

# Impact of Workplace Bullying on Employee Cynicism by Considering Emotional Labor as a Mediator and Core Self-Evaluation as a Moderator

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**Abstract.** The current study investigates and evaluates the moderated mediation model by examining at the direct and mediated effects of workplace bullying on employee cynicism through emotional labor, using core-self-evaluation as a moderator, using the conservation of resource theory as a perspective. An online questionnaire survey is used in the research design. The data was analyzed using SPSS and AMOS. To evaluate the data from 216 workers, correlation analysis and regression were performed using all exogenous constructs as independent variables and the endogenous construct as the dependent variable. The study's findings revealed that workplace bullying causes emotional labor among teachers, leading to employee cynicism, with core-self-evaluation as a significant mediator. The current study's findings have consequences for both practice and theory. Because there is always room for improvement, the current study outlines several potential future research topics, such as time-lag studies with large sample sizes.

**Key words:** workplace bullying, emotional labor, employee cynicism, core-self-evaluation and conservation of resource theory.

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## 1 Introduction

Workplace bullying is becoming a severe dilemma in organizations due to its deleterious consequences on employees well-being and also on organizations. According to a research, workplace bullying is one of the main sources of harm to the physical and mental health of employees. It not only includes different demeaning acts like work pressure, degradation, name calling, slander, and unwanted bodily contact but also ill-treatment by peers, colleague, and supervisor that can influence the employees trust in organization (Hodson et al., 2006).

Based on COR theory and bullying research, the current study maintains that bullying actions being an emotional event can activate emotional response (e.g. resentment) that leads toward improper reaction (e.g. crying), which direct employees to manage their response in order to act in accordance with the display rules. According to Grandey (2000) and Ma et al. (2021), this regulation procedure involves emotional labor (Yeun and Han, 2016). Emotional labor has

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been defined as faking of true emotions to the audience in accordance with the display rule. As in service sector organizations employees working on frontline are the significant crossing point between the organization and their clients, and often organizations made it mandatory to exhibit sociable and pleasant emotions in their day to day communication with clients under all situations. To comply with display rules when these employees experience workplace bullying they often engage in emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983).

According to the COR theory loss of a resource is a significant element of stress, and it further suggested that it is essential to prevent further loss of resources from happening Wright and Hobfoll (2004) and as per COR theory emotional labor being a stress for employees will results in negative outcome in the form of employee cynicism in negative way by using cynical language and acts against their leaders, management and organizations (Abubakar et al., 2018). Neves (2012) define employee cynicism as a tendency to engage in belittling and critical behavior toward the leaders, management and organization in a way that is consistent with their belief that it lacks honesty.

In spite of the rich literature about negative consequences of emotional labor on the health of employees, their job performance at one side and satisfaction of customers on the other side, limited research studies have been conducted to see the consequences of workplace bullying on the cynicism level of employees through emotional labor being a mediator. Building on the existing literature that emphasizes the negative consequences of workplace bullying; the current research study aims to investigate the impact of workplace bullying on emotional labor and employee cynicism. workplace bullying causes the personal resources to deplete however if an individual has some other resources that can mitigate the impact of workplace bullying it is quite possible that individual will suffer less from bullying and core-self-evaluation is one of the resources that can act as a buffering variable (Anasori et al., 2020).

The current research aims to find out the negative consequence of workplace bullying on emotional labor as an emotional response to bullying and employee cynicism as suggested by (Anasori et al., 2020). Moreover the present research suggested that whether a personality characteristics Core-self-evaluation might moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and emotional labor which will further reduce the level of employee cynicism.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Workplace Bullying and Employee Cynicism

It is suggested that employee cynicism has increased to a higher degree in recent age, and contemporary workplaces reports the level of employee cynicism to a higher degree in the organizations in a reaction to their negative experiences Neves (2012), that leads towards the decreasing level of optional job behaviors that is not the part of employee job description but it help in increasing the productivity of employees so does the organization (Neves, 2012). Employee cynicism has been described as a propensity to involve in belittling, and decisive behavior in the direction of the organization in such a way that is in accordance with their faith that it lacks honesty and truthfulness. This behavior comes from a feeling of despair and mistrust that spreads as a hopelessness and depression among group members and interferes with work relationships.

In contemporary work settings, employees look more and more cynical, because of increased organizational distrust, scandals, emotional labor and opportunistic approaches of their leaders and management (Twenge et al., 2004). According to Naus et al. (2007) employee cynicism is (i) a negative approach held by employees about the organization in which they are working; (ii) a

faith that the organization in which employee is working doesn't have honesty and integrity and (iii) the behavioral approaches of employees that are judgmental and decisive about their working organization. It was suggested by [Lobnikar and Pagon \(2004\)](#) that violent and aggressive behaviors of employees in the organization have significant positive association with employee cynicism. It is also seen that with increase in good experiences at the workplaces (e.g. excitement, satisfaction, better understanding of the work, having positive feeling etc.) the level of employee cynicism decreases, while negative experiences (e.g. tension, anxiety, lack of confidence, pressure and dissatisfaction etc.) cause increases in the occurrence of employee cynicism.

It is seen that pressure in the form of bullying is employed at educational institutions which has the responsibility of nations growth and learning. A study conducted on the university faculty in Turkey on the association of workplace bullying and employee cynicism finds positive relationship among them. It is suggested that workplace bullying and employee cynicism have positive relationship i.e. employee cynicisms increases with increase in workplace bullying.

According to COR theory loss of resource is a crucial source of stress, and it is very important to prevent the resources from further loss ([Wright and Hobfoll, 2004](#)). In accordance with the above approach, the current research hypothesizes that workplace bullying can be described as stressor, that pressurizes the resources of the target and in response to maintain and protect the resources individual will show employee cynicism as an outcome. In the presence of workplace bullying, the employee cynicism level will be increased [Kanter and Mirvis \(1989\)](#), and those employees who hold negative approach toward their job, leaders, management and organizations will have increased propensity to show negative job behaviors instead of positive job behaviors ([Abubakar et al., 2018](#); [Lazarus, 1999](#)). As such the researcher can argue that workplace bullying can result in employee cynicism. Therefore it is hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 1: Workplace bullying positively and significantly impacts employee cynicism.*

## 2.2 Workplace Bullying and Emotional Labor

The association of workplace bullying and emotional labor can be built in the light of association of workplace bullying with stress and strain outcomes because emotions originate in response to the depressing and stressful procedures at workplaces. The idea of emotional labor was projected to define the redeeming strategies that are used by workers to adjust their emotional appearances to get along with the values and norms of organizations ([Denison, 1984](#); [Grandey, 2000](#)). Emotional labor has three basic strategies, surface acting, deep acting and genuine expressions. Surface acting and deep acting have been studied by researchers very much. Deep acting can be defined as attempts of employees to truly feel the emotions required by the organization and surface acting is defined as hiding the true emotions felt by the employee and faking the emotions required by the organization ([Brotheridge and Lee, 2003](#); [Grandey, 2000](#)).

Employees' emotions have a very important role in their job performance because on one hand these emotions have power to increase the productivity of employees as they motivate them and on the other hand these emotions can hinder with their job performance. A number of researchers have studied the association of workplace bullying with emotional variables e.g. stress, strain, burnout, anxiety, exhaustion, different styles of leadership and working environment of the organization ([Ikanyon and Ucho, 2013](#)). However few researchers have suggested the function of emotions of employees in the context of workplace bullying but some researchers are suggesting that there might be a significant association between workplace bullying and emotional labor.

In jobs involving contacts with customers, including front line employees such as teachers, bank employees, and nurses, an essential characteristic of employees job is to show those emotions that are in line with their job description and norms of their organization i.e. to pursue display rules. But, this belief is normally joined with the identification that it is not possible to demand employees to thoroughly feel the needed emotions when collaborating with customers in an organization (Morris and Feldman, 1996).

According to COR theory workplace bullying is a stressor for the employees being bullied and it depletes the personal resources of employees that could be utilized at work to confront the challenges come across (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). If employees are unable to handle the bullying situations and are obliged to conform to display rules, there is possibility that employees will experience emotional labor. In accordance with COR theory, the current research suggests that workplace bullying may cause the target employee to experience emotional labor. COR theory suggests that workplace bullying will act as a resource depletion source. In line with COR theory, employees will experience emotional labor in response to workplace bullying which act as a resource depletion source. Therefore it is hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 2: Workplace bullying has positive and significant impact on emotional labor.*

### 2.3 Emotional Labor and Employee Cynicism

Employees feeling grateful to express some emotions due to their work is a topic that has been studied in numerous fields (Begenirbas and Turgut, 2014). However, researchers disagree over whether these emotions would be either positive Grandey (2000) or negative (Sarwar et al., 2021). The results of the research have suggested that negative emotions would cause employees to have problems committing to their organizations Gulova et al. (2013), affect the perception of inter-organizational fairness Bechtoldt et al. (2007), lead to work stress Grandey (2000) and cause employees to behave cynically (Begenirbas and Turgut, 2014).

Even though the number of studies addressing emotional labor and employee cynicism at the same time is very low, there are some organizational behavior variables which are frequently assessed together with these concepts, such as organizational commitment, stress and occupational burnout. Packell and Narayan (2013) suggested in their study that studies on emotional labor and employee cynicism have been mostly neglected. When these variables are examined, it can be said that there is actually a relationship between these two concepts.

In the study conducted by Begenirbas and Turgut (2014) on the sample of bank employees, it was found that the emotional labor of bank employees has significant effects on employee cynicism. In particular, it was discovered that employees who play superficial roles express more cynical attitudes and behaviors, and those who act naturally show fewer negative attitudes and behaviors towards their organizations (Begenirbas and Turgut, 2014). However, no significant relationships have been found between deep acting and employee cynicism (Begenirbas and Turgut, 2014).

When literature is examined, although the effects of emotional labor and employee cynicism variables on different organizational variables have been investigated in many studies, it can be seen that the relationship between these two variables has not been examined sufficiently. The current study adds to the literature by studying the impact of emotional labor on employee cynicism.

*Hypothesis 3: Emotional labor has positive and significant impact on employee cynicism.*

## 2.4 Mediating Role of Emotional Labor

As resource threatening actions are categorized as stressors, they are encountered with emotional responses and these emotional responses lead towards CWBs (counterproductive work behaviors) as behavioral reactions. COR theory gives theoretical support to emotional labor being a mediator between workplace bullying and employee cynicism. COR theory, suggests that employees describe themselves with various types of resources. Those resources can be physical objects being valued, conditions such as hierarchical position and marital status, personal resources such as persistency, emotional intelligence, perceptual orientation, hardiness, job resourcefulness and core self evaluations that act as buffers to emotional labor, and energies in the form of money and time. When such resources are lost, there is any possibility to lose or not re-achieved after expending more resources, employees will engage in emotional labor.

It is proposed by research that employees are generally motivated to accumulate resources. Thus, when they come into contact with stress situations like emotional labor, they will act in such a way to ensure the conservation of their present resources and their ability to produce resources in the future. The current research is suggesting in the context of primacy of resource loss principle of COR that if employee is facing bullying at workplace and they are feeling anger, anxiety, depression and negative emotion but they cannot express their true emotions as they have to oblige with the professional norms so they often are engage in emotional labor which consequently results in employee cynicism (Anasori et al., 2020).

In line with the above explanation workplace bullying act as a stressor which leads towards emotional labor as stress and will result in the display of employee cynicism (Kuru Çetin, 2019). Therefore it is hypothesize that:

*Hypothesis 4: Emotional labor mediates the relationship between workplace bullying.*

## 2.5 Moderating Role of Core Self-Evaluation

It is not possible for any organization to completely eliminate negative events from workplaces. So now researchers are suggesting that we should give attention to those processes through which the impact of workplace bullying can be minimized. According to COR theory individual will strive to retain, protect and establish their necessary resources. As workplace bullying causes the personal resources to deplete however if an individual has some other resources that can mitigate the impact of workplace bullying it is quite possible that individual will suffer less from bullying and core-self-evaluation is one of the resources that can act as a buffering variable (Anasori et al., 2020; Naseer and Raja, 2021).

Judge et al. (2003) defined core self-evaluation as someone who score high on core self-evaluation will be well-adjusted, positive, self-confident, efficacious, and believes in his or her own agency. According to the given definition it can be seen that core-self-evaluation is a trait variable that is it is a dispositional factor which states that it is an evaluation of self-worth of an employee and it also depicts self-reliance and confidence that an employee holds about his/her abilities, proficiency, and a common faith that everything will ultimately be excellent for him/her (Judge, 2009).

According to Judge (1997) when employees have high level of core-self-evaluation they will be self-reliance, adaptable to any kind of situations, efficient, and they will bring positivity to difficult situations. While those employees who have low level of core-self-evaluation they will not have confidence in themselves, cannot manage difficult situations, will reside in their belief

of being inefficient and will observe the working environment in a pessimistic way (CSE is made up of four separate personality traits i.e. self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control and emotional stability each one of which are briefly described below.

## 2.6 Self-Esteem

Self-esteem can also be termed as self-worth or self-value. It shows an employees inclusive evaluation of him/herself that how he/she value him/herself (Baumeister et al., 1996). It is the most basic symbol of core-self-evaluation and can be defined as the importance given by an employee to him/herself. Those employees who are high on self-esteem will have higher level of respect and liking for him/herself (Harter, 1988). These employees accept their success and failure and dont blame situations or other employees in any circumstances (Harter, 1988).

## 2.7 Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy represents an evaluation done by employees regarding their capabilities to deal with, execute and be successful regardless of confronting challenges, hardships and difficulties (Bandura, 1973), and it can be taken as a sign of optimistic core evaluations. It is a common conviction held by employees about their distinctive capabilities to get success in any kind of situations (Gibbons and Weingart, 2001).

## 2.8 Locus of Control

Locus of control is the strong faith of employees about themselves that they can control the situations that can have affect their lives in any way (Rotter, 1966). Locus of control has two types i.e., internal locus of control and external locus of control. Employees with high level of internal locus of control have a belief that they are responsible by themselves for anything happening in their lives (Judge, 1997) and life proceedings are determined by their own choices and behaviors, on the other hand employees that are high on external locus of control suppose that anything happening in their lives are the result of luck, destiny and fortune (Rotter, 1966).

## 2.9 Emotional Stability

Emotional stability can also be referred as low neuroticism. Emotionally stable employees have general propensity to be certain, safe and stable (Judge, 1997). Emotionally stable employees will show limited concern about stressful and fearful situations and will handle such situations more courageously without any help and losing hope Judge (1997). A study suggested that emotionally stable employees take action to traumatic situations with hardiness and resilience and theses employees also exhibit patience, secure and hassle-free behaviors.

When employees observe themselves in an optimistic way, they take themselves as valuable, worthy and competent of encountering various hardships, whereas those employees having pessimistic thoughts of them take themselves as pitiful and incompetent to handle difficult situations. Core-self-evaluation explains the primary assessment made by employees about their self-esteem and abilities (Chang et al., 2012). Core self-evaluation can act as a buffering variable to minimize the positive impact of workplace bullying. Employees high in core self-evaluation will experience less emotional labor which will further decrease the propensity of employees

involving in employee cynicism. Therefore it is hypothesized:

*Hypothesis 5: Core self-evaluation moderates the relationship between workplace bullying and emotional labor in such a way that relationship will be weaker among the individuals high on core self-evaluation.*

### 2.10 Moderated Mediation

In the Last, as it was anticipated that afore mentioned personality trait i.e. core-self-evaluation will moderate the association between workplace bullying and emotional labor, but here it can also be predicted that this core-self-evaluation can simultaneously and conditionally influence the indirect relationship between workplace bullying and employee cynicism. In agreement with suggested model, it can be expected that there is a moderated mediation relationship, which is indirect effect of workplace bullying on employee cynicism that occurs through emotional labor will pivot on core-self-evaluation as a moderator. Therefore it can be hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 6: Core-self-evaluation will moderate the indirect relationship of workplace bullying and employee cynicism through emotional labor; the mediated relationship will be weaker when core-self-evaluation is high.*

### 2.11 Theoretical Framework

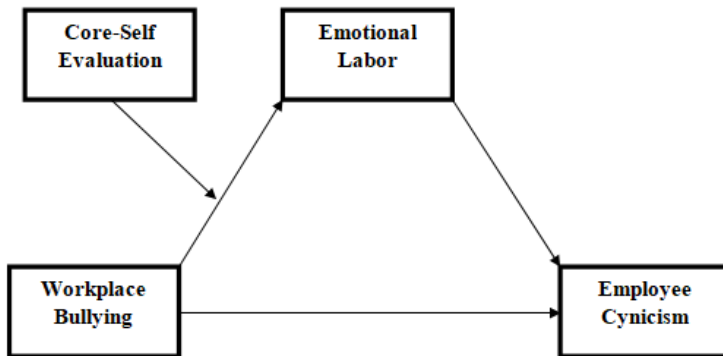


Figure 1: Framework

## 3 Methods

The research sample of this study is teachers from education sector of Pakistan at school and college level within both private and public sectors. The education sector is chosen for the current study by the researchers because workplace bullying can be seen at higher level in service sector organizations and they are demanded to obey display rules due to which they engage



in emotional labor and consequently cause employees to be cynical in reactions. While those employees high on core-self-evaluation will suffer less from workplace bullying. The questionnaires were administered in English language in both public and private sector schools and colleges. The reason of distributing the questionnaire in English is due to the fact that it is spoken widely in Pakistan (Khan et al., 2018, 2014). Data was gathered through online survey by using google forms from different schools and colleges based on reference by teachers, relatives and friends. Around 500 questionnaires were distributed among population by using email ids and WhatsApp numbers. Email ids and WhatsApp numbers were obtained on reference based from teachers, relatives and friends with the free consent of respondents. Of these 500 questionnaires only 216 such questionnaires were obtained that were workable. So the response rate is 43.2%.

Of the total 216, 56.5% were male and the remaining of 43.5% were female. Maximum numbers of respondents were from the age range of 26-33 i.e. 43.1%. 28.2% respondents were from the category of 18-25. 16.2% respondents belong to the age 50 and above. 6.9% respondents were from the age range of 42-49. 5.6% respondents were from the age range of 34-41. Regarding qualifications, majority of the respondents had qualified the degree of masters comprising 50% of the total sample. 20.4% had education of bachelors. 25% had degrees of MS and MPhil while only 1.9% had PhD degrees. 1.9% of the total sample belongs to the others category that can might be some diploma etc. With respect to the experience level of employees, more than half of the respondents are having experience of 1-5 years i.e. 53.2%. 13.9% respondents are having experience above 15 years. 13% respondents are having experience between 11-15 years. 10.6% respondents have experience of less than one year. 9.3% respondents are having experience between 6-10 years.

### **3.1 Instrumentation**

#### **3.1.1 Employee Cynicism**

The scale of employee cynicism is adopted from (Abubakar et al., 2018). It consists of 11 items. The current research study used 5 point likert scale that ranges from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. The Cronbachs alpha value for employee cynicism is .854.

#### **3.1.2 Emotional Labor**

The scale for emotional labor is adopted from a study by diefendorff. Two strategies of emotional labor are used in the current study. It contains 14 items each dimension having 7 items. The current research study used 5 point likert scale that ranges from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. The reliability of the scale is .718.

#### **3.1.3 Workplace Bullying**

The scale of workplace bullying EAPA-T is adopted from a study by escartin in which consists of 12 items. The current study used five-point likert scale that ranges from 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Occasionally, 4=Often and 5= Very often. The scale has Cronbachs alpha value of .882.

#### **3.1.4 Core Self Evaluation**

The scale of core-self-evaluation is adopted from Judge et al. (2003). It has four dimensions and twelve items. The current study used five point likert scale that ranges from 1= strongly



disagree to 5= strongly agree. The sample items are: I am confident I get the success I deserve in life, Sometimes I feel depressed (reverse coded), When I try, I generally succeed. The Cronbachs alpha value for core self-evaluation is .744.

### 3.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The numerical results of confirmatory factor analysis help in understanding whether the given theoretical model is reliable for the sample data or not. Some rule of thumb are followed while using AMOS that helps in understanding the reliability and validity level between proposed theoretical model and collected data. The acceptable values ranges for Good model fitness for confirmatory factor analysis are as follow. For example, the acceptable values of CFI and IFI should be larger than 0.9, and acceptable value for TLI should also be greater than 0.9. The acceptable value for RMSEA should be less than 0.07.

Table 3.1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Measurement Model

	CMIN/ DF	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Initial model	3.598	0.684	0.672	0.682	0.132
Modified model	1.540	0.962	0.958	0.961	0.044
3-factor model	4.215	0.440	0.409	0.435	0.122
2-factor model	5.406	0.231	0.190	0.225	0.143
Single-factor model	5.851	0.152	0.109	0.146	0.150

The values mentioned in table above are before and after covariances of the items in the model. As all the values lie in acceptable range so overall model is fit and further analyses can be conducted to find out whether the different paths are significant or not.

### 3.3 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

The mean value tells about the central tendency of the responses, it explains where the average response lies while standard deviation helps us to explain the deviation from average point. It actually tells us about the outliers, as outlier can influence the data. The correlation results show whether and how strongly pairs of variables are related. The Pearson product-moment correlation is used to determine the relationship between the variables. The acceptable range for correlation is between -1 to +1. According to [Cohen et al. \(2014\)](#) the value of correlation is 0.10 to 0.29 represents weak/ smaller correlation, value of correlation between range of 0.30 to 0.49 represents moderate correlation and if correlation is between range of 0.5 to 0.8 then it represents strong correlation.

The above table of Pearson Correlation shows that the correlation value between workplace bullying, employee cynicism, emotional labor and core-self-evaluation. The positive sign with the values shows that with increase in one variable the other variable will also be increased and the negative sign indicates that there is negative relationship between the variables. The correlation value of core-self-evaluation with employee cynicism, workplace bullying and emotional labor is -.226, -.297 and -.280 respectively which is negative and weak values and the negative

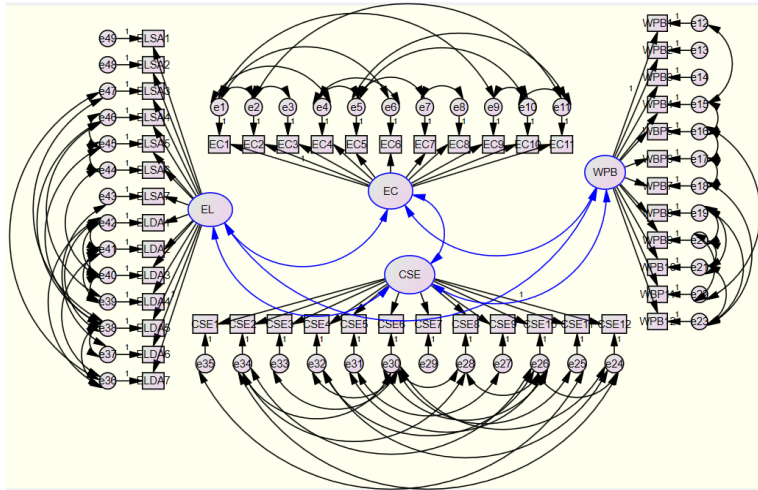


Figure 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (path diagram)

Table 3.2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Employee Cynicism	Emotional Labor	Workplace Bullying	Core-self-evaluation
Employee Cynicism	3.13	0.65	1			
Emotional Labor	3.35	0.44	.357**	1		
Workplace Bullying	2.20	0.85	.359**	.377**	1	
Core-self-evaluation	3.30	0.52	-.226**	-.280**	-.297**	1

Correlation is significant at 0.05 level\*(two tailed)

Correlation is significant at 0.01 level\*\* (two tailed)

sign indicates that with increase in core-self-evaluation the level of cynicism, workplace bullying and emotional labor will be decreased.

### 3.4 Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 were tested through linear regression. The results give clear support for the acceptance of all the three hypotheses. Results depicts that workplace bullying is positively and significantly linked with employee cynicism as shown by the regression coefficient ( $\beta = .395, p < 0.000$ ). Adding up to that, the value of ( $R^2 .156$ ) suggested that workplace bullying brings 15% variations in employee cynicism. Hypothesis 2 suggested that workplace bullying positively and significantly impacts emotional labor. Results shows that workplace bullying is positively and significantly linked with emotional labor as indicated by the regression coefficient ( $\beta = .377, p < 0.000$ ). Adding up to that, the value of ( $R^2 .142$ ) suggested that workplace bullying brings 14% variations in emotional labor.

Table 3.3: Linear Regression

Predictor variable	Employee Cynicism		
	B	R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Workplace Bullying	.395***	.156	.000
Emotional Labor	.243***	.207	.000
Workplace Bullying	Emotional Labor		
	.377***	.142	.000

Hypothesis 3 suggested that emotional labor positively and significantly impacts employee cynicism. The results give clear support for the acceptance of the hypothesis 3. Results shows that emotional labor is positively and significantly linked with employee cynicism as shown by the regression coefficient ( $\beta = .243, p < 0.000$ ). Adding up to that, the value of ( $R^2 .207$ ) suggested that workplace emotional labor brings 20% variations in employee cynicism.

### 3.5 Multiple Regressions

For the present study, the researcher used macros to investigate the mediation and moderation hypotheses. To examine the mediating role of emotional labor between workplace bullying and employee cynicism mediation analysis was carried out. Therefore model no.4 was utilized by using Preacher and Hayes macros for conduction of mediation analysis. Moreover, to investigate the moderating role of core-self-evaluation on the relationship of workplace bullying and emotional labor, moderation analysis was carried out. Therefore model no. 1 was used. Adding up to that, as the model of current research is moderated mediation model, therefore model no. 7 was used to examine the moderated mediation hypothesis.

Table 3.4: Mediation

IV	Effect of IV on M	Effect of M on DV	Direct Effect	Total Effect	Bootstrapping results for indirect effect	
					LL95%CI	UL95%CI
Workplace Bullying	.1977***	.3576***	.2346***	.3053***	.0332	.1142

*N=216 IV=independent variable, M=Mediator, DV=Dependent Variable, LLCI= Lower level confidence interval, ULCI=Upper level confidence interval,  $p < 0.000$ \*\*\**

Hypothesis No. 4 suggested that emotional labor will mediate the relationship between workplace bullying and employee cynicism. The results obtained from mediation analysis are shown in table no. 4.7. It can be seen from the results that the mediating role of emotional labor finds to be significant. Table 4.7 suggests that bootstrapping results for indirect effect of workplace bullying and employee cynicism through mediator emotional labor has the lower level confidence interval of .332 and upper level confidence interval of .1142. As the signs of upper

level confidence interval and lower level confidence interval are positive and no zero contains in between them. Therefore, it can be concluded from the results that mediation hypothesis is accepted. Therefore hypothesis no. 4 is supported, that emotional labor mediates the relationship between workplace bullying and employee cynicism.

Table 3.5: Moderation

Variable	$\beta$	SE	T	P	LL95%CI	UL95%CI
Constant	4.9453	.4580	10.7967	.0000	4.0424	5.8482
Int.term	.2310	.0647	3.5715	.0004	.1035	.3584

Hypothesis no. 5 states core self-evaluation moderates the relationship between workplace bullying and emotional labor in such a way that relationship will be weaker among the individuals high on core self-evaluation and will be stronger for those low on core-self-evaluation. Table no. 4.8 provides the results for moderation analysis hypothesis no. 4. It provides justification for the acceptance of moderation hypothesis.

Table 3.6: Mediated Moderation

Mediator	Core-self-evaluation	Conditional indirect effects	SE	LL95%CI	UL95%CI
Conditional indirect effects at M +-1 SD					
Emotional labor	2.7855	.1085	.0163	-.0028	.0615
Emotional labor	3.3071	.0654	.0209	.0288	.1111
Emotional labor	3.8287	.0223	.0313	.0536	.1767

Hypothesis no.6 suggests that core-self-evaluation will moderate the indirect effect of workplace bullying on employee cynicism through emotional labor such that the mediated relationship will be weaker when core-self-evaluation is high and vice versa. Table no.4.9 provides justification for acceptance of the proposed hypothesis. Core-self-evaluation is examined across 3 levels to investigate the conditional indirect effects of workplace bullying on employee cynicism through emotional labor. The results of moderated mediation are shown in table no.4.9. As predicted, the conditional indirect effects workplace bullying on employee cynicism through emotional labor becomes stronger at higher level values of moderator i.e. core-self-evaluation and both the upper level confidence interval and lower level confidence interval has the same signs between them. In addition to that, the conditional indirect effects of workplace bullying on employee cynicism through emotional labor becomes weaker and insignificant at lower level as indicated by lower level confidence interval and upper level confidence interval, both has dissimilar sign -.0028 and .0615 respectively and contains zero in between them. Therefore hypothesis no.6 is supported.

## 4 Discussion

Depend upon the working conditions and culture of the organization like strict hierarchical environment in workplaces, employees experience different kinds of workplace bullying. Workplace bullying results in weaken bond among employees and between employees with their organizations. Furthermore its severe consequences include poor job satisfaction, stress-based disorders like lower confidence level, emotional exhaustion, nervous breakdown, employee cynicism, anxiety, and depression that ultimately lead towards the reduction in productivity and efficiency of the organization and increased turnover rate.

According to a study, human resource is the most considerable investment made by services organizations, but sometime management has the least knowledge about its human resource because many physical, social, and psychological factors are involved. Organizations in education sector over here now days treat their employees like objects rather than human beings. Like other service line jobs teachers are also anticipated to engage in emotional labor to represent and, perfectly, practice emotions that go along with the required professional values and norms. However the educationists should behave more naturally and efficiently because whole of the society depends upon their behavior. Their natural qualities and talents should come out of their character and behavior so that the students may follow them in a natural way because for every student his teacher is his role model. But organizations in current era demands employees to follow display rules which causes employees to deplete their resources. In return the teachers act cynically towards their leaders and management. As primary goal of educational institutions is to provide students with quality education but when the teachers employing in such organization receive high level of workplace bullying and engaging in emotional labor this aim is very difficult to achieve. The findings of the current study suggest significant relationship between workplace bullying and emotional labor and employee cynicism which is in line with the previous literature ([Ikyanyon and Ucho, 2013](#)).

In addition to that, according to COR theory workplace bullying is a stressor for the employees being bullied and it depletes the personal resources of employees that could be utilized at work to confront the challenges come across ([Greenhaus and Powell, 2006](#)). If employees are facing workplace bullying, they are feeling anger, stress and anxiety but they can't express their true emotions. When employees are unable to handle the bullying situations and are oblige to conform to display rules, and then according to the findings of the current study they will experience emotional labor that will results in employee cynicism ([Begenirbas and Turgut, 2014](#); [Kuru Çetin, 2019](#)).

Human resource is very important resource for any organization but they often forget to consider their mental and physical wellbeing which badly affects not only employees but also the productivity of the organization too. Research has proposed that employees are generally motivated to accumulate resources. Thus, when they come into contact with stress situations like emotional labor, they will act in such a way to ensure the conservation of their present resources and their ability to produce resources in the future. The current research is suggesting in the context of primacy of resource loss principle of COR that if employee is facing bullying at workplace and they are feeling anger, anxiety, depression and negative emotion but they cannot express their true emotions as they have to oblige with the professional norms so they often are engage in emotional labor which consequently results in employee cynicism ([Anasori et al., 2020](#); [Kuru Çetin, 2019](#)).

As in today's working environment it is nearly impossible for anyone to completely eliminate the negative vibes from the workplaces so there can be any other resource through which

the negative consequences of workplace bullying can be decreased. According to COR theory "individual will strive to retain, protect and establish their necessary resources". As workplace bullying causes the personal resources to deplete however if an individual have some other resources that can mitigate the impact of workplace bullying it is quite possible that individual will suffer less from bullying.

It was identified in a research that core-self-evaluation can be buffering variable between stressor and stress relationship. In addition, it is also suggested core-self-evaluation to be a buffering variable between stressor and stress situations that can mitigate the positive impact of workplace bullying on emotional labor. According to [Judge et al. \(2003\)](#) when employees have high level of core-self-evaluation they will be self-reliance, adaptable to any kind of situations, efficient, and they will bring positivity to difficult situations. While those employees who have low level of core-self-evaluation they will not have confidence in themselves, cannot manage difficult situations, will reside in their belief of being inefficient and will observe the working environment in a pessimistic way.

## 5 Theoretical Implications

The findings of the current research study add to the literature of workplace bullying and employee cynicism in different ways. The current study tried to add to the research on workplace bullying and emotional labor in education sector of Pakistan. Workplace bullying level is high in education sector as proved by the findings of the current study that leads towards experiencing emotional labor among teachers which further cause them to behave cynical.

The second contribution of the current research is the examination of workplace bullying and employee cynicism through the theoretical optic of conservation of resource theory. In light of the conservation of resource theory the current research adds to the literature by demonstrating the process through which employees pass and leads their behavior to be cynical by including the role of emotions in the process.

Another contribution of the study is the moderating impact of core-self-evaluation. The current research provides support for the belief that personality of employees also has impacts alongside the mediational path from workplace bullying to employee cynicism. In accordance with conservation of resource theory, the findings of the current research study shows that intensity of emotional labor that arise from workplace bullying can be effected by the level of core-self-evaluation among employees. Specifically this contribution adds to the buffering literature of conservation of resource theory and increases its scope.

## 6 Practical Implications

This concept is generally accepted that workplace bullying has very harmful impact on employees. But in contemporary workplace settings bullying is very common. Workplaces are made very hostile due the frequent bullying occurrence over there. The current study was conducted on school level teachers. As teaching belongs to service sector jobs and the other more important phenomenon in service sector organization is to obey display rules. As the success of a country depends upon the success of a nation and the nation's grooming responsibility is with the teachers. So it is very important for any country to satisfy the teachers so that they can build the nation with best qualities. It is important for an organization to provide the employees with stress free environment where they can better use their qualities.

The educationists should behave more naturally and efficiently because whole of the society depends upon their behavior. Their natural qualities and talents should come out of their character and behavior so that the students may follow them in a natural way because for every student his teacher is his role model. But when the workplaces are made such hostile due to bullying the teachers report emotional labor and reacts cynically towards their leader, management and organization. Human resource is the major resource for any organization. Anything can be replaced with machines but teachers cannot be replaced with machines. Students cannot learn only from books or stuff available online. Teachers have major impact on their students. I being a student get motivation by my teachers. Teachers are the factories that produce doctors, engineers, pilots, military officers, business tycoons, astronauts and in short they are teachers who provide resources to run the smooth mechanism of a country. Most importantly it is a teacher, who transforms a person into a human,

But now a days these teachers are treated as money making machines by the organizations and being bullied due to which they often engage into emotional labor. Their half of the resources are used in tackling these negative phenomenon in the workplaces due to which they are unable to used all their efforts in their basic duty. Organizations should make the working environment free from any kind of stressor so that teachers might not be stressed and complete their duties whole heartedly.

Moreover, the current research suggested that if employee is having some other resource that can counter balance the negative impact of workplace bullying on emotional labor the employees will suffer less. So recruiting bodies should hire those individuals that are high on core-self-evaluation because they will be better able to handle the stress situations. Other than that policy makers should make strict policies against those leaders that are engage in workplace bullying and give protections to the one who report against these perpetrators by policy. So nobody can feel threatened if they report against perpetrators.

## 7 Limitations and Future Directions

The current research has some limitations which are faced while conducting the research. Firstly, as data was collected by convenience sampling method and this may limit the generalizability of the results. The second reason can be the sample of the study as data was collected from teachers which affect range of the validity, so future research can be done on diverse population to improve the validity of the results. Data was collected in cross sectional method so future research can be done through time lag studies, as data collected at different points of time gives improved results and reduce the common method biasness.

The current research was based on conservation of resource theory. In future the theoretical links studied in current research can be studied by any other theory to give more justifications for the existing research. Proposed theories for the current theoretical model can job demand and resource model and transactional stress model. In future, moderators other than core-self evaluation can also be used in the existing links e.g. psychological capital, job resourcefulness and cultural dimensions can also be used in the existing links. For example with increase in power distance the bullying also gets increases. As inequality of authority among the victim and perpetrator workplace bullying occurrence also gets increase (Matthiesen and Einarsen, 2010).



## 8 Conclusions

Workplace bullying is becoming a severe dilemma in organizations due to its deleterious consequences on employees' well-being and also on organizations. Workplace bullying is a common phenomenon in service organizations. It does happen because there is almost always conflict of interest among employees of the same organization (Haq et al., 2018). As in service sector organizations employees working on frontline are the significant crossing point between the organization and their clients, and often organizations made it mandatory to exhibit sociable and pleasant emotions in their day to day communication with clients under all situations.

The current research suggested that as workplace bullying causes the personal resources to deplete however if an individual have some other resources that can mitigate the impact of workplace bullying it is quite possible that individual will suffer less from bullying and core-self-evaluation is one of the resource that can act as a buffering variable. The current research examines the consequences of workplace bullying by presenting a theoretical model based on moderated-mediation model supported by conservation of resource theory in the education sector of Pakistan. The findings of the current study shows that workplace bullying and emotional labor is positively and significantly associated with employee cynicism. Furthermore, the mediating role of emotional labor between workplace bullying and employee cynicism was also finds to be significant. Moreover, the moderating role of core-self-evaluation on the relationship of workplace bullying and emotional labor was also founds to be significant.

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