities and assigned tasks, making jeers and mocking, spreading rumors, physical assault, and social disbar Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Harvey, Treadway, & Heames, 2006). These type of actions can cause distress, depression, uneasiness, and anxiety (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Bdck, 1994; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002), and it will lead to a vexatious work environment, badly affecting employees overall performance (Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2002; Kivimaki, Elovainio, & Vahtera, 2000; Quine, 2002). This will also have negative effect on victim's physical health (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002) and molds his intension to leave the job by badly affecting his attitude, behavior, job satisfaction, interest, commitment, and positivity (Djurkovic et al., 2003; Rodriguez-Munoz, Baillien, De Witte, Moreno-Jimenez, & Pastor, 2009). Bullying can also cause emotional imbalance and psychiatric consequences, e.g., post-traumatic stress (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004) and the general anxiety disorder (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002). Studies carried out in the past on workplace bullying also called this phenomenon as "mobbing" in which a "mob" or the coworkers underplay the target. In recent past, researchers agreed to call both the scenarios as synonyms (Nielsen, Matthiesen, & Einarsen, 2010). Generally, bullying behavior can be categorized in two types. In rapacious bullying, the victim can be subjected to demonstrate power despite he has done nothing intentionally whereas highly soar conflicts can cause conflict-related bullying (Einarsen, 2000). Many researchers have called the bullying at workplace as a result of various conflicts (De Dreu, Van Dierendonck, & Dijkstra, 2004; De Dreu & West, 2001), and theoretically, they have related bullying to "conflict" (Zapf & Gross, 2001). On contrary, many other researchers of workplace bullying do not agree with the abovementioned vision. According to their opinion, relating and restricting workplace bullying to a conflict undermines its immoral, unethical, and counterproductive classification (Keashly & Nowell, 2003; Nielsen et al., 2010). This vision is based on five points. First, bullying includes unfairness among the individuals, groups, or parties involved. The target subjected to bullying usually faces difficulty in defending herself/himself against negative behavior (Einarsen, 1999; Einarsen, Raknes, & Matthiesen, 1994; Leymann, 1996) and resultantly is forced into an inferior position (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Zapf & Gross, 2001). Second, conflict and bullying can be differentiated by analyzing the duration and how often someone is being bullied. According to Einarsen et al. (1994) and Olweus (1991), bullying based on long period results in a chain of negative acts that increase over time. On the other hand, conflicts are usually short as well as continuous. This includes a single occurrence (e.g., making a task clear as soon as it becomes obvious that there is some misunderstanding regarding that particular task/procedure) or a number of events (for instance, a persistent or long discussion about accepting responsibility of a certain task). Third, bullying is disgrace of one person who is forced into an inferior position (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Zapf & Gross, 2001). Conflicts do not aim to bring bad name or

either to disgrace a certain individual (e.g., Jehn, 1995). Fourth, the main cause of bullying someone is to harm the victim (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997), which cannot be related to conflicts. And lastly, in contrast to bullying which lead to anxiety disorder (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002), and may cause severe psychiatric and psychological consequences contrary to conflict, e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004).

According to various studies, concept of bullying relates to a particular situation where an under command or someone with less authority is subjected to mental or physical violence and hostile behaviors (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994; Leymann, 1996). Other studies reveal that this concept has direct effects on the health of targets/employees who face and encounter continuous negative behaviors from their supervisors/managers or their colleagues, whereas in other studies, it has been seen with organizational commitment and turnover (Ariza-Montes et al., 2017).

OCB has become an important subject of research in organizational studies and many scholars got attracted due to its glaring contribution to organizational effectiveness and success (Podsakoff, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Maynes, & Spoelma, 2014). OCB has been defined by various authors in different ways, but generally, it states an overall positive attitude and behavior of employees that may not cover their core task but still they want to support all the members of the organization, its social and psychological environment (Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009). Organ (1988) defines OCB as an individual's performance and his behavior is his own choice or his discretion and not related to any reward system which resultantly boosts the effectiveness of the organization. If we talk about the discretion, it means that the behavior is not an enforceable requirement as per the job description but the behavior is in fact a matter of personal choice, meaning by if he does not perform it, he may not be subjected to any offence. In short, the behavior is not compulsory as per his defined role but still he performs in the benefit of the organization. According to Organ (1988), OCB is related to employees' optional behaviors which are not defined in the job description and go beyond their assigned duties. Moreover, this behavior is not influenced by any reward set by the organization (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Shore & Wayne, 1993). In other words, OCBs are those behaviors which are different from the required technical skills of the job (Lin & Hsiao, 2014).

As per Podsakoff et al. (2009, 2014), OCB is a behavior that someone voluntarily helps to maintain and promote the social and psychological aspect of an organization. According to their definition, the difference between in-role and extra-role behavior is obvious. In addition, it eradicates the idea that OCB is discretionary behavior in nature. In addition, this definition clearly indicates that OCB is firmly rooted in the context.

OCB is a powerful component of free-will conduct, which is most pertinent in modern social organizations (Basu, Pradhan, & Tewari, 2017); it signifies the values of discretionary or voluntary individual actions especially among the paid employees. In this context, scientists studying on organizational behavior believe that a very large number of energetic inputs include assisting others or proffering innovative suggestions, an obligatory duty, which is often a matter of discretionary actions instead of any action being extracted from an employee by the organization. Past research shows that OCB is either a reactive behavior, driven by a commitment to serve the organization in the light of good relationship, or as deterministic behavior, which implies to his personality trait to serve others without any personal interest (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). In fact, OCB is not related to personal response to employee's perception regarding their jobs, or supervisors (Becton, Giles, & Schraeder, 2008), but by definition, OCB is employees' desire and attitude with intended behavior; therefore, they carefully decide whether they will engage or not (Penner, Midili, & Kegelmeyer, 1997). Researchers agreed that people associate themselves with OCB as they believe that this type of behavior fulfills certain needs with inner satisfaction (Rioux & Penner, 2001). Meanwhile, both reactive and proactive helping behavior facilitate in achieving differential benefits for others and benefits for self (Spitzmuller & Van Dyne, 2013).

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The dimensions of OCB are categorized into two parts, first is related to the individual known as OCBI whereas second behavior is directed toward organization (OCBO) (Williams & Anderson, 1991). OCBI or individual-level OCB consists of happiness, cheerfulness, etiquettes, and selfless efforts directly related to individual. This individual-based OCB encompasses the helping behavior and the civility dimensions. It directly or indirectly benefits coworkers, for example helping colleagues who are under very heavy workloads. On the other side, organizational-level behavior (OCBO) is directly related with the benefit of organization itself. OCBO consists of vigilance, civic welfare, and sportsmanship. A study carried out by Podsakoff et al. (2009) shows that individual-level behavior is related to a mechanism which acknowledges the performance of employees and resultantly rewarding them with various ways, e.g., awards, appreciation certificates, etc. The performance of employees, their productivity, output, and efficiency are interlinked with organizational-level behavior. Keeping in view the fact that individual level OCB is less studied OCB than the OCBO, further study and research in this regard is deem necessary. This is the reason that in this study, OCBI is taken into consideration for studying its mediating effect on workplace bullying and project success.

The term project implies too many definitions, it can be explained in different perspectives but mainly it is related to a project plan as how it can be developed and the progress of the project. This term "project" also defines the effectiveness and efficacy of work done and various activities running in organization. Three factors are necessary for the success of the project which are quality, cost, and time (Atkinson, 1999). Turner (1999) refers project as an effort by workers or employees who find a different and distinctive way for setting the aim of work keeping in view the given cost and time. This will ensure in achieving the aim with regards to qualitative as well quantitative perspective. The success of project is based on three simple quantitative factors which include scope, cost, and time (iron triangle), these are directly related to project efficiency (Bryde, 2005); it has long-term perspective which is directly related to performance and organizational impact (Belout, 1998; Judge & Bono, 2001).

It is important to mention that with the definitions of project success criteria, few project criteria will stay subjective by its nature, for instance use of any product or accepting any new inducted procedure. But when objective and subjective criteria are combined with each other, resultantly the combination of both the factors will decide the success or failure of the project. Projects consisted with various different groups of variety have less chance to reach on uniformed and unanimous agreements (Ika, 2009). It is very important to consider not only the success but there are also other aspects which lead to make the project successful throughout its process (Pinto & Slevin, 1988).

Pinto and Slevin (1988), Hoegl and Gemuenden (2001), and Lipovetsky, Tishler, Dvir, and Shenhar (1997) are considered to be most famous writers on the subject. The measurement models which they have developed differentiate with respect to project success, e.g., types of project and comfort of team members. A 10-dimensional success measurement model was developed by Muller and Turner (2006) according to whom symmetry came into hard and soft factors of project success and made the respondents capable of describing their own success criteria.

Success frameworks contain definitions, concepts, and existing theory for a specific research when research is based within the domain of project management. It is worth mentioning that some of the success frameworks narrated in the literature relate to success criteria, whereas others with success factors (Ika, 2009). In these cases, success frameworks can deviate from theoretical perspective with success dimensions and success factors (here the earlier is related to success criteria) or that is more expert oriented which will be based on practical figures like visual aids which may illustrate lists or groups of success factors; this may encompass links or process flows related to project life cycles. The basic aim is to use success frameworks which should be directed to address the errors but it should be as per the context of the project (Shenhar, Tishler, Dvir, Lipovetsky, & Lechler, 2002).

Generally, it is believed according to Prabhakar (2008) that measuring project success may not come up with the performance components schedule and budget; in other words, budget and performance components schedule lacks when it comes to measuring project success. But both the factors are still considered to be more required and important components of the construct. It is necessary to highlight here that there are some issues related to achievement of functional objectives and technical performance. These factors are used to investigate the quality. Moreover, the successes and achievements against settled and defined criteria will be based upon the deviation/variation of perceptions of different stakeholders (Carvalho & Rabechini, 2017). Basically, managers of stakeholders define the success criteria seeking some certain outcome of their project. Factually, it can be believed that project success is indeed an outcome and therefore, it can be considered as a dependent variable (DV).

Workplace bullying is considered to be a form of psychological violence. Workplace bullying is a very consequent and dangerous phenomenon which has very serious effects and it directly targets individual's health and well-being (Mumtaz, 2018a). If it goes beyond certain limits, it can cause suicidal incidents as well (Lovell & Lee, 2011). Workplace bullying can be defined as the deliberate or intentional and frequently occurring hostile conduct/behavior of an individual; usually supervisor or a manager; onto another who is subordinate and is less powerful. Both verbal and physical behaviors are included in bullying and that range from cruel teasing, physical acts of bellicosity and/or aggression. As per various researchers, workplace bullying is supposedly associated to other forms of employees ill-treatment, such as aggression (Budd, Arvey, & Lawless, 1996), violent behavior (Neuman & Baron, 1998), exploitation (Keashly, Trott, & MacLean, 1994), cruelty (Ashforth, 1994), discourteousness (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001), deviance or incivility (Robinson & Bennett, 1995), dysfunctional behavior (Giacolone & Greenberg, 1997), aggressive pressure or intimidation (Einarsen, 1999; Einarsen & Raknes, 1997), and antisocial behavior (Griffin, O'Leary-Kelly, & Collins, 1998). Bullying is also a form of human harassment which have very glaring effects on various human attributes, e.g., mental health, job satisfaction, and intention to resign from the workforce (Cleary, Hunt, Walter, & Robertson, 2009; Drabek & Merecz, 2013; Johnson, 2011; Turney, 2003). This kind of atmosphere having bullying as major factor will have very negative impacts on the overall productivity of whole organization; resultantly, it can suffered through financial costs to employers and the national economy (Adams, Nikolaev, Erickson, Ditomassi, & Jones, 2013; Shallcross, Ramsay, & Barker, 2013; Sheehan & Griffiths, 2011). Many studies have revealed that job satisfaction is inversely proportion to workplace bullying. The increase in bullying leads to less job satisfaction. On the other hand, it can cause a dramatic increase in depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. This factor not only affects the actual targets but witnesses may also be suffered with similar effects (Balducci, Fraccaroli, & Schaufeli, 2011; Branch, Ramsay, & Barker, 2013; Bryant, Buttigieg, & Hanley, 2009; Glaso & Notelaers, 2012; Hoobler, Rospenda, Lemmon, & Rosa, 2010; Piotrowski, 2012; Van Rooyen & McCormack, 2013). Workplace bullying has also many other negative consequences on the employers leading to increased absenteeism of staff, decrease productivity, lower morale of staff and thereby increasing financial costs due to legal claims, compensations to the effecters and managers time (Becher & Visovsky, 2012; Bellot, 2011; Hoobler et al., 2010). According to research subordinates who face more abusive or bullying behavior either engage in revenge behavior or retaliation (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001; Aquino et al., 2001; Inness, Barling, & Turner, 2005; Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002).

All the abovementioned negative effects of workplace bullying will have direct impact on the performance of the employees which of course will decrease with increase in the bullying and resultantly, it affects the project on which he is employed leading towards lower chances of project success. Therefore, hypothetically, it can be deducted as

H1: Workplace bullying has a negative impact on project success.

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According to Bryant and Buttigieg (2009), workplace bullying has mainly two basic effects. First, it hampers the organizational productivity due to awkward workplace behavior; and second, it affects its cost in terms of financial and human perspective. Bryant and Buttigieg (2009) suggest that workplace bullying is directly correlated to lower job satisfaction, increase in employee changeover, higher absenteeism, and lower organizational commitment. The study carried out by Zapf (1999) also shows that victims of workplace bullying face higher depression and increased anxiety. Moreover, it will lower the levels of reported self-esteem and ultimately compel the victims to resign from that organization to search for a better workplace. According to research subordinates who face more abusive or bullying behavior either engages in revenge behavior or retaliation (Aquino et al., 2001; Inness et al., 2005; Zellars et al., 2002).

In a previous study (Kim, Smith, & Brigham, 1998), people do not take revenge from or retaliate against their supervisor's or someone who helps get promotions, continued employment or raise (Ashforth, 1994). From the previous research, it has been observed that subordinates use different approaches to avoid or tackle workplace bullying; they either use regulative tactics—in which attempts are made to avoid direct interaction or contact and distorting of messages, i.e., hesitant in asking for directions, distorting information, or stretching the message to avoid any confrontation or problem or either use direct tactics—which is an attempt in which relationship injustices are openly addressed and discussed with the supervisor (Waldron, 1991). Another factor that subordinates use in response to abusive behavior at work is creating a climate of silence, also known as organizational silence (Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003).

In 2003, Ayoko studied the effects of workplace bullying and related emotional reactions of victims having very negative and counterproductive consequences. He reached on the conclusion that increased workplace bullying viz a viz related negative emotional reactions was associated with higher counterproductive behaviors at work. In relation to OCBs, another study carried out by (Zellars et al., 2002) shows that increased levels of abusive supervision resulted lower levels of citizenship behaviors. However, this particular study did not directly considered workplace bullying. The factor of abusive supervision was defined with the help of behavioral descriptors which included harassment, disrespect, and humiliation and covert aggressive behaviors within the domain of same workplace bullying. Therefore, hypothetically, it can be deducted as

H2: Workplace bullying has a negative impact on OCBI.

OCB promotes helping behaviors as well as organizational compliance (Podsakoff et al., 2000). When we talk about helping behaviors, it means that they are related to employees where these employees carryout volunteer efforts by enhancing an atmosphere of helping each other at a particular workplace. The employees are in full symmetry to address work-related issues in cordial environment. These behaviors are considered as an important form of citizenship (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996; Williams & Anderson, 1991). It is very interesting to note that in the perspective of OCB, helping attitude is seen similar to those of altruism, peacemaking, and cheerleading (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2000). This type of atmosphere where helping behaviors play a major role can promote a positive working environment where the employees are being supported and encouraged. Moreover, this kind of behavior which can be termed as professional social support can reduce work stress and impediments (Visweswaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). OCB is considered to be the most important positive factor in an organization and therefore, it can be called as an asset of and thus conceptualized as main factor of employee performance (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). OCB enhances the performance employee and resultantly brings positive impacts on the projects where he is working. Hence, hypothetically, it can be deducted as

H3: OCBI has a positive impact on project success.

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OCB is a set of attributes which do not come within the domain of defined role but still it holds great importance for efficient working in a particular organization (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff, Ahearne, & MacKenzie, 1997). According to Ehrhart, Bliese, and Thomas (2006) who carry out a work that supports OCB as a main factor of positive organizational performance, it has become a subject of argument that the OCB of the implementation team should lead to a successful outcome. Niehoff (2005) discussed socio-emotional support to other employees as one of the factors of OCB which positively influences organizational performance and thereby facilitates the work of others. This is the reason that the employees may perform to their best and enhance organizational effectiveness by constructing socio-emotional support in the organization and thereby promoting more efficient work behavior.

According to Rotundo and Sackett (2002), OCB is considered to be an asset of the organization and therefore conceptualized as a core element of the performance of the employee. All the factors discussed above can contribute toward the success of the project. It is worth mentioning that in past, no research has been carried out to find OCBI as a mediator between workplace bullying and project success. Therefore, this can be considered as the first research which will look into the relationship of OCBI with these variables. Therefore, it can be concluded that workplace bullying will affect the success of project through OCB. Hence, hypothetically, following can be deducted:

H4: OCBI mediates the relationship between workplace bullying and project success.

Proposed theoretical framework
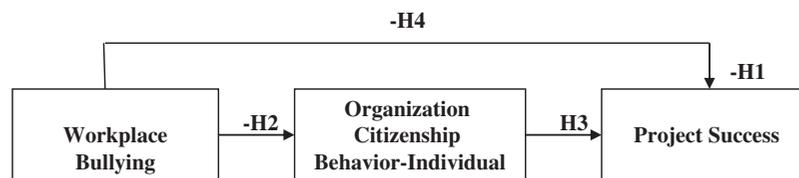
3. Research methodology

This is a quantitative study in which data were collected from sample using a closed ended questionnaire. The population of interest in this research consisted of leaders and employees of project-based organizations (non-government organizations [NGOs]) which are involved in project-based work. Targeted population was restricted to project-based organizations (NGOs) located at two major cities of country that is Islamabad and Rawalpindi. NGO sector was particularly selected in this study, as NGOs are projectized organizations. Additionally, NGOs work for the benefit and welfare of society; hence, it is important to understand how workplace bullying may impact performance of the employees in this sector.

Due to limited time and resources in this research available, it was difficult to get details regarding the exact population in this study. Researchers roughly estimated about the population in this study, hence, probability sampling techniques was not used for data collection and "convenience sampling strategy" was used for approaching employees. Three hundred and fifty questionnaires were randomly distributed manually to the employees of project-based organizations (NGOs) in two major cities in Pakistan (Rawalpindi and Islamabad). A total of 264 responses were received after distributing 350 questionnaires, in which 10 were rejected due to incomplete responses and remaining 254 responses were used in data analysis process. Response rate was 72%.

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3.1. Sources of instrumentation
This study was conducted using a 5-point Likert scale (interval scale), where 1 stands for "strongly disagree" and 5 embodies "strongly agree" option for every variable item, except for demographics where dichotomous and category scale was used. The questionnaire which is used in this research has been *adopted* from various authentic sources to gather requisite data for the study.

3.2. Work bullying
Scale that has been adapted in order to measure workplace bullying was originally developed by Einarsen, Hoel, and Notelaer in 2009. It consists of 21 items and is measured through 5-point Likert scale. Sample item includes "My key areas of responsibility is usually removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks."

3.3. OCBI
OCBI was measured using a four-item scale adapted from Saks (2006) but originally developed by Lee and Allen (2002). The sample item includes "I willingly give my time to help others who have work-related problems."

3.4. Project success
Project success scale developed by Aga, Noorderhaven, and Vallejo (2016) is adopted which had 14 items that measure the project success variable. The sample item includes "The project was completed on time." Details regarding complete scale have been attached in Appendix.

3.5. Data analyses tools
In order to analyze this cross-sectional data, multiple tests were run. Initially researchers run descriptive tests for examining normality of data. Later reliability tests were performed for testing inter-item correlations. Regression was run using preacher and Hayes process model.

4. Results

4.1. Reliability
The instrument used comprises 39 questions pertaining 3 variables: workplace bullying (21), OCBI (4), and project success (14). For all variables used in the research, the values of Cronbach alpha were greater than .70, which according to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) is acceptable confirming the reliability of our instrument.

4.2. Correlation
Comprehensive table is appended below demonstrating the associations, means, standard deviations, and correlations between all variables including independent variable (IV), i.e., workplace bullying, DV, i.e., project success and mediating variables (M), i.e., OCBI. The mean value of workplace bullying was 2.7186 which show that employees are facing less workplace bullying in their respective organizations. For OCBI, mean value was 3.5010 which depicts that employees are more toward positive response. For project success, the value of mean was 3.5565 that was highest among all the variables. Correlation demonstrates how each variable is associated with other variables. The results showed that workplace bullying has significant negative strong correlation with project success (−.345**). Thus, $H1_a$ which states workplace bullying has negative impact on project success is supported. The correlation table shows that workplace bullying has negative insignificant correlation with OCBI (−.104). OCBI has significant positive strong correlation with project success (.784**). Consequently, $H3_a$ which states that OCBI has positive impact on project success is supported.

4.3. Regression
Table 1 indicates correlation among all the variables. Table 2 shows mediation effect of OCBI on relation of workplace bullying and project success. The above table shows negative significant relation between workplace bullying and project success (coeff = −.2211, *p* = .0000); hence, H1 has been accepted. Results shows negative significant relation between workplace bullying and OCBI

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Table 1. Correlation showing association of variables							
	Mean	**SD**	**Age**	**Gender**	**WPBM**	**OCBIM**	**PSM**
AGE	1.4567	.82691					
GENDER	1.4843	.5007	.345**	1			
WPBM	2.7186	1.0002	.226**	−.121	1		
OCBIM	3.5010	.9834	.133*	.091	−.104	1	
PSM	3.5565	.8077	.060	.199**	−.345**	.784**	1

*Correlation is significant at .05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at .01 level (2-tailed).

SD: Standard deviation; WPBM: workplace bullying; OCBI: organizational citizenship behavior—individual; PSM: project success.

Table 2. Mediated regression analyses						
	Coeff	**se**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
Total effect of WPB on PS (c path)	−.2211	.0473	−6.2728	.0000	−.3902	−.2037
WPB to OCBI (a path)	−.1324	.0621	−2.1331	.0000	−.2547	−.0102
Direct effect of OCBI on PS (b path)	.5731	.0319	17.9783	.0000	.5103	.6359
Direct effect of WPB on PS (c' path)	−.2970	.0473	−6.2728	.0339	−.2833	−.1589

WPBM: Workplace bullying; OCBI: organizational citizenship behavior—individual; PSM: project success.

Notes:
c path shows the relation between workplace bullying and project success without mediator and it is negative and significant.
a path represents the relationship of workplace bullying with OCBI which is negative and significant.
b path shows relationship of OCBI with project success which is positive and significant.
c' path shows the mediating effect of OCBI between workplace bullying and project success. The significant value of coefficient shows that partial mediation exists.

(coeff = −.1324, p = .0000). Therefore, H2 has also been accepted. Thus, it implies that workplace bullying is significantly related to OCBI. The coefficient value (*B*) of −.1324 indicates that for every one SD increase in the value of workplace bullying, there would be .1324 times decrease in OCBI due to this change. OCBI is positively and significantly related to project success (coeff = .5731, p = 0.0000). As a result, H3 has been accepted.

OCBI is hypothesized to mediate the relationship between workplace bullying and project success in our model in H4. The *R*-square value in mediation is .6460 which depicts that .6460% fluctuations in dependent variable (i.e., project success) are captured due to fluctuation in independent variable (i.e., workplace bullying). To confirm the mediating role of OCBI mediation was tested through preacher and Hayes, the significant value of coefficient (coeff = —.2970, p = .0339) in direct effect of workplace bullying and project success path shows that partial mediation exists and OCBI is partially mediating the relationship between workplace bullying and project success. Consequently, H4 is partially accepted.

5. Discussion

Workplace bullying is a form of social stressor that influences the psychosocial work environment in ways that can be as harmful and devastating for both employees and the organization itself as any other form of job stressor (Hauge et al., 2010). Research suggests that project success in organizations is reliant upon the behavior of employees. Organizations are unable to cater the workplace bullying issues of their employees and certainly, it causes different loopholes for the accomplishment of objectives (Rockett, Fan, Dwyer, & Foy, 2017). The findings of this study suggest noteworthy hypothetical contributions to the literature and organizational implications. It is the

first study which empirically tested and validated the mediating effect of OCBI on the relationship of workplace bullying and project success.

The hypothesis which stated that there is a negative and significant effect of workplace bullying on project success has been accepted. Thus, it implies that workplace bullying is negatively significantly related to project success which means more bullying will result in less project success. Workplace bullying is a problem which causes nervousness, bad health, low self-esteem, tension, disbelief, overburden, and anxiety. It may result from workplace violence or from sexual harassment (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). It may be deliberate or not, obvious or secret, emotional or not. Numerous factors cause it which may include manipulation, aggression, exploitation, intimidating management styles and practices, personality clashes, masculinity in the organizational culture, gender politics and stereotyping, power play, and patterns laid down in childhood. Though often hidden away, the effects of bullying are usually very explicit, e.g., illness and absenteeism, conflict and violence, depression and low self-image, organizational inefficiency (Rockett et al., 2017). All these factors ultimately affect the success of the project on which that individual is working. This study adds significant value in the literature, as OCBI is a relatively new variable and has been studied in a fewer studies. This study suggests an essential role of OCBI in the relationship between workplace bullying and project success.

The results of the study show that workplace bullying has a negative significant relation with OCBI which suggests that the employees who feel bullied in their work place are going to have less OCBI. Literature also support this result; according to a study, workplace bullying has mainly two basic effects. First, it hampers the organizational productivity due to awkward workplace behavior; and second, it affects its cost in terms of financial and human perspective (Bryant & Buttigieg, 2009). Bryant and Buttigieg suggested that workplace bullying is directly correlated to lower job satisfaction, increase in employee changeover, higher absenteeism, and lower organizational commitment. The study carried out by Zapf's (1999) also shows that victims of workplace bullying face higher depression and increased anxiety. Moreover, it will lower the levels of reported self-esteem and ultimately compel the victims to resign from that organization to search for a better workplace.

The hypothesis which stated that OCBI has positive significant relation with project success is also accepted in results which confirm that employees with high OCBI are going to contribute more toward project success. High OCBI results in high employee efficiency, organizational turn-over, and productivity among employees which eventually leads toward project success (Basu et al., 2017). OCB is considered to be the most important positive factor in an organization and therefore, it can be called as an asset of and thus conceptualized as main factor of employee performance (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002) which eventually leads to project success. OCB enhances the performance employee and resultantly brings positive impacts on the projects where he is working.

6. Theoretical implications

Creasy and Carnes (2017) in their research paper "The effects of workplace bullying on team learning, innovation and project success as mediated through virtual and traditional team dynamics" proposed a model for empirical testing. They emphasized that their model requires empirical validation by assessing project manager behaviors, associated team dynamics, and subsequent project outcomes. This is the first study which empirically tested and validated the mediating effect of OCBI between the relationship of workplace bullying and project success. We have empirically tested the relation between workplace bullying and project success with mediating role of OCBI. This research is confirming the hypothesis which states that workplace bullying has a negative relation with project success and OCBI partially mediates this relation.

Researchers have suggested that more extensive work is required to explore the relationship between organizational justice and OCB and how they lead toward project performance (Bin &

Loosemore, 2017) which ultimately affects the project success. So, the results of this research are considerable because they are adding to the literature and it suggests that increase in OCBI can provide an environment and working conditions that may help to increase the performance of an employee which is ultimately leading toward project success.

7. Managerial implications

This research will hopefully be a good addition to the literature in context of exploring the impact of workplace bullying on project success in different organizations. This study will also reveal how OCBI (which is not widely studied earlier) mediates the above described relationship. The results from this study can be helpful for managers and organizations to recognize how to enhance project success by minimizing workplace bullying in an organization (Mumtaz, 2018a). The findings from this study may contribute to the discourse on workplace bullying and may assist leaders to understand a phenomenon that costs their institutions a considerable amount in human resources, thus leading to positive social change in their organizations. The organization as a whole needs to be aware of the consequences of workplace bullying and confront the bully within a problem-focused context. Hence, project managers, supervisors, and employees need to identify the patterns of workplace bullying process in order to stop the damaging behavior of the bully. Additionally, by developing preventive programs at an organizational level and by establishing an effective and safe grievance procedure, organizations can intervene to prevent or mitigate the impact of workplace bullying (Mumtaz, 2018b). Decrease in workplace bullying will cause increase in OCBI which is going to increase the project success.

Managers should pay attention to promote the level of OCBI in their employees through different HR practices. Different activities including workshops, lectures, and trainings should be conducted in order to keep up the level of OCB. OCBI is related to employees' optional behaviors which are not defined in the job description and go beyond their assigned duties. Moreover, this behavior is not influenced by any reward set by the organization. OCBI should be often measured through different surveys to scrutinize the level of OCBI in an organization.

8. Conclusion

Quite a few contributions to the literature were achieved in this study which includes the impact of workplace bullying on the project success in the presence of OCBI as mediator. Leaders and project managers should consider these findings to achieve preferred results and optimistic attitude from their employees in order to achieve high project success rate. Different sessions and talks need to be arranged to aware employees about workplace bullying and its implications toward an individual. These sessions are going to impact the behavior of their employees in a constructive way. Rules and regulations need to be set in an organization to make sure that employees are comfortable in the workplace. A supervisor should have a sharp observation to notice any unusual behavior in an employee or anything which looks abnormal between any two individuals in an organization. The most effective strategies may include problem-focused strategies like dealing collectively with the colleagues, looking for support of the managerial staff, and filing complaints to the management. Furthermore, the results revealed that OCBI is a partial mediator in the association between workplace bullying and the project success. Therefore, to elevate the level of OCBI in employee, different HR activities should be considered and applied in organizations. OCBI or individual-level OCB consists of happiness, cheerfulness, etiquettes, and selfless efforts directly related to individual. This individual-based OCB encompasses the helping behavior and the good manners in an employee which directly or indirectly aids coworkers, for example helping associates who are under very heavy workloads, which is eventually going to help in project success.

9. Limitations and future directions

There are certain limitations of this study. First, this study is based on convenience sampling technique in which sample is taken which is handy and easily available. In this method, may be some groups are

not included in sample. To represent the targeted population accurately, future studies should think about restating the same model with random sampling technique. Second, this study covers employees from development sector only which concerns the generalizability of our findings. Future studies could measure the generalizability of this study by taking samples from employees in other cultures and sectors. The same research should be carried out in some other sectors involved in projects. The same model can also be studied in countries other than Pakistan to endorse these results.

Due to shortage of resources, i.e., time, the role of gender could not be studied in this research. Findings from this study add value in literature, as NGOs are generally associated with the social welfare and their work environment seems to be positive than other organizations; however, findings from this study are useful, as future researchers can conduct studies in similar sectors for understanding this relationship. Also, future researchers should pay attention on role of gender on relation of workplace bullying and OCBI. It can be taken as a moderator to check any impact that it might has on this relation. OCBI is partially mediating between workplace bullying and project success in present research; thus, it should be taken as moderator in future to study if this variable has any moderating effects on the relationship of IV and DV.

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Appendix

Workplace bullying scale
In my organization, someone holds information which affects my performance
I am being ordered to do work below my level of competence
I find my opinions being ignored
I am being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines
My work is monitored excessively
I am pressurized not to claim something to which by right I am entitled (e.g., sick leave, holiday entitlement, and travel expenses) in my organization
I am usually being exposed to an unmanageable workload
I am usually being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with my work
My key areas of responsibility are usually removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks
Gossip and rumors about me are usually being spread in my organization
In my organization, I am being ignored or excluded
Insulting or offensive remarks are being made about me or my attitudes or your private life
I am being hinted or signaled from others that I should quit my job
I receive reminders of my errors or mistakes repeatedly
I am being ignored or faced with a hostile reaction when I approach to anyone in my organization
I am practically being joked out by people I don't get along with in my organization
Allegations are made against me in my organization
I am subjected to excessive teasing and sarcasm in my organization
I am shouted at or targeted of spontaneous anger in my organization
I am the victim of intimidating behaviors such as finger pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking your way in my organization
I received threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse in my organization
Individual organization citizenship behavior scale
I willingly give my time to help others who have work-related problems
I adjust my work schedule to accommodate other employees' requests for time off
I give up time to help others who have work or non-work problems
I assist others with their duties
Project success scale
The project was completed on time
The project was completed according to the budget allocated
The outcomes of the project are used by its intended end users
The outcomes of the project are likely to be sustained
The outcomes of the project have directly benefited the intended end users, either through increasing efficiency or effectiveness
Given the problem for which it was developed, the project seems to do the best job of solving that problem
I was satisfied with the process by which the project was implemented
Project team members were satisfied with the process by which the project was implemented
The project had no or minimal start-up problems because it was readily accepted by its end users
The project has directly led to improved performance for the end users/target beneficiaries
The project has made a visible positive impact on the target beneficiaries
Project specifications were met by the time of handover to the target beneficiaries
The target beneficiaries were satisfied with the outcomes of the project
Our principal donors were satisfied with the outcomes of the project implementation

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