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## The Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support on the Relationship between Bullying and Work Behaviors

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THE MODERATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BULLYING AND WORK BEHAVIORS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Psychology

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements of the Degree

Master of Science

by

Zakwan Salahieh

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The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Thesis Titled  
THE MODERATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BULLYING AND WORK BEHAVIORS

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## ABSTRACT

### THE MODERATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BULLYING AND WORK BEHAVIORS

by Zakwan Salahieh

Workplace bullying has been linked to many unfavorable outcomes that can be very costly to organizations. One way to minimize the impact of this negative behavior is through perceived organizational support (POS). Thus, researchers have called for more studies examining the joint effects of workplace bullying and POS on various outcomes. The purpose of this study was to examine whether POS would moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and outcomes that are related to work behaviors and motivations, namely, organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) and work engagement. A total of 224 individuals working in a variety of industries participated in an online survey. The study examined the direct effects of workplace bullying on OCB-I (behaviors directed towards individuals), OCB-O (behaviors directed towards the organization), and work engagement as well as the moderating effects of POS on such relationships. In support of the hypotheses, results showed that workplace bullying was negatively related to all three outcomes. However, POS moderated only the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-I. The effects of workplace bullying on OCB-I were more negative when POS was low, but there was no relationship between the two when POS was high. In other words, high POS nullified the negative impact of workplace bullying on OCB-I. These findings suggest that in order to foster positive work behaviors, organizations should create a supportive work environment through the implementation of anti-bullying policies and training programs.

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## **Introduction**

Workplace bullying, which refers to repeated negative behaviors such as harassment aimed at individuals at work where those on the receiving end feel inferior and are unable to defend themselves against the bully (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996), has a considerable impact on employees and organizations. For example, Namie (2000) conducted a survey on hostile workplaces in the U.S. to showcase the impact of workplace bullying on the target's health and career. Of the 1335 respondents, 94% reported severe anxiety, and 82% reported losing their job as a result of being bullied. Similarly, an employee exposed to bullying can cost a company between \$30,000 and \$100,000 in lost productivity, paid sick leave, and the need for occupational health staff and external consultants (Leymann, 1990). These statistics highlight the importance of understanding workplace bullying and dealing with this undesirable phenomenon in the interest of the well-being of both employees and organizations.

Although various outcomes of workplace bullying such as stress, depression, and absenteeism have been studied (Hauge, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2010; Kivimaki, Virtanen, Vartia, Elovainio, Vahtera, & Keltikangas-Jarvinen, 2003; Vartia, 2001), more recently, researchers have started to identify boundary conditions that might mitigate the negative consequences of workplace bullying. Examples of moderators include coping strategies (Jiang, Dong, & Wang, 2012) and perceived organizational support (POS) (Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2008; Quine, 2001). Overall, results show a consistent pattern among these moderators such that high levels of the moderator can offset the negative effects of bullying on various outcomes such as job satisfaction and intentions to leave.

For instance, nurses who reported being bullied but received support in the form of available resources at work (i.e., physical, intellectual, technical, financial, and social) had less intention to leave, were less depressed, and were more satisfied with their job, compared to bullied nurses with less support (Quine, 2001). Similarly, Djurkovic et al. (2008) found a positive relationship between workplace bullying and intention to leave among employees who did not perceive the organization as supportive; they discovered a non-significant relationship between employees who perceived their organization as supportive. Based on these findings, Djurkovic et al. concluded that if individuals perceived that organizations value them and care about them, the negative effects of workplace bullying on intention to leave weaken.

This notion of perceiving the organization as supportive (i.e., POS) refers to employees' belief that they are being valued and cared for by the organization (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986). Given that POS mitigates the negative consequences of workplace bullying, researchers have called for more studies that examine the joint effects of workplace bullying and POS on other outcomes (Djurkovic et al., 2008). In this study, POS was examined as a moderator of the relationship between workplace bullying and both organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and work engagement because research on workplace bullying mainly was focused on job attitudes and health-related outcomes with little attention to behaviors and motivations related to work.

OCB refers to discretionary work behavior that is not recognized by the formal reward structure; however, it collectively promotes the effective functioning of the

organization (Organ, 1988). Similarly, work engagement is defined as a persistent, positive affective state of fulfillment in employees (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Examining OCB and work engagement as potential consequences of workplace bullying is important as they have been linked to positive outcomes for individuals and organizations. These outcomes include lowered absenteeism and intention to leave, increased customer satisfaction, organizational performance, and overall effectiveness (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Podsakoff, Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Maynes, & Spoelma, 2014; Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009). Therefore, it is in organizations' best interest to foster both OCB and work engagement, even in an environment that could be susceptible to workplace bullying. Understanding how POS might help to lessen the negative consequences of workplace bullying might aid organizations in reducing the high cost associated with workplace bullying and increasing favorable behaviors such as OCB and work engagement. In this study, it was hypothesized that workplace bullying would be negatively related to both OCB and work engagement. However, this relationship was expected to be moderated by POS such that the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB and engagement would be more negative when POS was low than when it was high. The following sections provide a definition of workplace bullying, review the existing literature on both outcomes and moderators of workplace bullying, and present the hypotheses that were tested in the current study.

## **Definition of Workplace Bullying**

Although there is no consistent definition of workplace bullying in the literature, most definitions do share a recurring theme (Saunders, Huynh, & Goodman-Delahunty, 2007). Saunders and her colleagues categorized these definitions into four essential criteria: (1) the negative effect of the behavior on the target, (2) the frequency and (3) persistence of the behavior, and (4) the power imbalance resulting from the behavior. For example, workplace bullying has been defined as repeated actions directed at one or more workers that cause humiliation, offense, and distress, and that may interfere with job performance such that the negative actions may lead to an unpleasant working environment (Einarsen, 1999). Moreover, the bullying behavior must place victims in an inferior position where defending themselves becomes difficult (Einarsen, Raknes, & Matthiesen, 1994). Examples of such behaviors include intimidation, public humiliation, offensive name-calling, belittling of one's opinion, social exclusion, and unwanted physical contact (Cowie, Naylor, Rives, Smith, & Pereira, 2002; Rayner & Hoel, 1997).

It is likely that most researchers agree on the general definition mentioned above; however, the definition as to the frequency and duration of the negative behavior have been widely debated (Cowan, 2012; Saunders et al., 2007). Some researchers argue that the negative behavior must occur on a regular basis such as weekly or monthly and over a specific period of time such as the previous six to twelve months (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Leymann, 1990; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001). Others believe in a more open-ended approach where the occurrence of the bullying behavior can take place at any point in one's career (Saunders et al., 2007) such that a single instance of the negative behavior

could qualify as bullying based on its severity and the victim's ability to cope with it (Cowie et al., 2002). In this study, the former approach was followed such that workplace bullying was examined as negative behaviors occurring on a regular basis within a period of six months. More specifically, workplace bullying was defined as "harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work tasks. In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity, interaction or process, it has to occur repeatedly and regularly (e.g., weekly) and over a period of time (e.g., about six months). Bullying is an escalated process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of systematic negative social acts" (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003, p.15).

### **Outcomes of Workplace Bullying**

Outcomes of workplace bullying have been categorized into two broad groups: health-related and job-related outcomes (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). Health-related outcomes include stress, anxiety, low self-esteem, post-traumatic-stress-disorders (PTSD), and many other psychological and psychomatic health illnesses (Hansen, Hogh, Persson, Karlson, Garde, & Ørbæk, 2006; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002; Namie, 2003). For example, in a study of 437 employees of multiple companies in Sweden, Hansen and her colleagues (2006) examined the association between workplace bullying and health outcomes of victims and witnesses of bullying. Results showed that exposure to workplace bullying was highly related to somatization, depression, anxiety, and negative affectivity among victims of bullying, and anxiety among those who witnessed the bullying behavior. Similarly, Matthiesen et al. (2004)

conducted a comparison study to investigate levels of psychiatric distress and symptoms of PTSD in bullied employees. A sample of 102 victims of bullying was compared with several contrasting samples (e.g., employees after an organizational downsize, separated or divorced people, war zone personnel), all of which were either exposed to stress or reported symptoms of PTSD. Results showed that bullied employees reported particularly higher stress levels and more PTSD symptoms compared to the other groups.

Job-related outcomes of workplace bullying, on the other hand, include job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, organizational commitment, intention to leave the organization, and actual turnover (Bryant & Buttigieg, 2009; Djurkovic et al., 2008; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Rayner & Cooper, 1997; Samnani & Singh, 2012). For example, Djurkovic et al. (2008) examined the relationship between workplace bullying and intention to leave in 335 high school teachers in Australia and found a positive relationship between the two. In another Australian study, Demir and Rodwell (2012) surveyed a sample of 207 hospital nurses to understand antecedents and consequences of workplace bullying. Of the three outcomes examined (i.e., psychological distress, organizational commitment, job satisfaction), bullied nurses reported higher psychological distress and lower organizational commitment than their counterparts.

Although many consequences of workplace bullying have been studied, they mainly focus on job attitudes and health-related outcomes. To the researcher's best knowledge, there is little research on behavioral and motivational consequences of workplace bullying. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap in research and focuses on two job-related outcomes, organizational citizenship behavior and work engagement.

## **Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)**

OCB has been defined as “work behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that, in the aggregate, promotes the effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, 1988, p. 4). Such behavior can produce many tangible benefits for organizations. For example, a meta-analysis showed that OCB was related to many positive outcomes such as product quality, customer service, profitability, organizational performance, and overall effectiveness and success (Podsakoff et al., 2014). On an individual level, OCB was shown to be positively related to employee performance and reward allocation decisions, and negatively related to absenteeism, intention to leave, and actual turnover (Podsakoff et al., 2009).

In relation to the workplace bullying literature, OCB has mainly been linked to abusive supervision, a form of workplace bullying (Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002). In their study of 373 National Guard members and their supervisors, Zellars et al. argued that individuals exposed to abusive supervision might choose to perform or withhold certain behaviors within their discretion and indeed found a negative relationship between abusive supervision and OCB such that subordinates of abusive supervisors performed fewer OCBs than their non-abused counterparts.

Other researchers (i.e., Gregory, Osmonbekov, Gregory, Albritton, & Carr, 2013; Rafferty & Rustubog, 2011) examined the relationship between abusive supervision and OCBs on the basis of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Unlike economic exchange relationships which are short term and focused on material resources, social exchange relationships involve developing trust with the other party and thus develop over time

(Rafferty & Restubog, 2011). The norm of reciprocity is a key concept in social exchange theory, which indicates that if one person treats another well, the person on the receiving end feels obligated to return the favorable treatment. Alternatively, if one person treats another poorly, the person on the receiving end returns with the unfavorable behavior to maintain the balance of the exchange relationship. Overall, results showed a consistent pattern where workplace bullying was negatively related to OCBs. More specifically, subordinates with abusive supervisors withheld their OCBs as a way to overcome the imbalance of the exchange relationship with their supervisor when they were treated poorly (Gregory et al., 2013; Rafferty & Restubog, 2011).

It is worth mentioning that very few studies (i.e., Liu & Wang, 2013; Rafferty & Restubog, 2011) have focused organizational citizenship behavior as a multi-dimensional construct in relation to workplace bullying. Williams and Anderson (1991) have suggested that OCB has two components; OCB-I (directed towards other individuals) and OCB-O (directed towards the organization), which have been argued to have their own unique characteristics (LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002). Therefore, LePine et al. (2002) called for more research examining OCB-I and OCB-O as two separate constructs. As a result, Liu and Wang (2013) examined the relationship between abusive supervision and OCBs but more specifically, OCB-I and OCB-O. Consistent with their hypotheses, results showed abusive supervision to be negatively related to OCB-I but not directly related to OCB-O. According to Liu and Wang, OCB-I is an interpersonal construct by nature and therefore employees with abusive supervisors are more likely to withhold their

proactive work behaviors towards other individuals, whereas the same does not necessarily hold true towards their organization.

Given their argument, it is reasonable to assume that individuals might also withhold their proactive work behaviors directed toward their organization if they are in an environment conducive to bullying (i.e., organizations where bullying might be tolerated or ignored). Applying Blau's (1964) social exchange theory, it can be argued that if employees are bullied, they are likely to reciprocate this treatment by withholding their OCBs towards other individuals and the organization alike as a way to maintain the balance of the exchange relationship. Thus, the following hypotheses were posited.

*Hypothesis 1a:* Workplace bullying will be negatively related to OCB-I. In other words, the more bullied employees are, the less they will display OCB-I.

*Hypothesis 1b:* Workplace bullying will be negatively related to OCB-O. In other words, the more bullied employees are, the less they will display OCB-O.

### **Work Engagement**

Work engagement refers to a positive work-related state of mind that is characterized by dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). According to Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006), vigor refers to extraordinary levels of energy and mental resilience while on the job where one is willing to invest effort in his or her work and often persists even when faced with difficulties; dedication refers to high levels of involvement in one's work such that he or she feels challenged, inspired and proud; absorption refers to being completely absorbed in one's work with a difficulty separating oneself from work. Work engagement has been linked

to many favorable organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction (Schaufeli, 2013), job performance (Bakker & Bal, 2010), organizational commitment (Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008), and turnover intentions (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2014). Given these favorable outcomes, nurturing work engagement is of great value for organizations, especially in a setting where workplace bullying might be at play (Trepanier, Fernet, & Austin, 2013). Available, but limited studies show that workplace bullying is negatively related to work engagement.

The public healthcare sector may very well be an example of a setting at high risk of workplace bullying (Zapf, Einarsen, Hoel, & Vartia, 2010). In a study conducted on Canadian nurses, Trepanier et al. (2013) used self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008) to examine the relationship between workplace bullying and what they argued to be two indicators of psychological health at work: burnout and work engagement. Self-determination theory mainly focuses on the different types of human motivation (i.e., intrinsic vs. extrinsic) as predictors of performance, and relational and well-being outcomes. More specifically, it refers to having an innate tendency towards vitality and effective functioning (i.e., intrinsic motivation) when basic psychological needs are met (Deci & Ryan, 2008). These basic psychological needs are autonomy (i.e., feelings of choice and discretion), competence (i.e., feelings of being capable and efficacious), and relatedness (i.e., feelings of connectedness with others). It is reasonable to assume that if employees are bullied in the workplace, their psychological needs are not likely to be met (i.e., low in autonomy, competence, and connectedness) and consequently, they are less likely to be intrinsically motivated and engaged with their work. Consistent with the

theory, Trepanier et al. (2013) found that bullied nurses reported being less engaged with their work when their needs were not satisfied. These findings were supported by the same researchers 12 months later as part of a longitudinal study that aimed to examine the role of need satisfaction on the relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement over time (Trepanier, Fernet, & Austin, 2014).

In another longitudinal study, Rodríguez-Muñoz, Baillien, De Witte, Moreno-Jiménez, and Pastor (2009) examined a causal relationship between workplace bullying and job-related well-being. The study included the two core dimensions of work engagement: vigor and dedication. To demonstrate causations, researchers administered a survey questionnaire at Time 1 with a lag of six months and another at Time 2 with a lag of two years. Overall, results showed significant negative relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement over time, indicating that workplace bullying “wears out” targets leading to decreased job-related well-being (i.e., decreased work engagement).

Glaso, Bele, Nielsen, and Einarsen (2011) further expanded on workplace bullying research by studying its relationship to job engagement using an occupation-specific approach. They argued that such an approach complements mainstream studies which typically lack important factors pertaining to a particular work environment (e.g., poor ergonomics). In this case, the effects of workplace bullying on engagement were examined among bus drivers, a population that is four times more likely to face threats of violence at work compared to the ‘average worker’ (Tse, Flin, & Mearns, 2006). Not surprisingly, results of the study showed a negative relationship between workplace

bullying and job engagement, a finding that has been a consistent trend in the literature reviewed so far.

Based on self-determination theory, it is assumed that if employees are bullied, their basic psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, competence, and relatedness) are not likely to be met and hence, employees lose their innate tendency toward vitality and effective functioning. Thus, bullied employees are likely to be disengaged from work.

*Hypothesis 2: Workplace bullying is negatively related to work engagement. In other words, the more bullied employees are, the less engaged they will be at work.*

### **Perceived Organizational Support (POS)**

One way to combat unfavorable work consequences of workplace bullying such as stress and anxiety would be to examine factors that might ameliorate the relationship between workplace bullying and work-related outcomes, namely, OCB and work engagement. In fact, researchers such as Djurkovic et al. (2008) have examined POS as a moderator of the relationship between workplace bullying and intention to leave, and they have advocated for more studies examining the joint effects of workplace bullying and POS on various work outcomes that are important to organizations. To the researcher's best knowledge, there is no research on POS as a moderator of the relationship between workplace bullying and both OCB and job engagement.

According to Levinson (1965), employees have a tendency to assign the organization humanlike qualities such that actions taken by agents of the organization are viewed as driven by the organization itself rather than the agents' personal motives. An example of such qualities is perceived organizational support (POS) which refers to

employee beliefs that the organization genuinely values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoads & Eisenberger, 2002).

POS is a central construct within organizational support theory (OST) that explains the relationship between employers and employees based on social exchange (Baran, Shanock, & Miller, 2012). According to Baran et al., “employees develop POS in response to socio-emotional needs and the organization’s readiness to reward increased efforts made on its behalf” (p. 124). An important function of POS is the norm of reciprocity, suggesting that people should help those who have helped them (Gouldner, 1960). In the organizational context, favorable treatment between employers and employees is reciprocated by the receiving party leading to positive outcomes for both. This reciprocity is an application of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), where recipients feel obligated to behave in ways that maintain the balance of the exchange relationship. For instance, employees are more committed to their organization and perform better when they perceive their organization as supportive (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

One function of POS is that aid will be available from the organization when employees need to perform their job effectively and deal with stressful situations (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Workplace bullying may very well be an example of such stressful situations (Keashly, 2001). In an attempt to understand the role of POS on workplace bullying, Djurkovic et al. (2008) conducted a study on 335 schoolteachers to examine how POS might influence the victims’ intention to leave the organization. Results showed that POS moderated the relationship between workplace bullying and

intention to leave (Djurkovic et al.). More specifically, there was a non-significant relationship between workplace bullying and intention to leave among employees who perceived their organization to be supportive. However, there was a significant positive relationship between workplace bullying and intention to leave among those who were neutral or did not perceive their organization as supportive. It is worth mentioning that these findings are in no way exclusive to the teaching profession. In another study conducted on 1100 community nurses, Quine (2001) demonstrated how a supportive work environment moderated the relationship between bullying and propensity to quit as well as other outcomes (i.e., depression and job satisfaction). Consistent with their hypothesis, nurses who reported being bullied but received good support at work were less depressed, had a lower propensity to quit the organization and higher job satisfaction compared to those who had poor support at work.

There is indirect evidence that POS might moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and work-related outcomes. In a qualitative study examining the target's experience with emotional abuse, a form of workplace bullying, Keashly (2001) found a link between the organization's response to the target's concerns about abuse and his or her actual sense of feeling abused. In this case, the presence or absence of support and resources provided by the organization (e.g., support from co-workers and supervisors, relevant workplace policies, effective implementation of such policies) either reduced or enhanced the relationship between employees' concerns about emotional abuse and their actual sense of feeling abused. For example, employees who had concerns about emotional abuse at work were more likely to experience emotional abuse

at work when they viewed their organization's response to their concerns as ineffective or nonexistent compared to when they viewed their organization's response to their concerns as effective and present (Keashly, 2001). These findings are consistent with the literature reviewed thus far where POS moderated the relationship between workplace bullying and work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction and intention to leave.

Applying social exchange theory (Balu, 1964), it could be argued that bullied employees who perceive their organization as supportive might feel a sense of obligation to reciprocate this support in the form of OCBs and work engagement. With this same logic, it could also be argued that bullied employees may not reciprocate in the form of OCBs and work engagement when they do not perceive their organization as supportive. Therefore, the following hypotheses were posited.

*Hypothesis 3a:* POS will moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-I. More specifically, the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-I will be more negative among individuals who perceive low levels of organizational support than among those who perceive high levels of organizational support.

*Hypothesis 3b:* POS will moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-O. More specifically, the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-O will be more negative among individuals who perceive low levels of organizational support than among those who perceive high levels of organizational support.

*Hypothesis 3c:* POS will moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement. More specifically, the relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement will be more negative among individuals who perceive low levels

of organizational support than among those who perceive high levels of organizational support.

### **Purpose of the Current Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the potential moderating effects of POS on the relationship between workplace bullying and both OCB and work engagement. This study contributes to the existing workplace bullying research in many ways. First, this study answers the call for more research on how POS might influence the relationship between workplace bullying and other outcomes. To the researcher's best knowledge, little to no research has looked at OCB and work engagement as potential outcomes of workplace bullying. Second, this study is the first to examine workplace bullying and OCB as a multidimensional construct focusing on discretionary behaviors directed towards other individuals as well as the organization.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 306 individuals participated in the study. Participants were a combination of personal and professional contacts of the researcher as well as undergraduate students at San José State University (SJSU). Because workplace bullying was defined as being subjected to negative behaviors within the past six months, participants who indicated that they were employed for less than six months were excluded. Participants with large amounts of missing data were also excluded. Therefore, the final sample consisted of 224 participants.

Table 1 displays demographic information of the sample. Age ranged from 18 years to 64 years with an average age of 28.86 years ( $SD = 10.02$ ). The sample consisted of 43.8% ( $n = 98$ ) male and 56.3% ( $n = 126$ ) female. The sample was diverse in terms of its ethnic composition: 45.5% White, 27.2% Asian or Pacific Islander, 16.5% Hispanic, 5.4% African American or Black, and .4% Native American. Only nine participants (4%) reported that they were multi-ethnic, and two participants (.9%) did not report their ethnicity.

In terms of highest level of education obtained, the majority of participants (67.4%) held at least an associate's degree: associate's degree (20.1%), bachelor's degree (22.8%), master's degree (20.5%), and doctoral degree (4%). Participants worked in a variety of industries, including professional/business services (18.3%), retail (16.5%), education (11.6%), government (6.7%), leisure and hospitality (6.3%), manufacturing (3.1%), healthcare (1.8%), and other industries such as entertainment, food, and

technology (35.7%). On average, participants were employed at their current organization for 3.52 years ( $SD = 4.41$ ) and were at their current job for 3.04 years ( $SD = 4.41$ ). In addition, participants were employed full-time (48.7%), part-time (46.4%), or contracted/temporary worker status (4%). When asked whether they supervise others in their current job, 62.9% ( $n = 141$ ) of participants answered “no” and 37.1% ( $n = 83$ ) answered “yes.”

Table 1

*Descriptive statistics for demographic variables (n = 224)*

Variables	<i>n</i>	%
Age	<i>M</i> = 28.86	<i>SD</i> = 10.02
Gender		
Male	98	43.8%
Female	126	56.3%
Ethnicity		
White	102	45.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	61	27.2%
Hispanic	37	16.5%
African American/Black	12	5.4%
Two or more ethnicities	9	4%
Native American	1	.5%
No response	2	.9%
Education level		
Vocational/Trade school diploma	2	0.9%
High school diploma	69	30.8%
Associate degree	45	20.1%
Bachelor degree	51	22.8%
Master degree	46	20.5%
Doctoral degree	9	4.0%
Other	1	0.4%
No response	1	0.4%
Employment status		
Full-time	109	48.7%
Part-time	104	46.4%
Contract/Temp worker	9	4.0%
No response	2	0.9%
Industry		
Professional/Business services	41	18.3%
Retail	37	16.5%
Education	26	11.6%
Government	15	6.7%
Leisure/Hospitality	14	6.3%
Manufacturing	7	3.1%
Healthcare	4	1.8%
Other	80	35.7%
Supervisory position		
Yes	83	37.1%
No	141	62.9%
Organization tenure	<i>M</i> = 3.52	<i>SD</i> = 4.41
Job tenure	<i>M</i> = 3.04	<i>SD</i> = 4.41

## **Procedure**

An online survey hosted on Qualtrics® was used to collect data. The survey link and a short description of the study were shared with the researcher's personal and professional contacts through e-mail and multiple personal and professional groups such as Facebook® and LinkedIn®. Recipients were encouraged to participate in the study and share the survey link with their contacts. Furthermore, the survey link was added to a research pool of the Psychology Department and Business Department at SJSU via Sona Systems®. Interested students who signed up and participated in the study were granted credit as part of course requirements without compromising anonymity.

Participants who clicked on the survey link were first presented with a consent form. Participants were then asked to indicate whether they consented to taking the survey. Those who clicked on "I consent" were presented with survey items related to negative work behaviors, perceptions of support from their organization, work engagement, and proactive work behaviors. Participants who did not consent had the option to exit the survey by simply closing the web browser.

## **Measures**

The variables listed below were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Responses for all the scales, with the exception of the scale used to measure workplace bullying, ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Responses for the workplace bullying scale reflected frequencies and ranged from 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Daily*). The scores within each measure were averaged to create a composite score.

**Workplace bullying.** Workplace bullying was measured by using the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R) developed by Einarsen et al. (2009). This 22-item measure consisted of examples of negative acts from others at work to which participants indicated the frequency that best corresponded with their personal experience over the past six months. Sample items include “Someone withholding information which affects your performance,” “Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work,” and “Spreading of gossip and rumors about you.” Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was .95.

**Perceived organizational support (POS).** POS was measured by using a 7-item scale developed by Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, and Lynch (1997). Sample items include “My organization really cares about my well-being,” “My organization strongly considers my goals and values,” and “Help is available from my organization when I have a problem.” Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was .91.

**Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).** OCB was measured by using a 14-item scale adapted from Williams and Anderson (1991) to reflect a self-reported approach as opposed to other-reported approach (e.g., supervisor). Although self-bias and over-reporting might be concerns for using the self-reported approach, there is enough evidence suggesting very little difference in mean levels of self-reported and other-reported OCB (Carpenter, Merry, & Houston, 2013). The scale consisted of seven items that measured proactive work behaviors targeted towards other individuals (OCB-I) and seven items that measured proactive work behaviors targeted towards the organization (OCB-O). Sample OCB-I items include “I help co-workers who have been absent” and “I assist my supervisor with his/her work even when not asked.” Cronbach’s

coefficient alpha for OCB-I was .80. Sample OCB-O items include “My attendance at work is above the norm” and “I give advanced notice when I am unable to come to work.” Cronbach’s coefficient alpha for OCB-O was .70.

**Work engagement.** Work engagement was measured by using a 9-item scale developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006). Sample items include “My job inspires me,” “I feel happy when I am working intensely,” and “I am enthusiastic about my job.” Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was .92.

**Demographic variables.** Participants were asked to answer nine questions related to their demographics, including age, gender, ethnicity, level of education, employment status, industry in which they worked, tenure at their current organization and their current job, and whether they supervised other individuals.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 displays the means, standard deviations, Pearson correlations, and Cronbach's alphas for the variables studied. Participants reported that they experienced bullying at work every now and then ( $M = 1.61, SD = .67$ ). They also perceived their organization as moderately supportive ( $M = 3.64, SD = .81$ ). Furthermore, participants agreed that they demonstrated OCB-I ( $M = 3.98, SD = .53$ ) and OCB-O ( $M = 4.07, SD = .53$ ), but they reported that they were somewhat engaged with their work ( $M = 3.43, SD = .74$ ).

Table 2

*Means, Standard Deviations, Pearson Correlations, and Cronbach's Alphas (n = 224)*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Workplace Bullying	1.61	.67	(.95)				
2. POS	3.64	.81	-.52**	(.91)			
3. OCB-I	3.98	.53	-.26**	.28**	(.80)		
4. OCB-O	4.07	.53	-.32**	.30**	.43**	(.70)	
5. Work Engagement	3.43	.74	-.27**	.45**	.44**	.34**	(.92)

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , (two-tailed)

Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) are presented on the diagonal.

## **Pearson Correlations**

As presented in Table 2, workplace bullying was negatively related to all of the outcome variables; participants who reported being bullied at work were less likely to display OCB-I ( $r = -.26, p < .01$ ) and OCB-O ( $r = -.32, p < .01$ ), and were less likely to be engaged with their work ( $r = -.27, p < .01$ ). Similarly, workplace bullying was negatively related to the moderator variable (i.e., POS) such that participants who reported being bullied were less likely to perceive their organization as supportive ( $r = -.52, p < .01$ ). Furthermore, the outcome variables were moderately related to each other. That is, work engagement was moderately related to OCB-I ( $r = .44, p < .01$ ) and OCB-O ( $r = .34, p < .01$ ), and OCB-I was moderately related to OCB-O ( $r = .43, p < .01$ ). Lastly, POS was moderately related to the three outcome variables; participants who perceived their organization as supportive were more likely to display OCB-I ( $r = .28, p < .01$ ) and OCB-O ( $r = .30, p < .01$ ), and were more likely to be engaged with their work ( $r = .45, p < .01$ ).

## **Test of Hypotheses**

Pearson correlations were used to test the hypotheses that workplace bullying would be related to OCB-I (H1a), OCB-O (H1b), and work engagement (H2). Hypothesis 1a stated that workplace bullying would be negatively related to OCB-I. Consistent with Hypothesis 1a, results showed that workplace bullying was significantly and negatively related to OCB-I ( $r = -.26, p < .01$ ). That is, the more bullied participants were, the less likely they were to display proactive work behaviors towards other individuals. Similarly, Hypothesis 1b stated that workplace bullying would be negatively

related to OCB-O. As predicted, results showed that workplace bullying was significantly and negatively related to OCB-O ( $r = -.32, p < .01$ ), such that the more bullied participants were, the less likely they were to display proactive work behaviors towards their organization. Hence, Hypothesis 1b was supported.

Hypothesis 2 stated that workplace bullying would be negatively related to work engagement. In support of Hypothesis 2, results showed that workplace bullying was significantly and negatively related to work engagement ( $r = -.27, p < .01$ ). That is, the more bullied participants were, the less likely they were to be engaged with their work.

In an effort to examine whether POS would moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and the outcome variables (i.e., OCB-I, OCB-O, and work engagement), three separate hierarchical regression analyses were performed with a Type I error rate of .05. Workplace bullying and POS were mean-centered. In each hierarchical regression, workplace bullying and POS were entered in step 1, and then the cross product of workplace bullying and perceived organizational support was entered in step 2 to test for an interaction effect. If the variance explained by the interaction between workplace bullying and POS is statistically significant, this indicates a significant interaction effect.

Hypothesis 3a stated that POS would moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-I such that the relationship between the two would be more negative for those who perceived low levels of organizational support than those who perceived high levels of organizational support. As shown in Table 3, results of step 1 of the analysis revealed that workplace bullying and POS together explained 11% of the

variance in OCB-I ( $R^2 = .11, p < .001$ ). However, only POS ( $\beta = .16, t = 2.93, p < .01$ ) was a significant predictor of OCB-I such that participants who perceived their organization as more supportive displayed more proactive behaviors targeted at individuals. In step 2 of the analysis, the interaction between workplace bullying and POS explained an additional 4% of the variance in OCB-I ( $\Delta R^2 = .15, p < .001$ ) above and beyond the variance explained by workplace bullying and POS.

Table 3

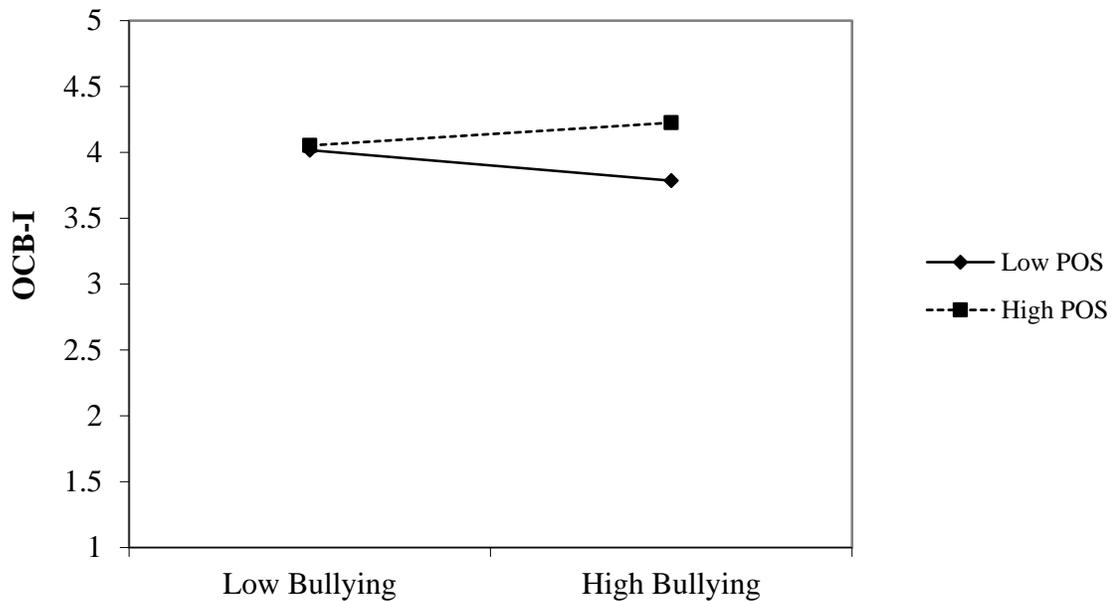
*Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting OCB-I*

Steps and Predictor Variables	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	r	$\beta$
Step 1:	.11***	.11***		
Workplace Bullying			-.26**	-.11
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)			.28**	.16**
Step 2:				
Workplace Bullying x POS	.15***	.04**		.19**

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$  (two-tailed)

In order to illustrate the nature of the interaction between workplace bullying and POS, the regression equation at one standard deviation above and below the mean of both workplace bullying and POS was plotted and is shown in Figure 1. A simple slope analysis showed that workplace bullying was negatively related to OCB-I at low levels of POS ( $\beta = -.16, t = -2.52, p < .05$ ) such that bullied employees were less likely to engage in proactive work behaviors towards other individuals when they experienced low levels of POS, whereas there was no relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-I at

high levels of POS ( $\beta = .13, t = 1.35, p = .18$ ). Although the result was not statistically significant at high levels of POS, the direction of the relationship was consistent with the hypothesis. Thus, Hypothesis 3a was partially supported.



*Figure 1:* Interaction Between Perceived Organizational Support and Workplace Bullying in Predicting OCB-I.

Hypothesis 3b stated that POS would moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-O such that the relationship between the two would be more negative for those who perceived low levels of organizational support than those who perceived high levels of organizational support. As shown in Table 4, results of step 1 of the analysis revealed that both workplace bullying ( $\beta = .17, t = -2.79, p < .01$ ) and POS ( $\beta = .13, t = 2.52, p < .05$ ) were significant predictors of OCB-O and together explained 13 % of the variance in OCB-O ( $R^2 = .13, p < .001$ ). In other words, the more

bullied employees were, the less they displayed OCB-O. The more employees perceived their organization as supportive, the more they displayed OCB-O. In step 2 of the analysis, the interaction between workplace bullying and POS did not explain any additional variance in OCB-O, above and beyond the variance explained by both workplace bullying and POS alone ( $\Delta R^2 = .001, p = .72$ ). These results showed that perceived organizational support did not moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-O. Thus, Hypothesis 3b was not supported.

Table 4

*Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting OCB-O*

Steps and Predictor Variables	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	r	$\beta$
Step 1:	.13***	.13***		
Workplace Bullying			-.32**	-.17**
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)			.30**	.13*
Step 2:				
Workplace Bullying x POS	.13	.00		.02

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$  (two-tailed)

Hypothesis 3c stated that POS would moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement such that the relationship between the two would be more negative for those who perceived low levels of organizational support than those who perceived high levels of organizational support. As shown in Table 5, results of step 1 of the analysis revealed that workplace bullying and POS together

explained 22% of the variance in work engagement ( $R^2 = .22, p < .001$ ). However, only POS was a significant predictor of work engagement such that participants who perceived their organization as supportive were more likely to be engaged with their work ( $\beta = .44, t = 6.13, p < .001$ ). In step 2 of the analysis, the interaction of workplace bullying and POS explained an additional 3% of the variance in work engagement ( $\Delta R^2 = .02, p < .05$ ) above and beyond the variance explained by workplace bullying and POS.

Table 5

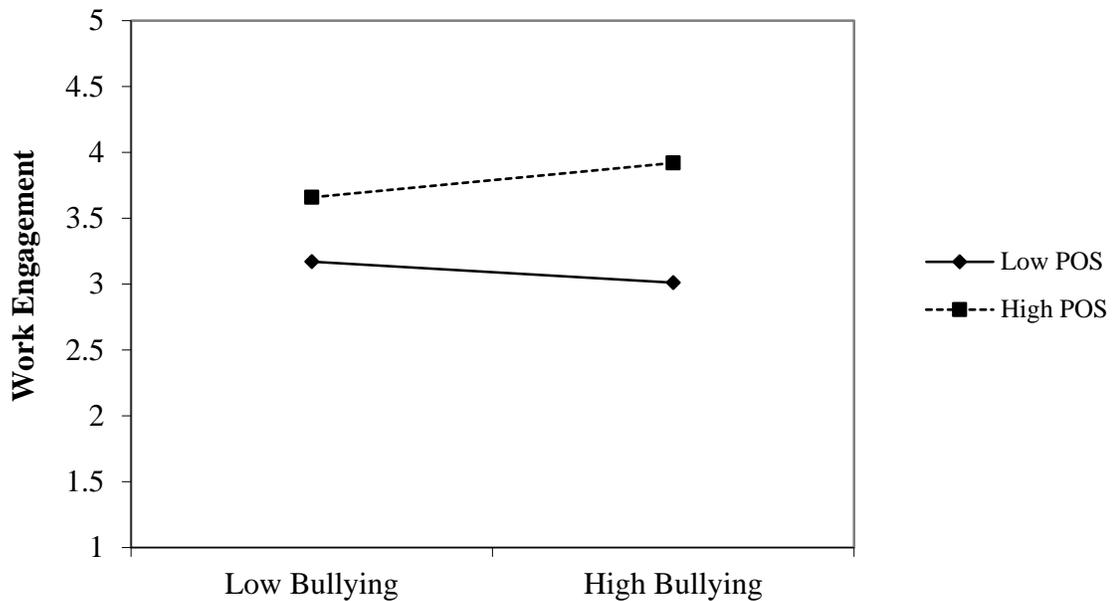
*Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Work Engagement*

Steps and Predictor Variables	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	r	B
Step 1:	.22***	.22***		
Workplace Bullying			-.27**	-.05
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)			.45**	.44***
Step 2:				
Workplace Bullying x POS	.25*	.03*		.19*

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

In order to illustrate the nature of the interaction, the regression equation at one standard deviation above and below the mean of workplace bullying and engagement was plotted. The plot of the interaction is presented in Figure 2. A simple slope analysis showed that there was no significant relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement at low ( $\beta = -.10, t = -1.21, p = .23$ ) and high ( $\beta = .19, t = 1.50, p = .13$ ) levels of POS. These results indicate that Hypothesis 3c was partially supported. Even though

results were not statistically significant, the direction of the relationship at low levels of POS appeared to be more negative than the relationship at high levels of POS, which is consistent with the hypothesis.



*Figure 2: Interaction Between Perceived Organizational Support and Workplace Bullying in Predicting Work Engagement.*

Overall, results of the hierarchical regression analyses revealed that employees who were bullied at work were less likely to display proactive work behaviors targeted towards other individuals and towards their organization and were also less engaged with their work. Furthermore, results showed that perceived organizational support was significantly related to OCB-I, OCB-O, and work engagement when workplace bullying was controlled. However, workplace bullying was not a significant predictor of OCB-I

and work engagement when POS was controlled for. Furthermore, POS only moderated the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-I. The relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-I was negative when POS was low but there was no relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-I when POS was high.

## Discussion

Workplace bullying has been a prominent research topic in the literature since the construct was first introduced by Leymann (1990). This negative work behavior has been linked to health-related (e.g., stress, depression) and work-related (e.g., job satisfaction, intention to leave) consequences, which can be very costly to organizations. Thus, researchers (e.g., Djurkovic et al., 2008; Quine, 2001) have started to examine ways in which the relationship between workplace bullying and its consequences can be weakened. For example, Djurkovic et al. (2008) found that POS moderated the relationship between workplace bullying and intention to leave such that there was a non-significant relationship between workplace bullying and intention to leave amongst employees who felt that their organization was supportive. Given the beneficial effects of POS, Djurkovic et al. (2008) called for more research on the combined effects of workplace bullying and POS on other outcomes. This study responded to this call and examined POS as a potential moderator between workplace bullying and work behaviors and motivations, namely, OCB and work engagement. Furthermore, Williams and Anderson (1991) suggested that OCB could be better understood when separated into two constructs: OCB-I and OCB-O. Thus, this study aimed to answer Lepine et al.'s (2002) call for more research examining OCB-I and OCB-O separately.

Hypothesis 1a stated that workplace bullying would be negatively related to OCB-I. The results of the study supported this hypothesis. More bullied employees were less likely to display proactive work behaviors towards other individuals. Even though previous research (Devonish, 2013; Liu et al., 2013) has mainly focused on abusive

supervision, a form of workplace bullying (Zellars et al., 2002), results of this study were consistent with the existing body of literature where a negative relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-I was found. This relationship can best be attributed to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), where employees feel a sense of obligation to maintain the balance of the exchange relationship. Given that OCB-I is an interpersonal construct by nature (Liu et al., 2013), it could be argued that bullied employees felt personally targeted and therefore reciprocated the negative treatment by withholding their proactive work behaviors towards other individuals as a way to overcome the imbalance of the exchange relationship. For example, if an employee is being bullied by his or her coworkers, that employee may adjust his or her behavior by proactively not helping other coworkers. However, this interpretation is speculative because participants were not asked about the source of bullying, therefore the bullying individuals are unknown. It could be that regardless of the source of bullying, if employees are bullied, they are simply less likely to display behaviors that help others.

Hypothesis 1b stated that workplace bullying would be negatively related to OCB-O. Consistent with the hypothesis, results showed that more bullied employees were less likely to display proactive work behaviors towards their organization. These results differ from Liu et al.'s finding (2013), of no relationship between abusive supervision and OCB-O. Liu et al. argued that an interpersonal relationship exists between abusive supervision and OCB-I, which is absent between abusive supervision and OCB-O. However, given employees' tendency to assign the organization humanlike characteristics where employees are viewed as acting on behalf of the organization

(Levinson, 1965), one would expect social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) to be at play where bullied employees would also withhold proactive helping behaviors towards the organization to maintain the balance of the exchange relationship. This might be especially true in organizations where workplace bullying is ignored. For example, if an employee is being bullied at work, the victim has a natural tendency to associate the bully with the entire organization and blame the organization for failing to prevent the bullying behavior from occurring.

Hypothesis 2 stated that workplace bullying would be negatively related to work engagement. Results were consistent with this hypothesis and replicated Trepanier et al.'s (2013) findings. More bullied employees were less likely to be engaged with their work. Similar to Trepanier et al.'s argument, these findings could be best explained by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008). It can be argued that bullied employees are less likely to have their basic psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, competence, relatedness) met and therefore lose their intrinsic motivation to be engaged with their work. For example, if employees are being bullied at work, they are likely to lose their sense of having a choice in their work activities (autonomy), their sense of being effective (i.e., competence) and, their sense of feeling connected to others at work (i.e., relatedness). As a result, bullied employees are less likely to be engaged with their work (Trepanier et al., 2013).

Hypotheses 3a, 3b, and 3c stated that POS would moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and each of the three work-related outcomes respectively (i.e., OCB-I, OCB-O, and work engagement). First, in support of Hypothesis 3a, results

of this study showed that POS moderated the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-I such that the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-I was negative when POS was low, but there was no relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-I when POS was high. These results indicate that victims of workplace bullying may feel weak and helpless in the absence of support from their organization and thus may not have the capacity to engage in proactive work behaviors towards other individuals. However, when they perceive their organization as supportive, victims of workplace bullying do not necessarily reduce their proactive social behaviors towards other individuals even though they are bullied. In other words, the effect of workplace bullying on OCB-I was nullified when POS was high.

Second, inconsistent with Hypothesis 3b, results of this study showed that POS did not moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-O. However, workplace bullying and POS contributed to OCB-O independently. One could argue that victims of workplace bullying may consciously choose not to engage in proactive work behaviors towards the organization because they feel that such behaviors may still somehow benefit the bully in a direct or indirect way. For example, Detert and Burriss (2007) argued that employee comments and suggestions that are intended to improve organizational functioning are critical to employee performance. Such behaviors have been labeled as prosocial employee voice, which is a form of OCBs (Rafferty & Restubog, 2011). It can be argued that prosocial voice is a form of OCB-O, given that it improves overall organizational functioning. Thus, victims of workplace bullying may withhold from sharing critical information because they feel that it may enhance the

bully's performance. Furthermore, the relationship between POS and OCB-O can be attributed to Blau's (1964) social exchange theory. In other words, when employees perceive that their organization cares about them or values their well-being, they feel the obligation to return such favorable treatment, and they do so in the form of behaviors that benefit the organization.

Third, for Hypothesis 3c, even though POS moderated the relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement, the results of the simple slope analyses showed that the relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement was not statistically significant when POS was high and when POS was low. Although not statistically significant, the direction of the relationship was still consistent with Hypothesis 3c. Bullied employees appear to be more engaged with their work when POS was high and less engaged when POS was low. Results also show a significant positive relationship between POS and work engagement which is not surprising as it has been demonstrated in previous studies (i.e., Saks, 2006) where POS predicted work engagement.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The purpose of the current study was to find further evidence that perceived organizational support alleviated the negative consequences of workplace bullying. In a similar study, Djurkovic et al. (2008) found that POS moderated the relationship between workplace bullying and intention to leave. However, they called for more research to examine the joint effects of workplace bullying and POS on various other outcomes. Thus, one implication of this study is that it answers Djurkovic et al.'s call for more

research and examines how workplace bullying and POS together might impact OCBs and work engagement. Furthermore, based on the current study's literature review, previous research mostly focused on outcomes related to job attitudes such as job satisfaction (i.e., Quine, 2001) and intention to leave (i.e., Djurkovic et al., 2008). Thus, another implication of this study is that it contributes to the body of knowledge on the topic of workplace bullying by shedding light on outcomes related to behaviors and motivations related to work (i.e., OCB & work engagement), which have been mostly absent from the literature.

According to Lepine et al. (2002), OCB has two dimensions (i.e., OCB-I & OCB-O) that were argued to have distinct property and thus, should be studied separately. To date, only one study (i.e., Liu & Wang, 2013) examined the multidimensionality of OCB in relation to abusive supervision (i.e., a form of workplace bullying). Rather than focusing in on a single source of workplace bullying, the present study expands on Liu and Wang's (2013) study by examining OCB-I and OCB-O as potential outcomes of workplace bullying overall. Furthermore, results of the current study confirm and even expand on Liu and Wang's (2013) findings. More specifically, workplace bullying was negatively related to both OCB-I and OCB-O such that bullied employees are less likely to engage in proactive work behaviors towards other individuals and their organization. These results support Liu and Wang's (2013) findings with the exception of OCB-O. Results of Liu and Wang's study found a negative relationship between abusive supervision and OCB-I, but no relationship between abusive supervision and OCB-O. It was argued that the interpersonal nature of OCB-I does not apply to OCB-O, hence the

lack of relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-O. Thus, the current study introduces new findings to the literature and offers a different perspective on how workplace bullying might predict OCB-O based on Blau's (1964) social exchange theory.

### **Practical Implications**

Results of the current study indicate that workplace bullying has serious consequences on employees and organizations alike. More bullied employees were found to display less proactive work behaviors and were less engaged with their work. Such consequences can be very costly to organizations given their relationship to organizational commitment (Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008), profitability, organizational performance, and overall effectiveness and success (Podsakoff et al., 2014). Given the high costs associated with workplace bullying (Leymann, 1990), it is important for organizations to take measures that could lessen the severity of these negative consequences. More specifically, results of the current study showed that the consequences of workplace bullying on victims' proactive work behaviors towards other individuals were more severe when organizational support was perceived to be low or absent. However, the same behaviors were not impacted in the presence of high organizational support. Therefore, in order to promote prosocial work behaviors towards other individuals, organizations should ensure that support is available to employees, especially those subjected to bullying at work. For example, organizations can provide training to all employees that would help them identify bullying behaviors and actions to take when it occurs.

Results of the current study showed that workplace bullying was negatively related to OCB-O. Thus, it is likely that prosocial voice, which this study argues to be a form of OCB-O, becomes suppressed in the presence of workplace bullying. In other words, more bullied employees are less likely to speak up about being bullied, diminishing overall organizational functioning as a result (Detert & Burris, 2007). Therefore, organizations should create a secure environment that encourages victims as well as witnesses of workplace bullying to speak up against this negative behavior. One way to achieve this would be to introduce bullying hotlines that protect and guarantee the anonymity and safety of those who report it.

### **Contributions of the Current Study**

The current study had multiple strengths that are worth mentioning. First, the study collected usable data from 224 participants, which is a relatively large sample size for this type of study. Having a large sample size gives more statistical power (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006), and thus more confidence in the significance of the results. Second, the study's sample was quite diverse in terms of education level, employment status, and industry. Therefore, results may be generalizable across each of these categories. Third, most studies on workplace bullying examined outcomes related to job attitudes. The current study contributed to workplace bullying literature by examining the relationship between workplace bullying and work behaviors and motivations, namely, OCB-I, OCB-O and work engagement. Furthermore, the multidimensionality of OCB has been mostly absent from the literature on this topic, thus, the current study contributed by filling this gap in research.

## **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

In spite of its strengths, the present study had design and methodological limitations. First, the data were only collected from the victims' perspective, neglecting the perspective of the source of the bullying behavior (i.e., single source). This may raise concerns of bias and therefore, future studies should also shed light on motivations that drive individuals to engage in bullying behaviors towards others at work. Second, the current study examined workplace bullying as a general concept rather than looking at specific bullying behaviors. Future studies should examine multiple bullying behaviors because they can help organizations, especially those with limited resources, prioritize and tailor precise interventions to tackle negative behaviors that are most prevalent.

From a methodology standpoint, the data for this study were collected using a common method (i.e., self-report questionnaire). Because all the variables were measured using a common method, the correlations among them might have been inflated. To address common method bias, future studies should utilize multiple methods to measure the variables. For example, workplace bullying could be measured using self-labelling approach or observational methods. Employees' OCB-I and OCB-O could be measured by their supervisors or their peers. Finally, the design of the study was non-experimental in nature. Thus, causal inferences among the variables cannot be made. In other words, it cannot be stated that workplace bullying causes a decrease in the display of OCB-I and OCB-O, and work engagement. To make causal inferences, a longitudinal study is needed so that results can be confirmed over a period of time.

## **Conclusion**

It is no surprise that workplace bullying has many negative consequences impacting both employees and organizations. This study sheds light on how perceived organizational support might minimize the negative impact of workplace bullying on outcomes that are related to work behaviors and motivations (i.e., OCB, work engagement) rather than the commonly studied outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, intention to leave). Results of the current study found that workplace bullying was negatively related to OCB-I, OCB-O, and work engagement. However, perceived organizational support only moderated the relationship between workplace bullying and OCB-I such that more bullied were less likely to display OCB-I when they felt that their organization did not support them, but the negative impact of workplace bullying on OCB-I was weakened when POS was high. Furthermore, perceived organizational support was found to be positively related to each of the three outcomes such that employees who perceived their organization as supportive displayed more OCBs and were more engaged at work. These findings have important theoretical and practical implications in that they contribute to the existing literature and highlight how important it is for companies to provide its workforce with support (e.g., training, policies, resources), especially when workplace bullying is at play.

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## Appendix

### Survey Items

#### Workplace Bullying - Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (Einarsen, Hoel & Notelaers, 2009)

1. Someone withholding information which affects your performance.
2. Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work.
3. Being ordered to do work below your level of competence.
4. Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks.
5. Spreading of gossip and rumors about you.
6. Being ignored or excluded.
7. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person (i.e. habits and background), your attitudes or your private life.
8. Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger (or rage).
9. Intimidating behavior such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking/barring the way.
10. Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job.
11. Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes.
12. Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach.
13. Persistent criticism of your work and effort.
14. Having your opinions and views ignored.
15. Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with.
16. Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines.
17. Having allegations made against you.
18. Excessive monitoring of your work.
19. Pressure not to claim something which by right you are entitled to (e.g. sick leave, holiday entitlement, travel expenses).
20. Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm.
21. Being exposed to an unmanageable workload.
22. Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse.

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#### Organizational Citizenship Behavior (Williams & Anderson, 1991)

1. I help coworkers who have been absent
2. I assist my supervisor with his/her work even when not asked
3. I take time to listen to my coworkers' problems and worries
4. I go out of my way to help new employees
5. I take personal interest in other employees
6. I pass along important information to my coworkers
7. My attendance at work is above the norm

8. I give advance notice when I am unable to come to work
9. I take undeserved work breaks
10. I spend a great deal of time on personal phone conversations
11. I complain about insignificant things at work
12. I conserve and protect company property
13. I adhere to informal rules devised to maintain order

Work Engagement (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006)

1. At work, I feel bursting with energy.
2. My job inspires me.
3. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
4. I feel happy when I am working intensely.
5. I get carried away when I am working.
6. I am immersed in my work.
7. I am proud of the work that I do.
8. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.
9. I am enthusiastic about my job.

Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997)

1. My organization really cares about my well-being.
2. My organization strongly considers my goals and values.
3. My organization shows little concern for me.
4. My organization cares about my opinions.
5. My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor.
6. Help is available from my organization when I have a problem.
7. My organization will forgive an honest mistake on my part.
8. If given the opportunity, my organization will take advantage of me.

Demographics

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What gender do you identify with?
  - Male
  - Female
3. What ethnicity do you most identify with?
  - White
  - Hispanic
  - African American/Black
  - Native American
  - Asian/Pacific Islander
  - Two or more ethnicity
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the highest level of education obtained?
  - Less than a high school diploma
  - High School diploma
  - Vocational/Trade school diploma
  - Associate's Degree
  - Bachelor's Degree
  - Master's Degree
  - Doctorate Degree
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What is your employment status?
  - Part-time employee
  - Full-time employee
  - Contract/Temp worker
  
6. Approximately how long have you been working for your current organization?
  - Years \_\_\_\_\_
  - Months \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Approximately how long have you been working in your current job?
  - Years \_\_\_\_\_
  - Months \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. Do you supervise others in your current job?
  - Yes
  - No
  
9. Please select the industry that best describes the organization for which you currently work
  - Retail
  - Educational Services
  - Leisure and Hospitality
  - Manufacturing
  - Professional/Business Services
  - Health care
  - Government
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_