
LINKS AMONG BULLYING, PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE, AND THE WORK ENGAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES: CAN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AS A MEDIATOR REDUCE THE NEGATIVE EFFECT OF BULLYING ON WORK ENGAGEMENT?

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Abstract

Although the prevalence of bullying at work varies from country to country, organizations of all types, natures, and sizes face this problem. The phenomenon of bullying at work is identified as a critical stressor, with serious consequences at both the individual and organizational levels. The aim of this research is to determine the links among bullying, psychological resilience, and the work engagement of employees. It is hypothesized that: a) more frequent bullying in the work environment will be negatively related to employees' psychological resilience and work engagement; b) psychological resilience will be positively related to employee work engagement; and c) the psychological resilience of employees acts as a mediator between the bullying they experience in the workplace and their work engagement. This research involved 187 participants from Lithuanian organizations of various types and sizes. Three measures were used for the research: the Negative Acts Questionnaire – Revised (NAQ-R); the Resilience Scale (RS-14); and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9). In addition, sociodemographic questions were included in the research questionnaire. The main results of the research revealed that bullying in the workplace is significantly negatively related to the psychological resilience and work engagement of employees.

The correlation analysis indicated that the psychological resilience of employees had significantly positive correlations with the work engagement of employees. The mediation analysis demonstrated that psychological resilience mediates the relationship between the bullying of employees at work and their work engagement. It was found that the inclusion of a mediator reduced the magnitude of the effect, i.e., psychological resilience slightly reduced the negative effect of bullying in the workplace on the work engagement of employees.

Keywords: *bullying in workplace, psychological resilience, work engagement.*

Introduction

Globalization processes are challenging organizations to remain competitive, open and dynamic in the global marketplace. Often, various stressful situations, competition, tension and other difficulties become inseparable parts of work for contemporary employees. Bullying at work is no exception. It is observed that bullying is widespread in today's world of work, and although its prevalence varies from country to country, organizations of all types, natures, and sizes face this problem (Mathisen et al., 2011; Astrauskaitė & Kern, 2011). The phenomenon of bullying at work is identified as a critical stressor, with serious consequences at both the individual and organizational levels (Podsiały & Gamian-Wilk, 2017). Bullying in the work environment can influence the organizational climate, work efficiency, and productivity (Bano & Malik, 2013). It is observed in the scientific literature that bullying in the work environment is associated with higher intentions of employees to leave the organization, more frequent morbidity, chronic fatigue, increased anxiety, and various psychosomatic pains (Salin, 2015; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018; Skuzinska et al., 2019). It also entails lower work efficiency and commitment to the organization, along with reduced work satisfaction and organizational citizenship (Podsiały & Gamian-Wilk, 2017; Bano & Malik, 2013; Tuckey et al., 2009; Muazzam et al., 2020). Employees who have experienced bullying at work have been found to feel less useful and generally needed by their organizations (Park & Ono, 2017). In addition, Rai and Agarwal (2017) found that bullying at work is significantly related to the employee's work engagement. Trepanier et al. (2013) agreed, adding that bullying at work not only reduces employees' work engagement but also reduces employees' identification with the organization. According to Koyuncu, Burke, and Fiksenbaum (2006), work engagement results from employees' contact with their work environment.

Employee work engagement is particularly important for organizations because, as Rana and Chopra (2019) point out, it is related to an organization's competitive advantage. Park and Ono (2017) found that bullying had a negative impact on employees' work engagement and their perceived health, and bullying increased employees' feelings of insecurity in the workplace, which influenced their level of work engagement. Employees who experienced bullying at work indicated that they felt less useful and needed in their work. Rai and Agarwal (2017), who surveyed 835 workers in the manufacturing and service sectors in India, also indicated that bullying was significantly related to work engagement. Further research by Trepanier, Fernet, and Austin (2013) found that bullying at work harms employees' emotional health and reduces their identification with the organization, thereby increasing the risk of burnout and reducing work engagement. They explained their results based on self-determination theory, according to which the satisfaction of basic psychological needs is a necessary condition for the optimal

functioning of a person and the maintenance of motivation. It is important to emphasize here that social environment plays an important role in meeting the most important psychological needs of a person (employee). Trepanier et al. (2013) argued that a supportive social environment promotes employees' satisfaction of needs, ensures optimal functioning, and promotes subjective well-being – and vice-versa. The results of their research indicated that bullying at work reduces the resources available to employees, influences their needs for autonomy, connectiveness and competence, and disrupts their optimal functioning in the work environment (involvement decreases, risk of burnout increases) (Trepanier et al., 2013). Goodboy, Martin, and Bolkan (2020) found that bullying at work indirectly reduced employee work engagement. Cases of bullying at work, such as ignoring, teasing, or gossiping, made it difficult for employees to meet their basic psychological needs (autonomy, connection, competence) at work. Based on this approach, the frustration of needs in the work environment leads to a decrease in employee motivation and decreased work engagement (Goodboy et al., 2020).

Thus, it is important to identify factors that, in case of bullying in the workplace, would help employees reduce or eliminate adverse components and help maintain work engagement. Researchers agree that a person's psychological resilience is critical to their mental and physical health (Wagnild, 2016). In the organizational context, resilience is seen as the ability of employees to overcome difficulties in the workplace (Maidaniuc-Chirila, 2015; Coco et al., 2021). In New Zealand, a case study by van Heugten (2012) of social workers who identified themselves as victims of bullying at work demonstrated that despite the negative factors they experienced in the work environment, not all workers suffered long-term negative effects on their physical or psychological health. According to the author, it is clear that the relationship between bullying at work, effects on health, and work factors is influenced by mediators, one of which may be a person's psychological resilience. Therefore, the question is: Can psychological resilience be a protective factor for employees who face the risk of bullying?

Research by Meseguer de Pedro, together with co-authors (2019), indicated that bullying in the work environment led to greater deterioration in the health of employees with lower levels of resilience; meanwhile, employees with higher levels of resilience were able to adapt better to unfavorable stressful work conditions and were able to reduce their discomfort. They found that bullying situations at work can lead to the use of personal resources (Meseguer de Pedro et al., 2019). Resilience has played the role of a partial mediator between bullying in the work environment and subjectively perceived health. Psychological resilience mitigated the negative effects of bullying on the subjectively perceived health of individuals. However, bullying in the work environment can weaken employees' personal resources and their ability to 'stand for themselves' (Meseguer de Pedro et al., 2019).

The results of research by Maidaniuc-Chirila (2015) revealed that employees with higher levels of psychological resilience, even after experiencing bullying in the workplace, felt less tension (mental and physical) compared to employees with lower levels of resilience. According to the author, resilience can be a personal resource of an employee that is used to overcome difficulties which are incurred by the phenomenon of bullying in the work environment. Bano and Malik (2013) observed that resistance may play a protective role. Gatiss (2019), who examined strategies for overcoming bullying at work in a sample of women, agreed that the use of psychological resilience as a personal resource can help protect employees from the harmful effects of bullying

on health. Dai and co-authors (2019) argued that greater psychological resilience of individuals can reduce employees' intentions to leave the organization and enhance their work engagement. The authors found that greater personal resilience allowed employees to recover faster from work difficulties and helped maintain a positive work attitude and engagement (Othman & Nasurdin, 2011). Wang, Li, and Li (2017) found that psychological resilience was positively associated with work engagement, predicting that more resilient employees have more personal resources and are more likely to engage in their work. Personal and work resources are important for achieving work goals and employee work engagement (Wang et al., 2017).

Thus, it can be seen that employees with higher levels of psychological resilience, even after experiencing bullying at work, felt less tension and were better able to adapt to stressful work conditions, and were able to reduce discomfort (Maidaniuc-Chirila, 2015; Meseguer de Pedro et al., 2019) and to manage the stressful situation itself (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Rook and co-authors (2018) considered psychological resilience as one of the most important factors enabling an employee to successfully overcome difficulties. While there are many different views on the importance of resilience and how much attention we should pay to it in the workplace (Rabenu & Tziner, 2016; Britt et al., 2016; Bec et al., 2018), we can assume that resilience can reduce the impact of bullying at work on work engagement. Thus, research suggests that bullying at work is negatively related to work engagement and that psychological resilience helps to overcome existing difficulties at work. In this research, the assumption is made that not only will bullying at work be negatively related to work engagement and psychological resilience, but employees' psychological resilience will also act as a mediator between bullying in the work environment and work engagement. The latter will thus serve as a protective factor, reducing the impact of bullying at work on work engagement.

Thus, the aim of this study was to determine the links among employee bullying at work, psychological resilience, and work engagement. It is hypothesized that: a) more frequent bullying in the work environment will be negatively related to employees' psychological resilience and work engagement; b) psychological resilience will be positively related to employee work engagement; and c) the psychological resilience of employees acts as a mediator between the bullying they experience in the workplace and their work engagement.

1. Materials and methods

Participants. In total, 187 research participants working in Lithuanian organizations of various types (public and private) and sizes (very small, small, medium and large) in March–April 2021 participated in this research. Due to the extraordinary situation and the quarantine announced after the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country, the entire sample of this research was collected through an online survey. Research participants were selected by availability sampling. Participants were informed and assured that their responses were completely anonymous and confidential, and that they were under no obligation to participate and could withdraw at any stage. Participants gave their informed consent to participate in this study. They were also informed that there was no right or wrong answer: we only required an honest answer, one that represents their true perception and experience. A larger share of participants (63%; $n = 117$) were female than male (37%; $n = 70$), and the age of the research participants ranged from 21 to 67 years, with an average age of 39 ($SD = 11.17$). The distribution of the sociodemographic data

of the research participants is presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Research participants' gender and education level

Indicators		N	Percent
Gender	Female	117	63%
	Male	70	37%
Education level	Basic	8	4%
	Secondary	53	28%
	Vocational	40	22%
	Post-secondary/vocational	34	18%
	Higher (college)	52	28%
	Higher university		

Note: $N = 187$

Table 2. Participants' working time and type and size of organization

	Indicators	N	Percent
Working time in current position	Up to 1 year	21	11%
	1–5 years	60	32%
	5–10 years	44	24%
	10+ years	62	33%
Organization type	Public	72	39%
	Private	115	61%
Organization size*	Very small (less than 10 employees)	26	14%
	Small (less than 50 employees)	56	30%
	Medium (more than 50 but less than 250 employees)	62	32%
	Large (more than 250 employees)	42	22%

Note: $N = 187$

* $N = 186$ (1 participant did not specify the size of their organization)

Methods. The questionnaire was divided into four parts in order to identify the links among bullying at work and the psychological resilience and work engagement of employees:

a) *Sociodemographic questions for the participants of the research.* The gender, age, education and length of service in the current position of the research participants were recorded. Participants of the research were also asked what type of organization (private or public) they currently worked in and what size (very small, small, medium, large) it was. Sociodemographic questions were presented to the research participants following the recommendations of a number of authors (Wagnild, 2016; Einarsen et al., 2009; Notelaers & Einarsen, 2012; Gupta et

al., 2017).

b) *The Negative Acts Questionnaire – Revised (NAQ-R)* (Einarsen et al., 2009; Notelaers & Einarsen, 2012). To assess the participants' subjectively perceived experiences of bullying in the work environment, the use of the NAQ-R was chosen for this research, which assesses how often employees have experienced negative behaviors in the work environment (Gupta et al., 2017). The NAQ-R consists of three subscales that reflect different experiences: 1) *bullying related to the work being done* (e.g., “your work has been over-controlled”), which describes negative behavior of others aimed at the person's ability to work competently and perform their professional role in the work environment (includes all work activities) (Einarsen et al., 2009; Notelaers & Einarsen, 2012); 2) *bullying related to a person individually* (e.g., “gossip and rumors have been spread about you”), which describes negative behaviors of others that are directed at degrading a person's dignity (including gossip, excessive teasing, social exclusion, etc.) (Einarsen et al., 2009; Notelaers & Einarsen, 2012); and 3) *bullying associated with physical intimidation* (e.g., “you were shouted at or targeted with spontaneous anger”), which reflects negative and aggressive (physical) behavior that is directed toward a person's safety (includes intimidation, threats, and physical violence) (Einarsen et al., 2009; Notelaers & Einarsen, 2012).

The statements in the questionnaire reflect the indirect and direct bullying that a person can experience in the work environment. Research participants had to read each statement carefully and mark the response option that reflected how often they had encountered such behavior in their work over the *past six months*. The statements were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 *never* to 5 *daily* (answer variants describe frequency). The overall score of the NAQ-R can range from 22 points to 110 points. Higher scores indicate that a person is more likely to encounter bullying in their work environment (Einarsen et al., 2009). The NAQ-R is reported to have high reliability and validity rates, with overall internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.90 (Einarsen et al., 2009; Notelaers & Einarsen, 2012). The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of the NAQ-R questionnaire obtained in this research are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Internal Consistency Coefficients of the Negative Acts Questionnaire – Revised (NAQ-R)

General scale/subscales	Internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha)
General NAQ-R	0.95
Bullying related to work being done	0.90
Bullying related to a person	0.91
Bullying related to physical intimidation	0.60

Note: $N = 187$

c) *The Resilience Scale (RS-14)*. To assess the psychological resilience of the research participants, the short version of the Psychological Resilience Scale (RS-14), developed by Wagnild, was chosen for this research. This consists of five main sub-scales of psychological

resilience: perseverance, purposeful life, self-reliance, equanimity and existential aloneness (authenticity) (Wagnild, 2016). The short version of the Resilience Scale consists of 14 statements on a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1, *strongly disagree*, to 7, *strongly agree* (e.g., “I often take life events calmly”). The overall score on the Psychological Resilience Scale (RS-14) can range from 14 to 98 points, and higher scores indicate a person’s higher psychological resilience. Wagnild (2016) reported an internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) of 0.93 of the scale (RS-14). The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach’s alpha) obtained in this research are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Internal Consistency Coefficients of the Psychological Resilience Scale (RS-14)

General scale/subscales	Internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach’s alpha)
General RS-14	0.96
Perseverance	0.83
Purposeful life	0.83
Self-reliance	0.92
Equanimity	0.61
Existential aloneness (authenticity)	0.86

Note: $N = 187$

d) *The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, UWES-9* (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, 2006). To assess the work engagement of the research participants, the shortened version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, UWES-9, was used (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2006). The Work Engagement scale consists of three sub-scales that reflect dimensions of work engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. The statements of the scale reflect employees’ potential feelings at work (e.g., “I am completely immersed in my work,” “my work inspires me”). All nine statements on the scale are rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale, and research participants are asked to indicate the frequency with which they feel the corresponding mood at work, from *never*, 0, to *daily*, 6 (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Higher scale values indicate the greater work engagement of the person. According to the authors, Cronbach’s alpha on the UWES-9 ranges from 0.89 to 0.97 (median 0.93). The Cronbach’s alpha of the vigor subscale ranges from 0.75 to 0.91; the dedication subscale from 0.83 to 0.93; and the absorption subscale from 0.70 to 0.84 (Cronbach’s alpha) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach’s alpha) obtained in this research are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Internal Consistency Coefficients of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9)

General scale/subscales	Internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha)
General UWES-9	0.93
Vigor	0.77
Dedication	0.85
Absorption	0.77

Note: $N = 187$

Statistical analysis of the research data was performed using the SPSS 21.00 (*Statistical Package for Social Science*) software package. Prior to the analysis of the research data, it was checked whether the data corresponded to the normal distribution. According to the Shapiro-Wilk criterion, the distribution of all study variables was significantly different from statistically normal ($p < 0.05$), and the graphs of the distribution of the variables did not visually correspond to normal distribution. Therefore, non-parametric statistical criteria were chosen for further data analysis, which involved the Spearman correlation coefficient. The Hayes PROCESS plugin for the SPSS software package was used to calculate mediation, which is appropriate for data that do not conform to the normal distribution because of the use of the Bootstrap method (Hayes, 2017).

2. Results

Descriptive statistics. This part of the work presents the descriptive statistics of the variables that were calculated to identify the general characteristics of the researched constructs (bullying at work, psychological resilience, and work engagement). Therefore, the tables below (Tables 6, 7, and 8) show the means, medians, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum values of the scales and subscales.

It can be seen in Table 6 that, when assessing the parameters of employee bullying in the work environment and its components, the largest bullying at work score was 88 points, while the maximum score of the questionnaire is 110 points. The mean of bullying in the work environment was 29.97, the median was 26.00, and the standard deviation was 11.09.

Table 6. Parameters obtained from bullying in the work environment and its components

Bullying in the work environment and its components	Parameters				
	Mean	Median	Standard deviation	Minimum value	Maximum value
Bullying related to work being done	11.96	10.00	5.24	8	35
Bullying related to a person	14.30	12.00	5.31	11	45
Bullying related to physical intimidation	3.71	3.00	1.37	3	15
General bullying in the work environment	29.97	26.00	11.09	22	88

Note: $N = 187$

We can see from Table 6 that the highest value obtained in any subscale of bullying in the work environment was for bullying related to a person ($Md = 12.00$; $SD = 5.31$).

Table 7. Parameters obtained from psychological resilience and its components

Psychological resilience and its components	Parameters				
	Mean	Median	Standard deviation	Minimum value	Maximum value
Perseverance	10.58	11.00	2.60	2	14
Purposeful life	16.21	17.00	3.61	3	21
Self-reliance	27.32	29.00	5.88	5	35
Equanimity	10.22	11.00	2.54	2	14
Existential aloneness (authenticity)	10.80	12.00	2.61	2	14
General psychological resilience	75.13	80.00	16.00	14	98

Note: $N = 187$

Analyzing Table 7, it is evident that the highest score in assessing the overall psychological resilience of employees was 98 points – the maximum possible score of the questionnaire. ($Md = 80.00$; $SD = 16.00$). The lowest score in assessing the overall psychological resilience of employees was 14 points, which is the minimum possible score of the questionnaire (RS-14).

Table 8. Parameters obtained from work engagement and its components

Work engagement and its components	Parameters				
	Mean	Median	Standard deviation	Minimum value	Maximum value
Vigor	11.90	12.00	3.87	2	18
Dedication	12.07	13.00	4.05	0	18
Absorption	13.11	14.00	3.77	1	18
General work engagement	37.09	39.00	10.51	9	54

Note: $N = 187$

From Table 8, we can see that the highest score in assessing employee work engagement was 54 points (maximum score), and the lowest 9 points (minimum score) ($Md = 39.00$; $SD = 10.51$). When describing the components of work engagement, the lowest value in this research was obtained on the dedication subscale ($Md = 13.00$; $SD = 4.05$). Table 9 shows that the vigor subscale had a mean of 11.90 and a median of 12.00 when looking at the parameters of absorption.

The links between employee bullying, psychological resilience, and work engagement. Further analysis of the data sought to examine the links between employee bullying, psychological resilience, and work engagement. These results are shown in Tables 9, 10 and 11.

Table 9. Correlation between bullying and psychological resilience

	Bullying related to work being done	Bullying related to a person	Bullying related to physical intimidation	General bullying in work environment
Perseverance	-0.188**	-0.134	-0.091	-0.184*
Purposeful life	-0.148*	-0.172*	-0.111	-0.175*
Self-reliance	-0.139	-0.104	-0.095	-0.139
Equanimity	-0.218*	-0.163*	-0.172*	-0.211**
Existential loneliness (authenticity)	-0.129	-0.053	-0.043	-0.114

General psychological resilience	-0.169*	-0.142	-0.090	-0.176*
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Note: $N = 187$.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 9 indicates verified links between employee bullying in the work environment and psychological resilience. In general, employee bullying at work has statistically significant negative correlations with employee psychological resilience ($r = -0.176$, $p < 0.05$). However, the analysis of the individual components of psychological resilience shows that components such as self-reliance or existential aloneness (authenticity) have no significant links to general bullying experienced by employees in the workplace or its individual forms.

Psychological resilience is statistically significantly negatively correlated with bullying at work related to a person's work activity ($r = -0.169$, $p < 0.05$). Meanwhile, psychological resilience has no statistically significant links to bullying at work related to a person (individually) or their physical intimidation.

Table 10. Correlation between bullying at work and work engagement

	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	General work engagement
Bullying related to work being done	-0.313**	-0.296**	-0.293**	-0.336**
Bullying related to a person	-0.313**	-0.319**	-0.316**	-0.353**
Bullying related to physical intimidation	-0.249**	-0.232**	-0.229**	-0.256**
General bullying in work environment	-0.332**	-0.331**	-0.327**	-0.369**

Note: $N = 187$.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 10 demonstrates the relationship between employee bullying in the work environment and work engagement. From the correlation matrix, we can see that bullying experienced by employees in the work environment has statistically significant negative correlations with work engagement ($r = -0.369$, $p < 0.01$) and all its components.

Table 11. Correlation between psychological resilience and work engagement

	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	General work engagement
Perseverance	0.305**	0.395**	0.394**	0.396**

Purposeful life	0.457**	0.503**	0.365**	0.505**
Self-reliance	0.392**	0.409**	0.399**	0.455**
Equanimity	0.255**	0.239**	0.225**	0.271**
Existential aloneness (authenticity)	0.324**	0.318**	0.375**	0.378**
General psychological resilience	0.428**	0.446**	0.389**	0.479**

Note: $N = 187$.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 10 explores the links between employee psychological resilience and work engagement. As expected, employee psychological resilience had a statistically significant positive relation to work engagement ($r = 0.479$, $p < 0.01$). The hypothesis that psychological resilience would be positively related to employee work engagement is confirmed.

Links between bullying at work and work engagement when the relationship is mediated by psychological resilience. In further analysis of the data, a mediation analysis was conducted to reveal whether the links between bullying at work and work engagement is mediated by psychological resilience. The Hayes (2017) PROCESS plugin for the SPSS software package was used to calculate mediation, which is appropriate for data that do not conform to the normal distribution because of the use of the Bootstrap method (Hayes, 2017).

The psychological resilience of employees, based on a review of the scientific literature, was considered as an intermediate variable (mediator) in this analysis. The scheme of the analysis of the intermediate variable is shown in Figure 1.

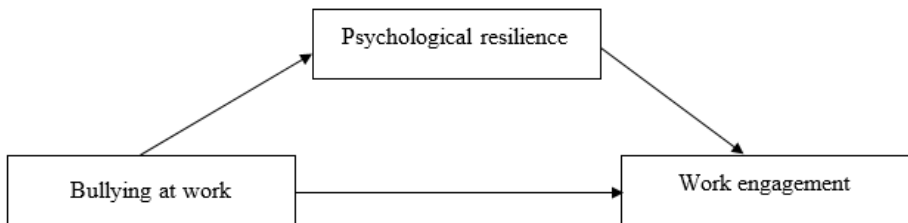


Fig.1. Links between bullying at work and work engagement, with psychological resilience acting as a mediator

The analysis indicated that psychological resilience can be predicted from employee bullying at work ($R^2 = 0.0309$; $F(1, 185) = 5.8929$; $p < 0.05$), and employee bullying at work was

found to have a statistically significant negative effect on psychological resilience ($\beta = -0.2534$, $p < 0.05$, CI $[-0.4594, -0.0475]$). It can also be seen that work engagement can be predicted from employee bullying at work ($R^2 = 0.4762$; $F(2, 184) = 26.9850$; $p < 0.05$), and employee bullying at work predicts work engagement in a statistically significant negative way ($\beta = -0.0214$, $p < 0.05$, CI $[-0.0350, -0.0077]$), while psychological resilience does so positively ($\beta = 0.0289$, $p < 0.05$, CI $[0.0195, 0.0384]$). A small negative direct effect was found between employee bullying at work and work engagement (effect size = -0.0214 ; CI $[-0.0350, -0.0077]$). By predicting work engagement based on employee bullying at work and including psychological resilience as a mediator, we find that the size of the mediation effect is statistically significantly negative (effect size = -0.0073 ; CI $[-0.0190, -0.0005]$).

It can be observed that with the inclusion of a mediator, the size of this effect decreases (from -0.0214 to -0.0073 , $\Delta = -0.0143$). This means that the mediator (psychological resilience) slightly reduces the negative effect of bullying in the work environment on work engagement. Thus, the last hypothesis raised in this work is confirmed.

3. Discussion

This research was conducted to determine the links among employee bullying, psychological resilience, and work engagement. The aim was to determine whether employee bullying, psychological resilience and involvement in work were related. First of all, the hypothesis that more frequent employee bullying will be negatively related to work engagement and psychological resilience was partially confirmed. The correlation analysis performed indicated that employee bullying in the workplace had statistically significant negative correlations with psychological resilience ($r = -0.176$, $p < 0.05$). Employee bullying was statistically significantly negatively correlated with the following individual components of psychological resilience: perseverance ($r = -0.184$, $p < 0.05$), purposeful life ($r = -0.175$, $p < 0.05$), and equanimity ($r = -0.211$, $p < 0.01$). No significant correlations were found among the components of psychological resilience, such as self-reliance and existential aloneness (authenticity), and employee bullying in the work environment. In general, psychological resilience was only found to be statistically significantly negatively correlated with bullying at work, which is related to the work being done by the person ($r = -0.169$, $p < 0.05$). Meanwhile, psychological resilience had no statistically significant links to bullying at work related to a person and their physical safety (intimidation). The results of the research complement the results of Maidaniuc-Chirila's (2015) work, which showed that employee bullying at work was significantly negatively correlated with psychological resilience. Meseguer de Pedro and co-authors (2019) also found that bullying at work was negatively related to employees' psychological resilience. Further correlation analysis of the links between employee bullying at work and work engagement revealed that employee bullying at work had statistically significant negative links to employee work engagement ($r = -0.369$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, employee bullying at work had statistically significant negative correlations with all components of work engagement: vigor ($r = -0.332$, $p < 0.01$), dedication ($r = -0.331$, $p < 0.01$), and absorption ($r = -0.327$, $p < 0.01$). These research results confirm results already available in the scientific literature (Park & Ono, 2017; Rai & Agarwal, 2017; Trepanier et al., 2013; Einarsen et al., 2018) revealing that bullying at work has a negative effect on employee work engagement. According to Koyuncu and co-authors (2016), work engagement is partly determined by the

employee's contact with the work environment and the extent to which that contact is pleasing to the employee. Trepanier and co-authors (2013) analyzed the consequences of bullying in the workplace and found that it not only affected employees' psychological and physical health but at the same time reduced employee work engagement and identification with the organization. From the literature discussed earlier, we know that employee work engagement is important not only for the employee but also for the organization, as engagement is related to productivity and organizational profitability, motivation, and customer satisfaction (Markos & Sridevi, 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2008).

The results of the research also confirmed the hypothesis that psychological resilience is positively related to employee work engagement. Correlation analysis showed that the psychological resilience of employees had a statistically significant positive correlation with employee work engagement ($r = 0.479, p < 0.01$). Psychological resilience had statistically significant positive links to all components of work engagement: vigor ($r = 0.428, p < 0.01$), dedication ($r = 0.446, p < 0.01$), and absorption ($r = 0.389, p < 0.01$). Thus, it can be argued that employees with higher psychological resilience are more likely to engage in their work. These results are consistent with those of previous studies (Rana & Chopra, 2019; Dai et al., 2019) which show that more psychologically resilient employees are more engaged in their work than less psychologically resilient colleagues. The authors agree that psychological resilience is particularly important in today's world of work, as it helps employees to overcome emerging challenges and maintain engagement in their work (Maidaniuc-Chirila, 2015; Black et al., 2017; Hetzel-Riggin et al., 2020). Ugwu and Amazue (2014) share this view, arguing that more psychologically resilient workers can cope more flexibly and smoothly with emerging work difficulties while maintaining their engagement and positive attitude towards work. Kašparkova and co-authors (2018) also agree that psychological resilience increases a person's work engagement, which in turn further empowers employees for better work results.

The results of this research also confirmed the last hypothesis regarding the role of psychological resilience as a mediator between employee bullying in the work environment and work engagement. It was found that employee bullying at work can predict psychological resilience ($R^2 = 0.0309; F(1, 185) = 5.8929; p < 0.05$): employee bullying at work statistically significantly negatively predicted psychological resilience ($\beta = -0.2534, p < 0.05, CI [-0.4594, -0.0475]$). The results also showed that work engagement can be predicted by employee bullying and psychological resilience ($R^2 = 0.4762; F(2, 184) = 26.9850; p < 0.05$), as employee bullying statistically significantly negatively predicted work engagement ($\beta = -0.0214, p < 0.05, CI [-0.0350, -0.0077]$) and psychological resilience positively predicted work engagement ($\beta = 0.0289, p < 0.05, CI [0.0195, 0.0384]$). The results showed a small, negative direct effect between bullying at work and work engagement (effect size = $-0.0214; CI [-0.0350, -0.0077]$). A statistically significant negative mediation effect was obtained by predicting work engagement based on employee bullying at work, with the inclusion of psychological resilience in the equation as a mediator (effect size = $-0.0073; CI [-0.0190, -0.0005]$). The inclusion of the mediator was found to reduce the size of the effect (from -0.0214 to $-0.0073, \Delta = -0.0143$). Thus, it can be said that the mediator (psychological resilience) slightly reduced the negative effect of bullying in the work environment on employee work engagement. The results obtained in this research confirm Meynaar and co-authors' (2021) observation that a person's psychological resilience may

be considered as a partially protective factor. These results complement the results of research by Meseguer de Pedro and co-authors (2019), in which psychological resilience acted as a partial mediator between employee bullying in the work environment and the subjective assessment of one's health. Resilience has been found to mitigate the negative effects of bullying on subjectively perceived health.

Summarizing the research on bullying, psychological resilience and work engagement, a number of limitations can be identified. First, socio-demographic variables such as the positions and functions of employees, the peculiarities of the work organization and the specifics of the organization were not taken into consideration while assessing the analyzed constructs. Second, in the desire to identify deeper links among employee bullying, psychological resilience, and work engagement and to identify significant differences among the groups of concern, the chosen sample of participants may have had an influence.

Conclusions

Employee bullying in the work environment is significantly negatively related to psychological resilience (and its components: perseverance, purposeful life and equanimity) and work engagement (all components). The more often employees reported having experienced experiencing bullying in their work environment, the less likely they were to be engaged in their work and psychologically resilient – in terms of perseverance, purposeful life and equanimity.

Psychological resilience is statistically significantly positively related to employee work engagement and all its components – more psychologically resilient employees were indicated to be more engaged in their work.

The link between employee bullying at work and work engagement is mediated by psychological resilience. The inclusion of the mediator was found to reduce the size of the effect, i.e., psychological resilience slightly reduced the negative effects of bullying in the work environment on employee engagement.

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LINKS AMONG BULLYING, PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE, AND THE WORK ENGAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES: CAN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AS A MEDIATOR REDUCE THE NEGATIVE EFFECT OF BULLYING ON WORK ENGAGEMENT?

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Summary

It is observed that bullying is widespread in today's world of work, and although its prevalence work varies from country to country, organizations of all types, natures, and sizes face this problem (Mathisen et al., 2011; Astrauskaitė & Kern, 2011). The phenomenon of bullying at work is identified as a critical stressor, with serious consequences at both the individual and organizational levels (Podsiadly & Gamian-Wilk, 2017). Bullying in the work environment can influence organizational climate, work efficiency, and productivity (Bano & Malik, 2013). It is observed that bullying in the work environment is associated with higher intentions of employees to leave the organization, more frequent morbidity, chronic fatigue, increased anxiety, and various psychosomatic pains (Salin, 2015; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018; Skuzinska et al., 2019). It also reduces work efficiency, commitment to the organization, work satisfaction, and organizational citizenship (Podsiadly & Gamian-Wilk, 2017; Bano & Malik, 2013; Tuckey et al., 2009; Muazzam et al., 2020). Employees who have experienced bullying at work have been found to feel less useful and generally needed by their organizations (Park & Ono, 2017). In addition, Rai and Agarwal (2017) found that bullying at work is significantly related to the employee's work engagement. Trepanier et al. (2013) agreed, adding that bullying at work not only reduces employees work engagement but also reduces employee identification with the organization. According to Koyuncu, Burke, and Fiksenbaum (2006), work engagement results from employees' contact with their work environment. Research suggests that psychological resilience helps to overcome existing difficulties at work, so the assumption is made that not only will bullying at work be negatively related to work engagement and psychological resilience, but employees' psychological resilience will also act as a mediator between bullying in the work environment and work engagement. The latter will thus serve as a protective factor, reducing the impact of bullying at work on work engagement. Thus, the aim of this study was to determine the links among employee bullying at work, psychological resilience, and work engagement. It is hypothesized that: a) more frequent bullying in the work environment will be negatively related

to employees' psychological resilience and work engagement; b) psychological resilience will be positively related to employee work engagement; and c) the psychological resilience of employees acts as a mediator between the bullying they experience in the workplace and their work engagement.

The research involved 187 participants from Lithuanian organizations of various types and sizes. Three measures were used for the research: the Negative Acts Questionnaire – Revised (NAQ-R), the Resilience Scale (RS-14), and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9). In addition, sociodemographic questions were included in the research questionnaire. The main results of the research revealed that bullying in the workplace is significantly negatively related to the psychological resilience and work engagement of employees. Correlation analysis indicated that the psychological resilience of employees had significantly positive correlations with the work engagement of employees. Mediation analysis demonstrated that psychological resilience mediates the relationship between employee bullying at work and their work engagement. It was found that the inclusion of the mediator reduced the magnitude of the effect – i.e., psychological resilience slightly reduced the negative effect of bullying in the workplace on the work engagement of employees.

Keywords: *bullying in workplace, psychological resilience, work engagement.*

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