WORKPLACE BULLYING AND WORK ENGAGEMENT AMONG HOTEL EMPLOYEES IN PAKISTAN: THE ROLES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING, WORK MEANINGFULNESS AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SAFETY CLIMATE

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by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COR   Conservation of Resource Theory

JD-R   Job Demands Resources Theory

PSC   Psychosocial Safety Climate

PWB   Psychological Well Being

USM   Universiti Sains Malaysia

WB   Workplace Bullying

WCB   Workplace Cyberbullying

WM   Work Meaningfulness

WE   Work Engagement

LIST OF APPENDICES

PEMBULIAN DI TEMPAT KERJA DAN PENGLIBATAN KERJA DALAM KALANGAN PEKERJA HOTEL DI PAKISTAN: PERANAN KESEJAHTERAAN PSIKOLOGI, PEKERJAAN BERMAKNA DAN IKLIM KESELAMATAN PSIKOSOSIAL

ABSTRAK

Pekerja yang berketerlibatan tinggi adalah kritikal untuk kejayaan industri perhotelan di mana mereka adalah pekerja yang berpusatkan pelanggan dan berorientasikan perkhidmatan. Untuk mencapai kejayaan, sesebuah syarikat perlu mempunyai pekerja yang berdaya usaha tinggi, etika kerja yang baik, serta berkomited untuk mencapai matlamat syarikat. Oleh itu, pengiktirafan pelaburan emosi dalam kalangan pekerja industri perhotelan di Pakistan adalah amat penting. Kajian ini direka dengan menggunakan model integrasi dengan menggunakan teori permintaan kerja-sumber (JD-R) dan teori pemuliharaan sumber (COR) untuk mengkaji kesan pembulian secara bersemuka dan maya pada penglibatan kerja dalam kalangan pekerja hotel. Kedua, kajian ini juga mengkaji peranan pengantara untuk kesejahteraan psikologi ke atas pembulian di tempat kerja, pembulian siber di tempat kerja dan penglibatan kerja. Selain itu, peranan pengantara bagi pengertian kerja di antara hubungan kesejahteraan psikologi dan keterlibatan kerja turut diuji. Kajian ini turut mengiktiraf iklim keselamatan sebagai satu aspek yang penting dalam industri perhotelan, maka kesan moderator faktor psikososial ke atas hubungan antara pembulian di tempat kerja, pembulian siber, dan kesejahteraan psikologi turut diuji. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kajian keratan rentas dengan persampelan bertujuan untuk mengutip data daripada 470 pekerja di peringkat pentadbiran di hotel-hotel bertaraf 4 dan 5-bintang di Pakistan. Kemudian, data yang terkumpul dianalisis

dengan menggunakan perisian IBM SPSS dan 'Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling' (PLS-SEM). Hasil dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa pembulian di tempat kerja adalah signifikan dan mempunyai hubungan negative dengan faktor keterlibatan kerja. Di samping itu, hipotesis bagi hubungan antara pembulian siber di tempat kerja dan keterlibatan kerja adalah tidak disokong. Dapatan kajian juga kesejahteraan psikologi hanya memainkan peranan sebagai pengantara di antara pembulian siber di tempat kerja dan keterlibatan kerja. Tambahan lagi, hubungan negatif antara pembulian di tempat kerja, pembulian siber, dan kesejahteraan psikologi menjadi lemah apabila industri perhotelan mempunyai iklim keselamatan psikososial yang baik. Implikasi kajian ini adalah penting kerana keterlibatan kerja pekerja-pekerja hotel mempengaruhi pekerja-pekerja di peringkat bawahan, produktiviti, kedudukan kewangan industri perhotelan dan kepuasan pelanggan. Pengamal dalam industri ini yang ingin meningkatkan keterlibatan kerja dalam kalangan pekerja industri perhotelan perlu sedar bahawa masalah pembulian yang berbentuk tradisional mahupun siber masih wujud dan berleluasa. Pekerja yang terkesan ini cenderung untuk menggunakan sumber-sumber mereka sendiri seperti kesejahteraan psikologi dan pengertian kerja untuk mengendalikan situasi-situasi sedemikian Sehubungan itu, pengurusan hotel yang mempunyai polisi dan prosedur keselamatan yang baik dapat membantu pekerja mereka untuk menangani kesan pembulian pada kesejahteraan mereka. Kajian ini mempunyai banyak nilai tambah kepada industri perhotelan, khasnya menyumbang kepada sorotan kajian dalam bidang pembulian siber dan iklim keselamatan psikososial yang kurang diterokai serta menyediakan satu rangka kerja yang holistik dalam mendedahkan mekanisma-mekanisma yang melibatkan sumber-sumber individu dan pekerjaan mereka.

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ABSTRACT

Engaged employees are critical to the hotel industry's success, which is customer-focused and service-oriented. A company must have employees who put in the effort, have a strong work ethic, and commit to the company's goals. Thus, recognizing the significance of the emotional investment of hotel employees in Pakistan. This study designed an integrative model using the job demand (JD-R) theory and conservation of resource (COR) theory to examine the impact of bullying, both face-to-face and online, on the work engagement of hotel employees. Secondly, it investigates the mediating role of psychological well-being between workplace bullying, workplace cyberbullying, and work engagement. The mediating role of workplace meaningfulness between psychological well-being and work engagement is also tested. This study also recognizes the importance of a safety climate in the hotel industry, thus examining the moderating role of the psychosocial safety climate between workplace bullying, cyberbullying, and psychological well-being. This study used a cross-sectional research design with purposive sampling to collect data from 470 administrative level employees of Pakistan's 4-star and 5-star hotels employees. SPSS and Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) were used to analyze the data. The findings reported that workplace bullying has a significant and negative relationship with work engagement. Whereas the workplace cyberbullying and the work engagement hypothesis was unsupported. The results reported that

psychological well-being only plays a mediating role between workplace cyberbullying and work engagement. Work meaningfulness mediated the relationship between psychological well-being and work engagement. Furthermore, the negative relationship between workplace bullying, cyberbullying, and psychological well-being is weakened when the hotel industry has a psychosocial safety climate. The implications of this study are important as the work engagement of hotel employees influences the bottom line, productivity, financial position in the industry, and client satisfaction. The practitioners looking to improve work engagement in the hotel industry need to recognize that it is tainted with traditional bullying and cyberbullying. The employees tend to use their own resources to deal with such situations as psychological well-being and work meaningfulness. Nevertheless, hotel management who tend to have safety policies and procedures would assist their employees to better deal with bullying consequences on their well-being. This study carries value for many reasons besides contributing to the literature on still less explored areas of cyberbullying and the psychosocial safety climate in the hotel industry. It provides a holistic framework that uncovers the mechanism played by both individual and job resources.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The introduction chapter discusses the background of the study, along with a problem statement related to the work engagement of employees working in the hotel industry in Pakistan. The research questions and research objectives are provided. It is followed by the significance of the study, the scope of the research, and the definition of the key terms. The chapter concludes with a summary of the thesis chapters.

1.2 Background of Study

The travel and tourism business is one of the most rapidly expanding. It has a tremendous impact on employment and global commerce. It is considered a pivotal contributor to economic growth and an essential source of jobs and foreign cash. With the right policies in place, tourism can provide long-term economic and social development by creating high-quality jobs (Zhang et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2020). For the eighth year in a row, 2017 was considered a milestone year for worldwide travel. Because the number of overseas visitors has increased, a significant milestone in the tourist industry's long-term growth. Tourist dream destinations worldwide welcomed 1,323 million international visitors, an increase of 84 million over 2016. For the past eight years, the tourism industry has grown at a rate much above average, increasing by roughly 4% annually (UNWTO, 2017).

However, even though export revenues typically push countries to prioritize international tourism, domestic tourism remains the most popular and represents an essential tool for regional economic development. In 2017, 73% of all travel and tourism spending was spent on domestic travel, making it the primary driving force

behind the global tourism industry (World Travel Tourism Council, 2019). For the ninth straight year, the travel and tourism industry achieved 3.5% growth, outpacing the overall economy by 2.5% in 2019 (Department of Tourist Services, 2020). Beyond direct implications on GDP and employment, travel and tourism help the entire ecosystem and act as a supply chain link to other industries. Travel & tourism's contribution in 2019 accounted for 10.4% of global GDP (9.2 trillion USD), 10.6% of all jobs (334 million), and 1 in 4 new jobs globally. Global tourist expenditure reached USD 1.7 trillion in 2019 (6.8% of total exports, 27.4% of global services exports) (WTTC, 2021).

In recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a significant toll on communities worldwide and devastatingly affected hospitality & tourism (Afzal, 2020). The Travel and tourism sector lost roughly 4.5 trillion dollars in 2019, contributing 49.1% less to the global economy in 2020, as shown in Figure 1 (Economic Impact Reports, 2022). In other words, the travel/tourism industry lost roughly USD 4.5 trillion due to the COVID-19 agreement and the ongoing restrictions on international movement, resulting in an overall GDP decrease of 3.7% for the global economy. For the first time, overseas tourist expenditure declined by 69.4%, while domestic visitor spending decreased by 45% (WTTC, 2021). More than 62 million jobs were axed in 2020, drop-off a global workforce of 272 million people in the sector. Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), who make up 80% of all global enterprises in the travel and tourism industry, took the brunt of this 18.5% drop (WTTC, 2021). Additionally, hourly workers in the hotel and tourism industries face severe problems due to a community spread anxieties engendered by travel and group gatherings (Nicola et al., 2020).
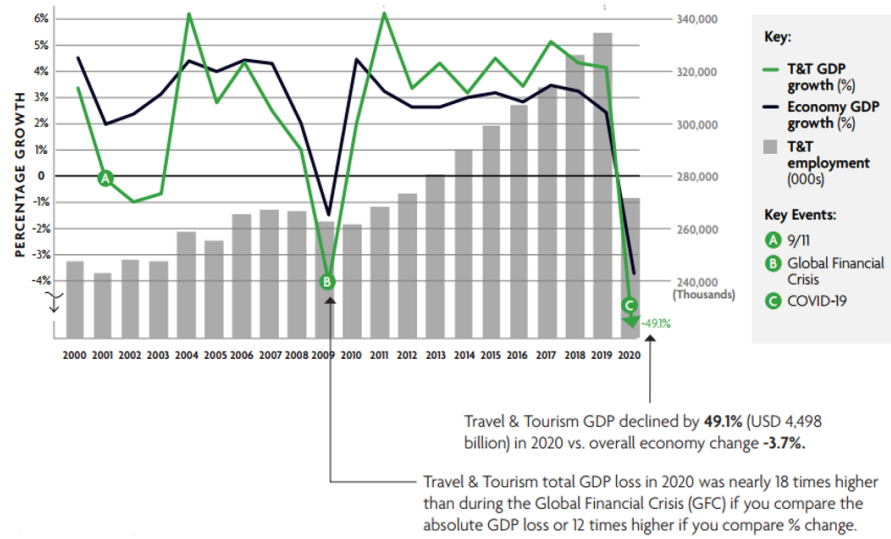
Figure 1.1 Global Travel and Tourism Economic Impact Timeline, 2000-2020

Due to persistent mobility limitations, the travel and tourism sector contributed 10.4% to global GDP in 2019. In 2020, the employees working in this sector lost 62 million jobs (18.5%), leaving just 272 million employed globally, down from 334 million in 2019. Government retention plans and reduced hours supported many employees' salaries. Domestic visitor expenditure fell by 44%, while overseas visitor spending fell by 69.4% (Economic Impact Reports, 2022).
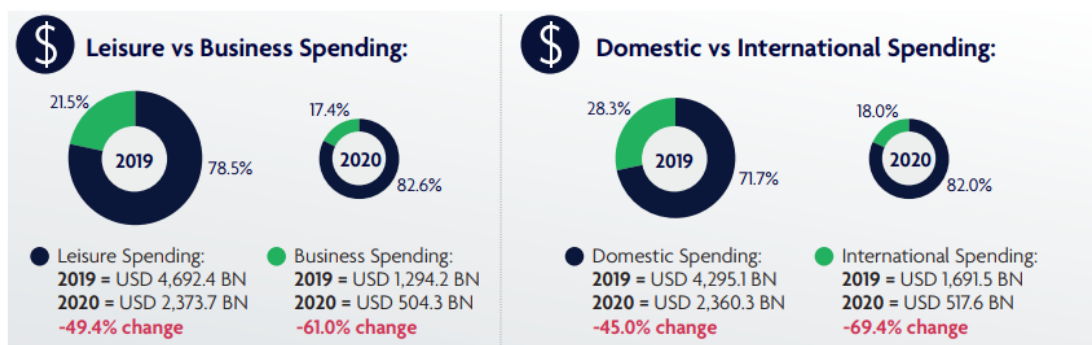
Figure 1.2 Global Travel and Tourism Sector Characteristics

Figure 1.2 shows that overseas tourist expenditure fell by 69.4% due to persistent travel restrictions. As a result, domestic visitor expenditure grew from 72% in 2019 to 80% in 2020. Parallel to this, leisure spending fell by 49.4%, compared to a 61.4% drop in business spending.

Globally, the sector's contribution to the global economy and employment might reach nearly pre-pandemic levels this year as the world begins its recovery from a pandemic, according to the WTTC study (WTTC, 2022c). The travel and tourism industry in the United Kingdom is on the path to recovery, with GDP expected to grow to £192 billion by the end of 2022, only 19% below pre-pandemic levels. If travel restrictions and needless testing protocols discontinue, the World Tourism Organization predicts a robust recovery for the UK travel and tourism sector (WTTC, 2022c). Similarly, this year, the Middle East's travel and tourism business is expected to exceed US$246 billion. It is just 8.9% lower than it was pre-pandemic. This year, WTTC estimates that the sector will contribute nearly to pre-pandemic employment levels as major markets reopen their borders and ease travel restrictions (WTTC, 2022b). According to WTTC, "We must continue to focus on the vaccine and booster rollout," Chinese government and governments worldwide, so that fully immunized travelers can travel freely without the need for testing.

It would facilitate international travel; the global tourism group urges governments to adopt digital solutions that allow visitors to establish their status quickly, easily, and securely (WTTC, 2022a). Globally, the hospitality and tourism industry has created one out of every four new jobs over the last five years. It is the best partner for governments to create job opportunities (Department of Tourist Services, 2020). Hotels and other lodging establishments have played a significant role in the economies of several countries (Jiang et al., 2020). When it comes to lodging, hotels have risen to become one of the most competitive businesses in the world today (Darvishmotevali et al., 2020).

1.2.1 Pakistan Tourism and Hospitality Industry

South Asia is a diverse region with various landscapes, from grasslands to forests and swamps to deserts. This region's natural riches, coastal areas, mountains, visual splendor, rivers, and climatic conditions make it even more appealing (Rasul & Manandhar, 2009). Pakistan is well known for its tourism potential in the South Asia region. Pakistan's cultural and historical legacy consists of Lake Saif ul Muluk, Malika Parbat (the highest mountain of Kaghan valley and also known as Queen of the Mountains), Supat valley, and other historical mountain ranges in the country that draw the attention of many tourists (Arshad et al., 2018).

According to Forbes, Pakistan's tourism and hospitality industry is a growing sector, with the country being named one of the '10 Coolest Places to Visit in 2019' (Pakistan High Commission, 2020). In 2019, Asia Pacific's travel and tourism GDP grew by 7.4% (WTTC, 2021). So does Pakistan; travel and tourism created 1 in 4 new jobs during the last five years, contributing USD 16,756.5 million to Pakistan's GDP in 2019. At the same time, international tourist spending was USD 852.2 million (WTTC, 2020). The total number of tourists has reached 808,000. It indicates it is a 24.4% increase over the preceding two years. In 2017, 1.75 million people visited Pakistan (Wu et al., 2014). The revenue in Pakistan's travel and tourism market is projected to reach US$3,008.00m in 2023 (Statista, 2023).

Pakistan's hotel business is also seeing a rise in investment prospects. This industry is booming in Pakistan and is a significant source of foreign cash. There are many possibilities for employment in Pakistan's hotel industry (Shah & Yasir, 2019). The service sector grew by 4.7% in 2018-2019, and tourism is expected to produce over 500,000 direct and indirect jobs in the next five years (Finance Division, 2013). In December 2018, Pakistan's tourism revenue was $818 million, compared to 866

million dollars in 2017 (CEIC, 2020). Pakistan's GDP was boosted by travel and tourism in 2018 to the amount of $8 billion. During the period from 1999 to 2018, the direct contribution of travel and tourism to Pakistan's GDP grew from 2 billion US dollars to 8 billion US dollars.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic turmoil has had a global impact, and Pakistan is no exception. As a result of this pandemic, Pakistan's economy has been severely impacted (Shafi et al., 2020). Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has reported losses of around $18 million in March 2020 (Afzal, 2020), and the cancellation of travel and holiday packages that mainly affected hotels and airlines due to the pendemic (Meo et al., 2022). From January to February 2020, 23% of travelers canceled their Pakistan vacation plans (International Labour Organisation, 2020), the Pakistani hotel business lost over PKR 100 million. The tourism industry in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (a Pakistan province) lost $20 million in income and almost 260,000 full-time jobs by 2020 (Afzal, 2020). There has been an abrupt stop to all lodging services (Wen et al., 2021). According to a recent report, restaurant and hotel bookings in Pakistan have fallen sharply (Javed, 2020). As a result, hotel bookings fell from 95% to 40% between January and March 2020 (TRAC, 2020); as a result hospitality business has seen a significant drop in GDP growth (USD -3447 MN) (UNCTAD, 2020).

Just 5.2% less than pre-pandemic levels, China's travel and tourism sector might contribute 11 trillion to GDP in the year 2022, according to a new study from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), governments can bring back millions of jobs (WTTC, 2022a). Travel and tourism in the Asia Pacific region may also reach pre-pandemic levels, according to WTTC data, which reveals that the region's prediction is equally encouraging. According to the report, the sector could generate

20 trillion (USD 2.9 trillion) in GDP and 190 million jobs, exceeding the 2019 numbers and adding five million jobs to the industry in China (WTTC, 2022a).

The hotel industry in Pakistan is regarded as a substantial part of the economy because of its long-term ties to the public and private sectors. A report in DAWN stated that Pakistan's hotel business had received much interest from the rest of the world (DAWN, 2019). Condé Nast Traveler ranked Pakistan as the best holiday destination for 2020 (DAWN, 2019). There are five-, four-, three-, two-, and one-star hotels in Pakistan. In contrast to small hotels, 5-star and 4-star hotels offer extended-stay and full-service accommodations (Hayati et al., 2019). Recent investment initiatives have been promoting Pakistan tourist destinations around the globe. As a result, the Pakistani government has created and made available online visa services for 191 countries (Pakistan Online Visa system, 2022a), offering as well a "visa on arrival" option for 50 countries (Pakistan Online Visa system, 2022b). These steps are expected to make Pakistan more accessible to both domestic and foreign tourists in the future. The hotel industry in Pakistan is becoming increasingly competitive as the number of visitors increases (Malik et al., 2020). In the face of rising competition, hotels are under pressure to enhance the performance and engagement of their workers. As a result of these requirements, there is a greater need for staff engagement to improve service quality and the overall customer experience (Bu et al., 2022). Furthermore, the hotel industry is known for vulnerable, high-stress jobs that make workers dependent on their bosses and supervisors (Ram, 2018) that can easily translate into offensive behavior toward colleagues (Anasori et al., 2020). Academic and industry leaders alike have a strong emphasis on employee welfare and human development (Rivera, 2017). As a result, attention should be paid to the work engagement of Pakistan hotel employees.

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1.2.2   The Need for Work Engagement in Hotel Industry

There is a lot of negative press about the hotel sector's work environment. The structural and technological transformations have changed the nature of work in the hotel industry. The job has become more emotionally, psychologically, and intellectually demanding in hotel industry. Effective human capital deployment is the only way to ensure competitiveness. In today's economic environment, competitive advantage requires firms to ensure that their people are fully engaged (Turner, 2020). The hotel industry has made an effort to recruit and retain employees that demonstrate a sense of work engagement (Min et al., 2015). Subsequently, the world's top companies are looking to leverage employee engagement (Nikolova et al., 2019). To positively impact bottom-line results like better performance (Rich et al., 2010) and profitability (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Work engagement is important in the hotel industry, it is related to performance outcomes (X. Liu et al., 2022). Work engagement is defined as "an active state of psychological immersion in one's work" (Demirtas et al., 2017, p.5). In the face of fatigue at the end of a long hard work, engaged employees perceive this as a sign of accomplishment (Bakker et al., 2011a). Thus, the fact that many professional organizations focus on evaluating employee engagement is no surprise (Gallup, 2020).

The power disparity is one of the major problems in the hotel industry (Kang & Jang, 2019) and, in turn, makes it a stressful job (Ram, 2018) and also becomes a cause of workplace bullying incidence (Anasori et al., 2020). As a result, the hotel industry has been designated a high-risk place for bullying. As argued by George (2010), ''it would seem to be especially important for employees to be engaged at work when there are real problems and the need for improvements and change'' (p. 259) as the tourism and hotel industry witnessed "a major and evolving challenge."

Engaged staff can also help the organization perform better. Employees want involvement because it affects their overall mood, job performance, and career possibilities (Turner, 2020). Given the vulnerability of the hotel industry and the established importance of employee engagement, psychological well-being aids in the ability to cope with the challenges of the job (Tesi et al., 2019) like workplace bullying (Lever et al., 2019).

Olugbade and Karatepe (2019) claim that employee experience stress at work is a well-documented phenomenon. Bullying in the hotel industry has recently been brought to the attention of academics as a significant cause of professional stress and the negative consequences that can result from it (Said & Tanova, 2021) on psychological well-being (Bernstein & Trimm, 2016) and lower work engagement (Rai & Agarwal, 2017). Social media and the internet have recently been used in the hotel industry (Jaffer, 2021). In the wake of these rapid developments, researchers have begun investigating how information technology can be used in the hotel sector (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2021). Using information technology has numerous advantages Farley et al. (2021) study, however, shows the potential drawbacks of such technology such as few hospitality researchers (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2022) started investigating online bullying in workplace.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2020) generated a report on workplace conflict and bullying in the last 12 months and mentioned that 55% of employees are being undermined or humiliated in a job, 40% receive persistent unwarranted criticism, 40% receive unwanted personal remarks (joke at personal expense), 40% obtain unreasonable pressure regarding job performance, 27% get public humiliated, 28% employees are being shouted at, 26% receive verbal abuse (for example, offensive language, insults), 18% get isolated or excluded from social

activities. It drops 40% into work motivation, commitment, or engagement (Porter-O'Grady, 2003). Thus, it is imperative to examine employee well-being (Arjona-Fuentes et al., 2019). Robertson and Cooper's (2011) study on psychological well-being emphasized the significance of employees' psychological well-being in the workplace, helping them recognize and find the meaning in their work that eventually improves their work engagement (Ugwu & Onyishi, 2018). Kahn (1990) stressed the significance of meaningful work for employees because meaningful work plays a vital role in boosting employee work engagement. After all, it enhances an individual's sense of self-worth and contributes to the success of an organization.

The workplace's psychological climate substantially correlates with employees' abilities to protect themselves from bullying at work (Law et al., 2011). However, in the hospitality industry, little is known about organizational policies and procedures' role in curbing workplace bullying (Bohle et al., 2017) to protect employee health and well-being. At the same time, PWB is an emerging concept in the hospitality business that has recently attracted academic attention (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019; Kim & Jang, 2022). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine; workplace bullying and cyberbullying as an impact on work engagement in Pakistan hotel sector employees while investigating the mediating role of psychological well-being and work meaningfulness on employee engagement whereas moderating role of psychosocial safety climate between traditional bullying and cyberbullying and psychological well-being. An initial investigation was carried out to comprehend Pakistan's hotel industry's working environment and whether it is conducive to employees' work engagement.

1.3   Preliminary Study

A preliminary study was conducted to obtain a fresh and accurate picture of the hotel industry of Pakistan with regard to the study research interest. Respondents were asked questions about the workplace environment and whether they found it stressful in semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is a flexible method because it "is sufficiently structured to address specific topics related to the phenomenon of the study while leaving space for participants to offer new meanings to the study focus" (Galletta, 2013, p. 24).

The 6 respondents were managers working in Pakistan's 4-star and 5-star hotels. It includes Holiday Inn, Avari, Hotel Mövenpick Karachi, Pearl Continental Rawalpindi, Royal Swiss Lahore and Ramada Plaza International. The respondents served as training and development manager, head of human resources, and heads of sales (see Appendix A). The interview questions (Appendix A), including the consent form, were sent to the respondents through email and scheduled a time for an interview via Zoom. The interviews were conducted in two months, January to February 2021. The questions asked were as follows:

1. What is the working environment/culture of your hotel? How is the behavior of employees with each other? How do supervisors/managers treatment with employees?

2. Do your hotel use the internet or social media in the workplace to carry out work-related activities?

3. Have you noticed any positive or negative impact of internet use in your hotel?

4. Is there any policy in your hotel to ensure employee well-being?

5. Do you normally enjoy your job in the hotel?

6. What kind of efforts is your hotel management doing to ensure the employees' work engagement?

1.3.1 Findings of Preliminary Study

The preliminary study findings reveal hotel industry employees' challenges and problems, highlighting workplace bullying and cyberbullying incidents. The information was collected from six hotel industry employees in Pakistan.

Theme 1: Working environment and behavior of employee and supervisor

The first theme emphasizes on negative workplace environment of the hotel industry in Pakistan. The participants discussed the incidents that were sometimes verbal abuse and others indirect. All participants reported that they have both observed and experienced being bullied. For example, all participants said that they had been the victim of gossip and rumors. For example, one participant reported that one of my colleagues, "A lot of people turned away from me because of what other people were saying about me. I do not have any friends". Another respondent reported that "everyone here talks about each other, lunch time now become gossip time". 6 participants reported that their work is publicly criticized. 3 participants claimed that they had been publicly humiliated in front of everyone. One participant noted that he had faced favoritism in the hotel, "my project was taken away from me by accusing me of being incompetent and given to someone else". 4 respondents reported that there were times when they learned that some important information was hiding from them, making their work very difficult.

Theme 2: Negative effect of the internet on the workplace

The participants were asked questions that do they use social media or the internet in the workplace. All participants reported affirmative. For example, one participant said, "we use email most frequently. The room reservations are now mostly done online. Being a 5-star hotel, we have some workshops or conferences daily, and all communication is done via email". The participants were further probed about their experience with social media and the internet in the workplace. 4 of the participants reported that they had experienced negatively being publicly humiliated via the internet. For example, one participant said, "people sometimes abuse the use of email and scold and criticize someone by keeping irrelevant people in 'cc' and sent the email. Honestly, it is very embracing.". Another participant reported, "the use of social media has affected my personal life as well; even after office hours, I am being called and receive rude messages. It is mentally disturbing. However, it has become a workplace norm, so we have to live with it". The study participants reported that such negative workplace incidents negatively affect employee work. For example, one participant reported, "Although I enjoy my work when you get publicly humiliated, it is hard to feel excited about the job anymore." Another participant reported his observation, "I have observed that people sometimes do not verify they hear something about someone and start making jokes about and sent WhatsApp text messages. It damages people's reputation, which is hard to recover."

Theme 3: Policies to protect hotel employees' well-being

In answering the questions of what actions your hotel is taking to ensure employee well-being, the participants' responses were mainly directed around the health and safety policies that every hotel industry must follow. The participants highlighted that food and safety protocols and physical safety policies for employees

and customers are very strict. It is compulsory for quality compliance purposes. The participants were probed about their earlier answers about not being treated with respect and how your hotel is taking care of employees' well-being. In response, all employees reported that if they go and say the issue, management acts quickly to correct problems/issues that affect employees' well-being, "one time I discussed that my colleagues make fun of me and creating rumors, HR asked me to write a formal report, but I did not do it. It is not a general practice". Another participant responds, "in recent years, the management has started to pay attention to employee well-being. It is started when one of our General managers went abroad for training, and since he is back, he emphasizes that employee well-being is critical for hotel performance". All the participants agree that their hotels have written policies to ensure employee health and safety.

Theme 4: Work meaningfulness and engagement

During the interview session, when participants were asked questions about their feelings towards work, most respondents emphasized their preference for working in the hotel industry because they find the work "personally interesting." One of the respondents shared his experience, "I try out new themes and ideas when organizing any event. Being creative and working closely with people bring me joy". 3 other participants claimed that they feel passionate about their work, "I find working in the hotel industry more interesting than working for any other industry because I like meeting new people, and my work allows me to socialize." Another participant reported, "I look forward to going to the hotel every day and feel energetic about it because each day is different from others, there is always some events going on, or we are planning something new. I had one of the best experiences when foreign tourists

came; they had many questions about our culture. It is really enjoyable to interact with them." The participants were further probed about any work engagement practices in the hotel; all the participants reported that in the hotel industry of Pakistan, it is the norm to have year-end staff parties, organize leisure trips for employees or team building activities, the nomination of the employee of the month and sports activities and events. All 4-star and 5-star hotels have these practices under the employee work engagement program. The participants claimed that employees always look forward to such events, which is the best feature of working in the hotel industry of Pakistan.

1.3.2   The Implication of the Preliminary Study

The preliminary study findings indicate that Pakistan hotel industry employees are victims of rude treatment in the workplace, both face-to-face and online, negatively affecting their work engagement. Participants reported that gossip and rude treatment among colleagues are very common in the workplace. The participants have faced public humiliation in front of people. They also mentioned that hotel employees are becoming victims of email culture and tend to be scolded and humiliated while keeping irrelevant employees in the loop. It has affected their personal life and psychological well-being because they receive text messages at home. The employees see it as a part of the workplace norm and are trying to accept it.

Although, participants agree that they found their job personally exciting and meaningful. But bullying incidents tend to impact their work engagement negatively; they no longer feel excited about their job as they used to do. Nevertheless, the participants agree that the Pakistan hotel industry, 4-star and 5-star hotels, have safety and health policies that ensure employees' physical and psychological well-being. The hotels are stringent about physical health and safety protocols because of regulatory

compliance. However, respondents gave a mixed responses about employee psychological well-being. They acknowledged that if employees approach hotel management, they will get full support, but for some reason, employees usually do not make this decision. In conclusion, participants appreciate that the hotel industry allows them to be part of various events and meet new and exciting people. They enjoy working because of it. However, traditional and online bullying incidents negatively impact employee work engagement and affect their well-being. It is a critical issue to be addressed, but it lacks academic researchers' attention. After conducting preliminary research, the following problem statement was drafted.

1.4   Problem Statement

Work engagement has emerged as a critical driver for the hospitality industry in the volatile economic world. During the crisis and financial instability, getting the desired business outcome and rapid growth requires employees to put in extra effort and exhibit work engagement. According to Gallup's analysis of 96 countries, employee work engagement impacts business performance outcomes, such as retention, productivity, safety and profitability (Gallup, 2022). Globally, Gallup estimates that it costs US$7.8 trillion and accounts for 11% of GDP (Gallup, 2022). Germany €112 billion to €138 billion per year ($151 billion to $186 billion), and the U.K. between £52 billion and £70 billion ($83 billion to $112 billion) per year (Phillips et al., 2016). Yet a recent Gallup survey (Harter & Rubenstein, 2020) shows that worldwide work engagement is at 15% in several areas, including the hotel business, indicating the necessity of investigating the low level of employee engagement at work.

Countries around the world are facing employee work engagement issues, such as the United States (Cooke et al., 2019), Netherlands (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007), Sweden, and Germany (Wirtz et al., 2017), Singapore (Tan et al., 2019) Thailand (Kunte & RungRuang, 2019), Malaysia (Suan & Nasurdin, 2016), Bangladesh (Rabiul et al., 2022), China (Guan et al., 2020) and Pakistan (Farid et al., 2019; Ahmad & Gao, 2018; Ahmad et al., 2022) especially in the hospitality industry (Sarwar et al., 2020) because 63% of service workers are not engaged in Pakistan (Gallup, 2017b). Consequently, the Gallup survey report on 160 countries reported that 79% of employees are not engaged or are actively disengaged in their job (Gallup, 2022). In other words, just 21% of workers are emotionally invested in and dedicated to their jobs, which means they are not contributing much to the success of their companies. Whereas, in Pakistan, 87% of employees are not engaged (Gallup, 2022).

Consequently, a low level of work engagement is a critical issue to be addressed because its absence can negatively impact Pakistan's hotel industry's profit and productivity. Gallup survey indicates that hotels with higher employee engagement showed a 22% increase in profit and a 21% increase in productivity (Hoisington, 2019). Thus, the work engagement of hotel workers is a significant concern for competitive advantage globally (Hsu et al., 2019; Olugbade & Karatepe, 2019; Rabiul et al., 2022), especially in the Pakistan hotel industry, but the recent study highlights that it lacks engaged workforce and require the immediate attention of both researchers and hotel management (Bu et al., 2022). It is also evident from the preliminary study results that hotel employees are facing an aggressive working environment that affects their work engagement.

The hospitality industry is characterized as hostile and has always been associated with negative behavior, such as deviant workplace behavior, harassment,

and bullying (Johnson & Madera, 2018; Erica, 2019; Said & Tanova, 2021; Bloisi, 2021; Zhou et al., 2021; Dar & Rahman, 2022; Gaspani, 2022). A study reported that the prevalence of workplace bullying is 5.6% among hospitality employees (Ariza-Montes et al., 2017); another study reported 9% (Erica, 2019). The tourism sector reported 8% direct violence and 10% threats of violence. Moreover, 30% of the workers said they had experienced at least one kind of violence, bullying, or sexual harassment in the previous 12 months (Ram, 2018). In general, all sectors reported that frequent bullying acts in the workplace consist of 15% of employees occasionally engaging in gossip and 21% of employees regularly participating in gossip (Gallagher, 2020); even 15% of all work emails have been categorized as gossip, too (Bassuk & Lew, 2016). Spreading rumors and gossip about someone, resulting in false rumors, is hard to shake off and affects the employees' work engagement (Seppala, 2016). Pakistan hotel industry reported the incidence of bullying (Dar & Rahman, 2022), and 48% of employees reported being the victim of bullying (Iftikhar, 2019).

The use of information technology using social media to gossip or bully someone online has also started to get researchers' attention (Farley et al., 2021; Lyu et al., 2022), known as cyberbullying (Vranjes et al., 2018). Using multiple social media channels, offenders can target victims while keeping their identities hidden. It is predicted by European Agency for Safety and Health at work (EU-OSHA, 2021) that cyberbullying has become a new problem for employees; however, there is a lack of research on this topic. Because of social media's anonymity, employees in the hotel business have experienced bullying without knowing how to respond and stop it (Mkono, 2018). In Pakistan, 40% of hotel employees are victims of cyberbullying (Iftikhar, 2019). Thus, it is imperative to study technology-related challenges (i.e.,

bullying) in the hospitality and hotel industry (Buer, 2019; Gip et al., 2022) because the ROI of social media impact on the hotel industry (Michopouloua & Moisab, 2019).

It may result from a perceived power imbalance in the hospitality industry (Ariza-Montes et al., 2017). Given that Pakistan has a culture of power distance and collectivism (Hofstede, 1994; Islam, 2004), which refers to "a set of feelings, beliefs, behavioral intentions, and behaviors related to solidarity and concern for others, and collectivistic cultures emphasize the establishment of close and harmonious interpersonal relationships" (Hui, 1988, p. 17). The employees' responses to workplace bullying and cyberbullying may also be culturally bound and have a different impact. Because Pakistan's collective culture differs significantly from that of the west's individualistic culture (Idris et al., 2012) when it comes to power distance (Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018) because it encourages obedience to authority (Islam, 2004; Kartinah & Kong, 2010) and subsequently, higher tolerance for work-related hostile acts and bullying in the hospitality industry (Salin, 2021; Said & Tanova, 2021; Zhou et al., 2021) and especially in the hotel industry of Pakistan (Dar & Rahman, 2022). The preliminary study results align with the literature that employees believe receiving emails and text messages after work hours is a part of work culture and are trying to adjust accordingly.

It is established that workplace cyber ostracism severely affects the work engagement and well-being of employees working in Pakistan (Yang et al., 2022). Consequently, the hotel business highly values employee well-being (Hsu et al., 2019) and work engagement (Olugbade & Karatepe, 2019). The researchers from the hotel industry emphasized examining the role of psychological well-being in reducing workplace bullying (Hsu et al., 2019; Cheng et al., 2022).

A culture of civility is essential for any organization's success (Alola et al., 2021). Whether in person or online, bullying in the workplace is well-recognized as a source of anxiety for both employees and employers. Nevertheless, employers are accountable for providing a conducive work environment that is possible by providing a psychosocial safety climate (PSC), policies, and procedures that buffer the negative effects of bullying (Law et al., 2011; Dollard & Bakker, 2010). PSC could improve PWB if the workplace is marked by bullying and cyberbullying. Zhou et al. (2021) argued that intervention and prevention strategies of organizations are necessary to limit workplace mistreatment in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Consequently, employees feel protected from workplace bullying if organizations have appropriate policies (Vranjes et al., 2022). Thus, the hotel industry must embark on a journey recognizing that employees face bullying both in-person and online. It is negatively influencing work engagement. This study investigates the negative impact of workplace bullying and cyberbullying on work engagement. Moreover, examine the mediating role of PWB between workplace bullying, cyberbullying, and work engagement. Further, investigate the impact of PWB on work engagement via work meaningfulness. Additionally, this study considers PSC an essential safety climate in the hotel industry to protect well-being that would improve employees' work engagement.

1.5   Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following research questions to address the problem statement of the current study:

1. Does workplace bullying and cyberbullying have a negative relationship with work engagement?

2. Does psychological well-being mediate the relationship between workplace bullying, cyberbullying, and work engagement?

3. Does work meaningfulness mediate the relationship between psychological well-being and work engagement?

4. Does psychosocial safety climate moderate the relationship between workplace bullying, cyberbullying and psychological well-being?

1.6   Research Objectives

The following research goals were established to meet the study's goal in light of the current research challenge and the literature gaps found in the previous section.

1. To examine the negative relationship between workplace bullying, cyberbullying and work engagement.

2. To examine psychological well-being mediates the relationship between workplace bullying, cyberbullying and work engagement.

3. To examine work meaningfulness mediates the relationship between psychological well-being and work engagement.

4. To examine psychosocial safety climate moderate the relationship between workplace bullying, cyberbullying and psychological well-being.

1.7   Significance of the Study

This study provides theoretical and practical contributions discussed in the following section.

1.7.1 Theoretical Significance

In terms of theoretical significance, this study extends the recently emerging stream of research that has begun to examine the impact of workplace bullying and cyberbullying on employees' work engagement in the hospitality industry because it recently started to get researchers' attention (Bloisi, 2021; Zhou et al., 2021). Moreover, it examines the mediating role of psychological well-being in the hotel industry of Pakistan between bullying and work engagement. In turn would contribute to the mental health literature, as a gap is highlighted by a recent call for paper, special issue on mental health at the workplace (Els, 2022).

Additionally, it has been known that bullying negatively influences work engagement. Although there are similarities between the traditional bullying construct and its online counterpart, limited studies (Forssell, 2019; van Geel & Vedder, 2020) have been carried out on the subject of workplace cyberbullying in the hotel industry. The findings of this study would contribute to the literature. Recently researchers have highlighted the importance of keeping employees engaged in the presence of work-related stress by issuing a special issue on workplace health (Blake et al., 2020). As a second benefit, this research fills a void in the body of knowledge regarding the importance of psychological well-being (PWB) and work meaningfulness. There is a lack of research focusing on the importance of resources when studying work engagement (Lee et at., 2020).

The academics urged additional researchers to concentrate on preventing workplace bullying in organizations (Hodgins & Mannix-McNamara, 2019). It is important to encourage positive experiences and maintain employee engagement by implementing appropriate rules, procedures, and interventions (Woerkom et al., 2019). A psychologically safe climate would benefit employees' well-being (Silla & Gamero,

2018). Because of a dearth of management support with high job demands and insufficient job resources, work pressure, harassment, and bullying behavior may occur (Dollard et al., 2012; Dollard et al., 2017). As a result, policies, practices, and procedures in a high PSC work environment will help reduce bullying behavior that arises from working conditions.

In previous research, the moderating effect of PSC on the relationship between psychological hazards and psychological health problems was the primary center of attention. This study demonstrates that PSC is a significant job resource that could be used to improve PWB in a high level of workplace bullying and cyberbullying. It also addresses the theoretical gap highlighted by Zhou et al. (2021) that intervention and prevention strategies of organizations are necessary to curb workplace mistreatment in the hospitality and tourism industry. According to the researchers' best knowledge, this study is the only one of its kind in Pakistan. Thus, the PSC can be used as an organizational intervention even in nations where health and safety are emphasized less than production goals.

From the methodology perspective, there is a lack of studies (2011-2017) on employee work engagement in the hotel industry that used the PLS-SEM technique to examine the relationship between study variables. The structural equation modeling (SEM) was used in 55.3%, and precisely only 3 studies used the PLS technique, 2011-2017 (Park et al., 2019). Additionally, this research contributes to the literature an understanding of contextual differences in employee perception toward traditional vs. online bullying in a developing country (Pakistan) with a high-power distance and collectivistic culture because previous studies on cyberbullying prevalence have shown mixed cultural effects (Barlett et al., 2021). As a result, whereas previous studies have primarily focused on economies in the West, this research assesses the

impact on the level of work engagement of Pakistani hotel employees after experiencing workplace bullying and workplace cyberbullying.

1.7.2 Practical Significance

This research study would have several managerial implications regarding decreasing workplace bullying and creating a safe and healthy work environment for employees. Policymakers, practitioners, and hotel managers could use this information to revise their strategies to improve employee PWB and engagement. Despite the fact that bullying is a reality in the workplace, limited studies in the hotel industry attempted to understand the mechanics of bullying. Given results of a systematic review based on 156 articles on workplace mistreatment in the hospitality and tourism industry reveal that the centralized and hierarchical organizational structures in the hospitality and tourism industry emphasize the imbalance of power between managers and employees, which likely causes institutionalized mistreatment such as workplace bullying (Zhou et al., 2021).

Unfortunately, ad hoc approaches such as attempting to alleviate the bullying experience with the help of finances or referring the target to external counsel are generally unsuccessful. Indeed, ineffective management strategies can contribute to the secondary victimization of targets (Halder & Jaishankar, 2011). Employers, therefore, are urged to place employee well-being at the heart of their HR management system. Developing anti-bullying policies, explaining them to staff, and training them are just a few ways employers can show they care about their employees' well-being (Einarsen et al., 2019). Workplace bullying can lead to a lack of employee work engagement if firms don't give the necessary resources, such as developing an unbiased mechanism for internal complaints to allow bullying victims to air their grievances. Thus, all hotel managers should adopt safety protocols and design workplace bullying