

**Workplace Bullying and Employee Performance in Selected Agro-Industrial Firms in  
Benin City, Edo State**

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BENIN CITY,**

**SEPTEMBER, 2025**

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**BEING A RESEARCH THESIS DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, FACULTY OF  
MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, IN PARTIAL  
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SCIENCE (M.Sc.) DEGREE IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY,**

**SEPTEMBER, 2025**

### DECLARATION

I, **Frank Osemwegie AGBONGIAGUE**, hereby declare that this dissertation is a genuine work done originally by me and has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of any degree. All sources of information referred to in this work are acknowledged with reference to the respective authors.

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**Frank Osemwegie AGBONGIAGUE**  
(M.Sc. Student)

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**Date**

### CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this dissertation titled “**Workplace Bullying and Employee Performance in Selected Agro-Industrial Firms in Benin City, Edo State**” was carried out by **Frank Osemwegie AGBONGIAGUE** in the Department of Human Resources Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City.

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**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated first and foremost to Almighty God, the source of wisdom, strength, and inspiration, whose unfailing grace and guidance sustained me throughout this programme and the completion of this project.

It is also dedicated to my beloved parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Idele Agbongiague, whose love, prayers, and sacrifices laid the foundation for my academic and personal growth. Their unwavering support, encouragement, and values of hard work, perseverance, and integrity have been my guiding light. This achievement is as much theirs as it is mine.

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined workplace bullying and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State. Specifically, it assessed the relationship between verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, social exclusion, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, cyberbullying, and employee performance in the selected agro-industrial firms. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted. The study population comprised 3,184 employees of ten purposively selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City.

Using stratified random sampling and Yamane's formula, a sample of 426 employees was arrived at and a structured questionnaire was thus administered after which 397 valid responses were retrieved and found usable for the study. Data collected with a structured questionnaire was then analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression (Ordinary Least Squares) via the use of SPSS v24.

The study found that verbal abuse, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying have significant negative effects on employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State. Conversely, aggressive behaviour and social exclusion, though negatively associated with performance, did not show statistically significant effects on employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State. The study recommends that agro-industrial firms implement clear anti-bullying policies, establish effective reporting and grievance redress mechanisms, provide continuous training and sensitisation for employees on the dangers of workplace bullying, promote supportive organisational cultures that encourage respect and collaboration, and institute employee assistance programmes to mitigate the adverse effects of bullying. In addition, management should monitor and evaluate bullying-related interventions through measurable performance indicators to ensure the creation of safe, inclusive, and productive work environments.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The agro-industry is widely recognised as a cornerstone of global economic growth, contributing significantly to employment creation, food security, and industrial development. Despite accounting for just under 4 per cent of world GDP, agriculture and its associated industries employ nearly a third of the global labour force, making them central to poverty alleviation and sustainable development strategies (Vijayakumar & Rajagopal, 2025). Unlike other economic sub-sectors such as manufacturing and services, the agro-industry is highly dependent on ecological and climatic stability, rendering it more vulnerable to natural disasters, climate change, and supply chain disruptions (Tatar, 2025). This unique vulnerability underscores the necessity of resilient organisational structures that protect both external productivity and internal human capital.

In the African context, agriculture remains the backbone of many economies, employing over 60 per cent of the population and contributing around 35 per cent of GDP in some countries (Khan & Nazir, 2025). However, the sector is characterised by low mechanisation, high labour intensity, and persistent structural weaknesses. These challenges differentiate agro-industry from other sub-sectors, as inefficiencies in agricultural production directly influence food security, industrial capacity, and export revenues (Ullah et al., 2025). Moreover, external threats such as fluctuating commodity prices and climate variability compound the fragility of African agricultural systems, further intensifying the need to address internal organisational issues that affect workforce effectiveness.

In Nigeria, agriculture and agro-processing collectively contribute between 23 and 25 per cent of national GDP and remain the largest source of employment, particularly in rural communities (Aboobaker & Shanujas, 2024). The agro-industrial sector is especially important as it integrates primary production with processing and distribution, thereby creating value chains that support industrial diversification (Mehmood et al., 2024). Yet, Nigerian agro-industry faces unique

challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, low access to financing, limited technological adoption, and exposure to global food import dependency. These macro-level weaknesses are further exacerbated by internal organisational challenges such as poor employee welfare and negative workplace climates, which impede productivity and innovation (Tiwari et al., 2024).

While the structural and environmental difficulties of the sector are often emphasised, internal organisational challenges such as workplace bullying remain underexplored, even though they have equally profound implications for employee productivity and retention. Bullying constitutes persistent and systematic mistreatment through verbal, physical, social, or psychological means, leading to long-term harm for employees and organisational functioning (Salin et al., 2023). In labour-intensive industries such as agro-processing, where efficiency depends heavily on employee commitment and resilience, the effects of bullying can undermine efforts to stabilise productivity amid external shocks (Mabasa & Maluka, 2024).

Scholars have highlighted that workplace bullying manifests in multiple forms, including verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, social exclusion, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying (Kurniasari et al., 2024). Each form of bullying undermines employee dignity and disrupts interpersonal relationships, leading to reduced job satisfaction, low organisational commitment, and increased turnover intentions (Buriro et al., 2023). Social exclusion, for example, diminishes psychological safety and weakens collaboration, while gender discrimination perpetuates inequities that hinder talent retention and advancement (Moffat et al., 2023). Similarly, the rise of cyberbullying in digitalised workspaces adds new dimensions of hostility that transcend physical boundaries, deepening the complexity of workplace aggression (Khairiyah et al., 2023).

Employee performance is conceptualised as the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality with which employees execute assigned tasks and contribute to organisational goals. Performance incorporates both quantitative measures such as productivity and qualitative dimensions such as engagement, satisfaction, and commitment (Divyakala & Vasumathi, 2023). Research indicates that hostile organisational climates significantly reduce performance, as employees experiencing

bullying often report stress, absenteeism, reduced creativity, and diminished loyalty (Anasori et al., 2023). Within the agro-industrial context, where the workforce is central to operational success, the adverse effects of bullying on performance threaten not only firms but also wider economic growth and food security outcomes (Olaleye & Lekunze, 2023).

From the above, it is of note that the agro-industry is simultaneously affected by external structural challenges and internal organisational climates that determine employee performance (Ribeiro et al., 2021). Workplace bullying, as an internal challenge, threatens to undermine productivity and engagement within Nigerian agro-industrial firms. Therefore, this study aims to generate evidence-based recommendations that foster healthier work environments by examining the relationships between verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, social exclusion, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, cyberbullying, and employee performance. These interventions are essential for improving both organisational effectiveness and the broader contribution of the agro-industry to Nigeria's economic stability and food security.

## **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

Workplace bullying has been identified as a global occupational hazard with severe consequences for employees and organisations alike. It manifests as repeated negative acts in a context of power imbalance, often leaving targets defenceless and fostering hostile work climates that erode organisational trust and productivity (Einarsen et al., 2020). While scholars acknowledge its detrimental effects, ranging from psychosomatic illnesses to increased staff turnover, absenteeism and performance decline, the phenomenon remains insufficiently conceptualised, particularly in relation to its multidimensional manifestations in specific industrial and cultural contexts (Salin & Hoel, 2020). This lack of contextual depth underscores the importance of studies that do not only quantify prevalence but interrogate its dynamics in under-explored environments such as the agro-industrial sector in Nigeria.

One major gap arises from definitional inconsistencies and divergent measurement strategies. Researchers have alternated between self-labelling and behavioural checklist methods, generating widely differing prevalence rates and weakening the reliability of cross-study

comparisons (Nielsen et al., 2021). Without an agreed-upon definition, workplace bullying continues to be interpreted subjectively, leading to underreporting, distorted findings and ineffective interventions. This study responds to this conceptual gap by employing a systematic focus on distinct forms of bullying, verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, social exclusion, gender discrimination, sexual harassment and cyberbullying, thereby advancing a more granular understanding of the phenomenon.

Geographically, bullying research is heavily concentrated in Nordic and Western European contexts, with limited empirical engagement from African nations such as Nigeria (Agbu & Olaleye, 2022). The predominance of evidence from advanced economies limits the external validity of findings, particularly in non-Western cultural and economic settings where organisational dynamics differ significantly. In Nigeria, where hierarchical structures, weak labour protections and socio-cultural power imbalances are prevalent, the manifestation and consequences of workplace bullying may vary substantially from global patterns. This geographical gap justifies the study's focus on agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State, where no significant body of empirical research has been developed.

Population gaps are also evident, as most studies have prioritised public sector employees, healthcare workers and administrative staff, often neglecting private-sector professionals in competitive and knowledge-intensive industries (Samnani & Singh, 2016). Agro-industrial firms, despite their critical role in food security and national development, remain under-researched in this respect. Employees in such environments often face performance pressures, resource constraints and workplace vulnerabilities that may exacerbate bullying tendencies. By focusing on this overlooked group, the study directly contributes to broadening the demographic and industrial scope of workplace bullying research.

Conflicting arguments also highlight unresolved controversies. For example, while some scholars emphasise personality traits as precursors to bullying (Coyne et al., 2017), others attribute it primarily to organisational failings such as poor leadership, high workload or weak policies (Baillien et al., 2019). Similarly, findings regarding the differential impacts of bullying

on male and female employees are inconsistent, revealing the influence of cultural and gendered power relations (Salin, 2018). These contradictions necessitate context-specific investigations that not only document bullying behaviours but also differentiate their impacts across categories of employees. The study's focus on gender discrimination and sexual harassment as discrete objectives is a deliberate attempt to address these unresolved debates in the Nigerian agro-industrial context.

The present study is justified on the basis of definitional ambiguities, geographical and population neglect, methodological weaknesses, unresolved controversies and the lack of context-specific empirical insights. By examining the distinct effects of verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, social exclusion, gender discrimination, sexual harassment and cyberbullying on employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms, the study seeks to bridge multiple research gaps. The specific objectives reflect both the multidimensionality of bullying behaviours and their potential to erode employee well-being, motivation and organisational productivity, offering insights that are theoretically novel, empirically robust and practically significant for organisations in Nigeria and beyond.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

In line with the stated research problem, the following research questions will guide this study:

1. To what extent does verbal abuse affect employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State?
2. What is the relationship between aggressive behaviour and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State?
3. How does social exclusion impact employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State?
4. To what extent does gender discrimination influence employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State?
5. What is the relationship between sexual harassment and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State?

6. How does cyberbullying influence employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State?

**Present the research questions in Roman numerals such as i, ii, iii, and so on.**

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between workplace bullying and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State, with emphasis on how different forms of bullying influence employee performance. The specific objectives are to:

1. determine the extent to which verbal abuse affects employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State;
2. examine the relationship between aggressive behaviour and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State;
3. ascertain how social exclusion impact employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State;
4. examine the extent to which gender discrimination influence employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State;
5. evaluate the relationship between sexual harassment and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State; and
6. determine how cyberbullying influence employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State;

**Present the objectives of the study in Roman numerals such as i, ii, iii, and so on.**

#### **1.5 Research Hypotheses**

This study intends to test the following hypotheses which are stated in the null form ( $H_0$ ):

1. Verbal abuse does not have a significant effect on employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State.
2. There is no significant relationship between aggressive behaviour and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State.

3. Social exclusion does not have a significant effect on employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State.
4. Gender discrimination does not significantly impact employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State.
5. There is no significant relationship between sexual harassment and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State.
6. Cyberbullying does not significantly influence employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State.

**Present the research hypotheses in Roman numerals such as i, ii, iii, and so on.**

#### **1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

This study is delimited to the investigation of workplace bullying and its impact on employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The study focuses on how different forms of workplace bullying, including verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, social exclusion, cyberbullying, unjustified criticism, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and ethnic or religious bias, affect key dimensions of employee performance such as productivity, engagement, and job satisfaction. The research adopted a quantitative design and is restricted to employees within the core operational departments of the selected firms, such as plantation, administration, production, processing, and logistics. The temporal scope is limited to the year 2025, thereby ensuring that the findings reflect contemporary workplace experiences. The population of interest includes employees across different hierarchical levels, ranging from contract workers and junior staff to supervisors and line managers, in order to capture the influence of power dynamics and organisational roles on bullying experiences and performance outcomes. The study does not provide an in-depth exploration of legal, financial, or organisational policy frameworks; rather, it is concentrated on employee perspectives and experiences, which will be measured through the administration of structured questionnaires. By focusing on selected agro-industrial firms within Benin City, the research provides a contextualised understanding of workplace bullying and employee

performance within the socio-cultural and organisational settings of Nigerian agro-industrial enterprises.

### 1.7 Significance of the Study

This study seeks to examine the effect of workplace bullying on employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State. From the review of extant literature, it was observed that while numerous studies have explored workplace bullying in general, little or no attention has been given to its impact on employee performance within the context of Nigerian agro-industrial firms. This research will therefore be of benefit to the following stakeholders:

**Human Resource Managers:** The findings of this study will assist human resource managers in identifying the different forms of workplace bullying and their impact on employee productivity, engagement, and job satisfaction. This will guide the design and implementation of effective policies and intervention strategies to reduce bullying and enhance overall employee performance.

**Government and Policymakers:** The recommendations from this study will provide useful insights for government agencies and policy makers in formulating labour and workplace policies that address workplace bullying, protect employees, and promote healthy work environments in the agro-industrial sector.

**Researchers and Academicians:** This research will contribute to the growing body of literature on workplace bullying and employee performance in developing economies. It will serve as a valuable reference point for future researchers and academicians seeking to expand knowledge in human resource management, organisational behaviour, and workplace well-being.

**Employees and Organisations:** The study will benefit employees by raising awareness of the negative consequences of workplace bullying and encouraging the creation of safer and more inclusive work environments. For organisations, particularly those in the agro-industrial sector, the study provides evidence on the importance of tackling bullying in order to foster higher levels of performance, commitment, and long-term organisational sustainability.

## **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

This study, though carefully designed to achieve its stated objectives, is subject to certain limitations that must be acknowledged. First, there is a geographical limitation as the research is confined to selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State. Consequently, the findings may not be fully generalisable to other sectors or regions within Nigeria. Second, time constraints associated with the academic schedule may restrict the extent of data collection and analysis, potentially limiting the depth of insights derived.

Another limitation concerns the sampling scope. The study focuses only on selected agro-industrial firms and not all agro-industrial companies in Edo State. In addition, the researcher will rely on a representative sample rather than the entire workforce, which may affect the comprehensiveness of the findings. Relatedly, poor response rates may be encountered if employees are unwilling or unable to complete the questionnaire due to workload, stress, or fear of disclosure.

There is also the possibility of self-report bias, as the study relies on structured questionnaires that may be influenced by social desirability or reluctance to reveal sensitive information regarding workplace bullying. Furthermore, issues of organisational access and obtaining consent from participants may pose challenges, potentially limiting the diversity of respondents included. Lastly, workplace bullying is a sensitive topic, and some participants may withhold or underreport their experiences due to fear of victimisation in a hierarchical work environment.

Despite these limitations, the researcher will mitigate their effects by adopting polite and confidential approaches in interacting with respondents, ensuring anonymity of responses, and making efficient use of available time and resources to produce reliable findings.

## **1.9 Definition of Key Terms**

To ensure clarity and a common understanding of the concepts discussed in this thesis, some key terms are defined below.

**Workplace Bullying:** Repeated, health-harming mistreatment of an employee by one or more individuals, often manifested in behaviours such as verbal abuse, social exclusion, intimidation, or undermining of professional work. It involves repeated and persistent negative actions directed at an employee that can cause humiliation, offence, or distress, and may interfere with job performance or create a hostile work environment (Einarsen et al., 2020).

**Employee Performance:** The extent to which employees successfully carry out their assigned roles and responsibilities, measured in terms of productivity, job engagement, work quality, and overall contribution to organisational goals. It reflects efficiency, quality, and effectiveness in task execution (Parker et al., 2022).

**Verbal Abuse:** The use of insulting, offensive, derogatory, or demeaning language directed at an employee, often with the intent to humiliate, intimidate, or undermine their dignity and confidence in the workplace.

**Aggressive Behaviour:** Hostile or intimidating conduct, whether physical or psychological, that creates fear, tension, or discomfort for employees and disrupts workplace harmony.

**Social Exclusion:** The deliberate isolation of an employee from work-related or social activities within the organisation, including group communications and decision-making processes, resulting in rejection, neglect, or marginalisation.

**Gender Discrimination:** Unequal treatment of employees based on gender, which hinders opportunities for growth, recognition, and fair treatment within the workplace.

**Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

**Cyberbullying:** The use of electronic communication tools such as emails, internal messaging platforms, or social media to harass, intimidate, threaten, or spread false information about an employee, sometimes occurring beyond normal working hours.

**Unjustified Criticism:** Excessive, unfair, or non-constructive feedback directed at employees with the intent to demoralise or discredit, rather than to improve performance or provide developmental support.

**Productivity:** The efficiency with which employees complete tasks and achieve set targets within the available resources and time frame.

**Job Engagement:** The degree of emotional, cognitive, and physical commitment employees demonstrate towards their work and organisational objectives.

**Job Satisfaction:** The level of fulfilment and contentment employees derive from their jobs, which influences their motivation, loyalty, and performance outcomes.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Preamble**

This chapter reviewed relevant literature on workplace bullying and employee performance to provide the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical foundation for the study. The review begins with the conceptual issues relating to employee performance and workplace bullying and its dimensions, followed by the development of a conceptual framework showing the relationship between the variables of interest. It then presents relevant theories that explain the dynamics between the two variables. Finally, the chapter examined empirical studies, both global and Nigerian, highlighting major findings and research gaps, thereby demonstrating how the present study contributes to the discourse on workplace bullying and employee performance in Nigerian agro-industrial firms.

#### **2.2 Conceptual Review**

##### **2.2.1 Employee Performance**

Employee performance is a fundamental concept in organisational management, directly influencing a company's success and its ability to achieve objectives. It encompasses the effectiveness with which an individual fulfils their work responsibilities and contributes to organisational goals. Key components of employee performance include competence, coordination with others, and mental, physical, and social relations during work hours (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Performance can manifest in various behaviours such as task performance, individual-targeted organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB-I), and counterproductive work behaviour (CWB-P) (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002).

The quality of employee performance is shaped by diverse organisational factors. A hostile work climate characterised by distrust, suspicion, and antagonism significantly impacts performance (Einarsen et al., 2020). Leadership style, particularly destructive supervision or overly autocratic approaches, and poor job design such as role conflict, ambiguity, or excessive workload, are

strongly correlated with lower performance (Yukl, 2013; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Organisational culture also plays a critical role, as environments that tolerate or normalise negative behaviours often lead to reduced job satisfaction and performance (Schein, 2017). In the Nigerian context, Akinbode and Fagbohunge (2012) found that perceptions of workplace injustice and discrimination significantly reduced employees' job commitment and productivity. Individual characteristics and experiences equally shape employee performance. Psychological well-being and emotional intelligence are critical, as higher levels of emotional intelligence buffer against workplace stressors and enhance performance (Goleman, 1998; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Conversely, psychological distress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion lead to deterioration in performance (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Negative workplace experiences, particularly bullying and incivility, are explicitly identified as major contributors to poor employee performance (Hoel et al., 2020). Such behaviours drain psychological resources, undermine motivation, and breach the psychological contract. Interestingly, some studies report that individuals subjected to negative acts but who do not identify themselves as bullied tend to maintain or even improve performance, suggesting that perceptions and attributions play a moderating role (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012).

High employee performance is crucial for organisational sustainability as it directly impacts productivity, sales, and income. It remains a central concern for human resource management due to its implications for both individual well-being and organisational competitiveness (Boxall & Purcell, 2016). A supportive work environment is therefore essential to mitigate negative influences and foster optimal performance. In Nigeria, empirical findings from Okeke (2021) on bank workers revealed that supportive leadership and fair treatment enhanced employee engagement and performance, while hostile supervision and bullying led to higher turnover intentions.

When employee performance is compromised, the consequences are severe and far-reaching. For individuals, it results in lower job satisfaction, demotivation, and reduced creativity and innovation. For organisations, poor performance due to stressors such as bullying translates to

high costs including absenteeism, staff turnover, and reduced service quality (Hoel et al., 2020; Olowookere & Alao, 2022). However, some studies suggest weak or non-significant relationships between bullying and performance, indicating that contextual dynamics such as cultural orientation and industry characteristics may moderate this relationship (Samnani & Singh, 2012).

### **2.2.2 Concept of Workplace Bullying**

Workplace bullying is generally conceptualised as repeated, persistent, and systematic negative acts directed at an employee or group of employees, typically involving a power imbalance and resulting in a hostile work environment (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2020). Unlike isolated incidents of workplace conflict, bullying occurs over a prolonged period and leaves the victim feeling defenseless and unable to retaliate effectively (Hoel & Cooper, 2021). It may be expressed through behaviours such as social exclusion, spreading of rumours, verbal abuse, excessive monitoring of tasks, withholding vital information, and public humiliation. Although physical violence is rare in most organisational contexts, the psychological and social dimensions of bullying are often more pervasive and damaging (Branch, Ramsay, & Barker, 2013). Central to most definitions is the victim's perception of the experience rather than the perpetrator's intent, as negative consequences, such as ill health, reduced job commitment, and lowered productivity, are strongly linked to how individuals interpret and internalise these experiences (Salin, 2021).

The causes of workplace bullying are multi-dimensional, reflecting the interaction of individual, organisational, and societal-level factors. At the organisational level, a hostile climate marked by distrust, suspicion, and antagonism is strongly associated with increased bullying tendencies (Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012). Ineffective leadership styles, particularly autocratic, laissez-faire, or destructive supervision, exacerbate risks by creating environments where power is misused and accountability is weak (Einarsen et al., 2018). Structural deficiencies, including role conflict, role ambiguity, work overload, and lack of clarity in job design, further heighten vulnerability to bullying (Baillien, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & De Witte, 2011). Beyond the

workplace, socio-economic pressures, globalisation, and heightened competition can normalise aggressive strategies as survival tactics, while organisational politics may position bullying as a means to eliminate rivals or secure power in turbulent environments (Salin, 2003).

The implications of workplace bullying are both severe and far-reaching. For individuals, bullying often results in psychological distress, emotional exhaustion, anxiety, depression, reduced work engagement, and diminished job satisfaction (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). In addition, it is linked with physical health challenges, increased absenteeism, and higher turnover intentions (Hoel, Sheehan, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2020). At the organisational level, bullying undermines productivity, increases labour turnover, reduces organisational commitment, and escalates hidden costs such as litigation risks, reputational damage, and the loss of critical skills (Branch et al., 2013). Scholars argue that bullying can foster a vicious cycle of distrust and antagonism, poisoning organisational culture and further perpetuating hostile behaviours (Samnani & Singh, 2012). While the majority of empirical studies reveal a negative association with employee performance, some findings suggest complex or non-significant relationships, with certain employees paradoxically reporting heightened performance under stress, an outcome attributed to resilience or fear-driven motivation (Hutchinson, Wilkes, Vickers, & Jackson, 2010).

Addressing workplace bullying is therefore a strategic imperative for organisational sustainability. Ethical and participative leadership, strong human resource policies, and zero-tolerance frameworks are essential for prevention and mitigation (Hoel & Vartia, 2017). Establishing supportive reporting systems and fostering an inclusive and respectful workplace culture are equally vital. Without these measures, organisations risk not only individual harm but also enduring operational inefficiencies and financial losses.

#### **2.2.2.1 Verbal Abuse**

Verbal abuse, often manifesting as verbal aggression or verbal attack, represents a critical dimension of workplace bullying and is increasingly recognised as a widespread organisational problem. It is understood as hostile and aggressive communication directed at individuals in a

repeated and systematic manner, contributing significantly to the creation of a toxic work environment (Einarsen et al., 2020). Unlike one-off confrontations, verbal abuse in the workplace is marked by persistence, frequency, and the victim's inability to defend themselves effectively, making it a sustained threat to both individual well-being and organisational stability. The definition of verbal abuse encompasses both overt and subtle forms of negative communication. These range from direct acts, such as yelling, screaming, name-calling, and ridiculing individuals in front of others, to less obvious but equally damaging practices like gossiping, blaming colleagues, spreading rumours, and making disparaging or discriminatory remarks (Salin & Notelaers, 2020). In certain contexts, it also includes sexually inappropriate verbal expressions, such as whistling or unsolicited sexual comments, further compounding its impact on victims. Importantly, even seemingly trivial remarks, when delivered persistently, form part of a broader pattern of harassment that undermines psychological safety in the workplace (Branch [et al.](#), 2013).

Discussions around verbal abuse highlight its multi-faceted nature within the broader framework of workplace mistreatment. It is often categorised as a form of personal aggression and has been described as a form of serious interpersonal deviant behaviour (Hoel & Cooper, 2021). Verbal abuse can also be viewed through the lens of emotional abuse, where communication is strategically weaponised to assert dominance or gain compliance. Research further reveals that social and organisational cultures often normalise such behaviours, dismissing them as jokes or banter, thereby perpetuating the cycle of abuse (Samnani & Singh, 2016). Gender dynamics also influence the experience of verbal abuse, as women are disproportionately subjected to derogatory remarks relating to appearance or family responsibilities, while men may experience verbal confrontations that escalate into open disputes (Giorgi et al., 2020).

The importance of addressing verbal abuse lies in its profound consequences for individual employees. Exposure to verbal aggression has been strongly associated with psychological distress, emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and depression, often leading to burnout and a decline in work engagement (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). Victims frequently suffer diminished job

satisfaction and confidence, impairing their ability to contribute effectively to organisational goals. Notably, the adverse effects of verbal abuse often persist long after the incidents cease, leaving individuals with feelings of shame and long-term emotional scars (Escartín, 2016).

For organisations, the consequences of verbal abuse are equally damaging. A workplace climate characterised by persistent verbal hostility undermines social cohesion and trust, creating antagonism among employees and reducing overall productivity (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2018). Verbal abuse contributes to absenteeism, higher turnover intentions, and declining morale, which ultimately translate into significant financial costs for the organisation. Companies that fail to address such behaviours risk reputational damage, legal liabilities, and reduced competitiveness. Hence, the establishment of strong ethical infrastructures, clear anti-bullying policies, and proactive managerial interventions are essential to curbing verbal abuse and fostering a positive, respectful workplace culture (Hogh *et al.*, 2021).

#### **2.2.2.2 Aggressive Behaviour**

Aggressive behaviour in the workplace has become a persistent challenge in contemporary organisations, undermining employee well-being and organisational performance. It represents a major dimension of workplace bullying and interpersonal mistreatment that negatively affects social relations at work. Unlike ordinary conflicts, aggressive behaviour is often systematic, repeated, and perceived by targets as hostile, thereby contributing to toxic organisational climates (Samnani & Singh, 2023). The growing recognition of this problem highlights the need to examine its manifestations, determinants, and implications for individuals and organisations globally and within African contexts.

Aggressive behaviour is broadly defined as hostile and psychologically harmful acts directed at others, often categorised as personal aggression or serious interpersonal deviant behaviour (Einarsen *et al.*, 2020). Its components range from verbal aggression, such as ridicule, insults, yelling, and derogatory remarks, to indirect acts like gossiping, withholding information, and undermining professional competence (Olusegun & Akinwale, 2021). While physical violence is relatively rare in professional settings, psychological and verbal forms are far more prevalent,

with surveys indicating that over 60% of employees in high-pressure industries have experienced one or more forms of workplace aggression (ILO, 2022). These behaviours often operate subtly, making them difficult to address through formal complaints.

Scholarly discussions reveal that workplace aggression is a multi-causal phenomenon shaped by individual, organisational, and socio-cultural factors. Individual-level drivers include low emotional regulation, authoritarian beliefs, and intolerance of ambiguity (Hoel & Salin, 2021). Organisationally, poor leadership styles such as autocratic or laissez-faire management have been strongly linked to bullying and aggressive behaviour (Salin & Björkqvist, 2022). Similarly, job stressors like high workload, role conflict, and ambiguity increase frustration and the likelihood of aggression (Ogbonnaya & Oguegbu, 2023). Cultural and societal contexts also play a role, as workplace aggression may be normalised in settings where hostile conduct is dismissed as “joking” or “toughness.” From a theoretical perspective, social learning theory suggests that employees who observe aggression being rewarded or tolerated are more likely to replicate such behaviours, embedding them into workplace norms (Bandura, 2020).

The importance of addressing aggressive behaviour stems from its profound consequences on both individuals and organisations. At the individual level, exposure to aggression has been associated with psychological distress, burnout, anxiety, depression, and lower self-esteem (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2022). Victims also tend to report reduced job satisfaction, diminished engagement, and lower productivity, which collectively impact overall performance. Organisationally, unchecked aggression erodes social cohesion, fosters distrust, and creates a hostile climate that increases absenteeism and turnover intentions. In Nigeria, for instance, studies in the banking and manufacturing sectors have reported that workplace aggression directly contributes to declining employee performance and higher attrition rates (Okolie & Akpan, 2022).

To mitigate these outcomes, organisations must adopt comprehensive strategies that promote ethical leadership and strengthen institutional responses. Establishing zero-tolerance policies, awareness campaigns, formal sanctions, and conflict-resolution mechanisms is essential for

curbing aggressive behaviour (Salin, 2023). Managers play a central role in intervening early in disputes, modelling positive behaviour, and embedding respect in organisational cultures. Addressing workplace aggression not only safeguards employee well-being but also enhances productivity, loyalty, and long-term sustainability. Hence, tackling this form of mistreatment is indispensable for organisations aiming to maintain healthy and high-performing workplaces.

### **2.2.2.3 Social Exclusion**

Social exclusion, also referred to as social isolation or the silent treatment, is a major form of workplace bullying and interpersonal mistreatment. It involves repeated and persistent negative acts that create a hostile work environment in which the target perceives themselves as unable to defend effectively (Einarsen et al., 2020). Unlike isolated conflicts, social exclusion is systematic and prolonged, thereby constituting a form of victimisation that disrupts both individual well-being and organisational functioning.

Manifestations of social exclusion include deliberate ignoring of colleagues, withholding critical information, exclusion from social or professional gatherings, silent treatment, public ridicule, and restricting opportunities to express one's views (Hoel & Cooper, 2021). Although individual acts such as gossiping or social withdrawal may appear trivial, their cumulative and patterned occurrence elevates them to serious interpersonal deviant behaviour (Robinson [et al.](#), 2019). Within bullying typologies, social exclusion is classified under personal aggression, a subcategory of counterproductive work behaviour that undermines social cohesion in the workplace (Appelbaum [et al.](#), 2007).

Several antecedents explain the occurrence of social exclusion. At the organisational level, a poor social climate characterised by distrust, antagonism, and weak collegial relations serves as a breeding ground (Salin, 2015). Power imbalances are also central, as perpetrators often occupy superior formal or informal positions, rendering victims defenseless (Einarsen et al., 2020). Furthermore, organisational politics and internal competition foster exclusionary tactics, where co-workers deliberately withhold information or obstruct rivals as a means of advancing their own standing (Rosen et al., 2016). Deficiencies in the psychosocial work environment,

particularly role ambiguity and lack of supportive leadership, further exacerbate this form of mistreatment (Samnani & Singh, 2012).

The consequences of social exclusion are profound. On the individual level, targets often report psychological distress, emotional exhaustion, anxiety, depression, and reduced self-esteem, alongside diminished job satisfaction and increased stress reactions (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). Beyond individual harm, social exclusion corrodes the wider organisational climate by undermining trust, collaboration, and team cohesion (Hoel et al., 2020). Over time, this fosters lower productivity, higher absenteeism, turnover intentions, and reputational costs (Ng & Feldman, 2012). Importantly, observers of bullying are also negatively affected, experiencing decreased morale and a sense of organisational injustice (Einarsen et al., 2020).

Thus, social exclusion represents a subtle yet damaging form of workplace bullying, distinct from overt aggression but equally detrimental to employee performance and organisational sustainability. Addressing it requires interventions that strengthen organisational culture, leadership accountability, and policies against mistreatment.

#### **2.2.2.4 Gender Discrimination**

Gender discrimination in the workplace refers to the unfair treatment of employees on the basis of their sex, often manifesting in biased practices, exclusion, or unequal opportunities. Despite increased awareness and legislation, gender discrimination persists across industries and organisational settings, posing a major challenge to achieving workplace equity (ILO, 2023). It is closely linked to other forms of workplace mistreatment, such as bullying and sexual harassment, with underlying power imbalances and stereotypes fuelling its continuation (Healy et al., 2022).

Definitions of gender discrimination generally emphasise unequal treatment in employment decisions, including hiring, promotion, pay, and job assignments, that disadvantage one gender over another (Choi & Kim, 2023). The concept includes both overt practices, such as pay disparities, and subtle acts, such as exclusion from key networks or stereotyping of women's

capabilities. Its components span gender harassment, stereotyping in job allocation, exclusion from decision-making, work/family policing, pay inequality, and even sexual violence in severe cases (Hoel et al., 2021). These forms are interconnected, often reinforcing systemic barriers that undermine employees' rights and dignity.

Research has shown that gender discrimination is shaped by a combination of structural, organisational, and cultural factors. Organisational cultures that normalise sexist behaviour, weak leadership intervention, and "silent networks" of tolerance sustain discriminatory practices (Morimoto & Judge, 2021). Negative stereotypes and biases also contribute, whereby women are often perceived as less suitable for leadership or demanding roles. Additionally, resistance to organisational change and poor awareness or training on gender equity exacerbate the persistence of discrimination, leaving affected employees without adequate protection or support (Hennekam & Bennett, 2023).

The importance of addressing gender discrimination lies in its significant consequences for both individuals and organisations. At the individual level, victims often face psychological distress, reduced job satisfaction, decreased performance, and long-term career stagnation (Odeku, 2022). For organisations, discrimination fosters a hostile work environment, reduces innovation and creativity, increases absenteeism, and results in higher turnover costs (Sabharwal & Malish, 2021). In the long term, unchecked discrimination undermines organisational performance and damages reputation, making equity not only a moral but also a strategic imperative.

Ultimately, gender discrimination in the workplace is both a social justice issue and a critical determinant of organisational success. The consequences of ignoring it include diminished employee well-being, loss of valuable talent, and declining productivity. Conversely, organisations that proactively address discrimination by implementing inclusive policies, promoting gender-sensitive leadership, and encouraging open dialogue benefit from improved morale, diversity-driven innovation, and enhanced competitiveness (Choi & Kim, 2023). Tackling gender discrimination therefore requires deliberate cultural and structural interventions to foster workplaces that uphold fairness, respect, and equal opportunity.

### **2.2.2.5 Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that constitutes discrimination based on sex. It is globally recognised as a persistent workplace challenge with wide-ranging consequences for individuals and organisations (ILO, 2022). Although scholarly engagement with the subject intensified in the 1970s, evidence suggests that such behaviours have existed across decades, often unnamed and normalised within workplace cultures (Cortina & Areguin, 2021). In contemporary organisations, it remains one of the most significant threats to workplace equity and employee well-being, particularly affecting women and other vulnerable groups (Odeku, 2022).

Scholars generally classify sexual harassment into three primary categories: sexual coercion, unwanted sexual attention, and gender harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Willness et al., 2007). Sexual coercion involves threats or promises of professional benefits in exchange for sexual favours, while unwanted sexual attention includes inappropriate comments, touching, or advances. Gender harassment, the most prevalent, refers to sexist behaviours or remarks that humiliate or undermine women without necessarily involving sexual interaction (Cortina & Berdahl, 2008). Cortina's Iceberg Model explains that visible "come-ons" (coercion and unwanted attention) often receive attention in policies, whereas subtle "put-downs" such as sexist jokes and stereotypes remain unacknowledged, despite their damaging effects (Cortina & Areguin, 2021). In Nigeria, studies indicate that gender harassment is more common than overt sexual coercion, reflecting deep-rooted socio-cultural stereotypes about women's roles (Odeku, 2022).

Empirical evidence shows that sexual harassment is widespread, with underreporting remaining a persistent issue. An EU survey revealed that one in three women experienced some form of sexual or physical violence since age 15 (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). A meta-analysis by Willness et al. (2007) reported that nearly 58% of women encounter sexually harassing behaviour at work. The WHO (2021) further confirms that one in two working women report harassment at some point in their career. In Nigeria, Odeku (2022) found that over

40% of female employees in the public sector reported experiencing harassment, yet most cases were silenced due to fear of retaliation and cultural taboos. Younger women, especially those aged 18–29, are disproportionately affected (Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020). While men also experience harassment, rates are significantly lower, and research on non-binary individuals remains limited.

The persistence of sexual harassment is rooted in unequal gender power relations and structural inequalities in the workplace (ILO, 2022). Women's vulnerability often arises from their concentration in lower organisational positions, making them more susceptible to abuse from those in authority (Morimoto & Judge, 2021). Organisational culture also plays a critical role; cultures that trivialise sexist behaviour or tolerate silence provide fertile ground for harassment to thrive (Hoel & Vartia, 2018). Leadership behaviour is another determinant factor. Leaders who ignore complaints reinforce the perception that harassment is acceptable (Healy et al., 2022). In Nigeria, patriarchal traditions and gender stereotypes reinforce discriminatory practices, with women frequently excluded from leadership pipelines and decision-making networks (Odeku, 2022). Furthermore, resistance to organisational change and lack of awareness among HR managers about bystander intervention strategies exacerbate the problem (Buchanan & Fitzgerald, 2008).

Sexual harassment produces severe consequences at both individual and organisational levels. For individuals, it is associated with psychological and health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Chan et al., 2008). Victims also report diminished job satisfaction, reduced motivation, and career stagnation (Willness et al., 2007). In Nigeria, Odeku (2022) documented that women facing harassment frequently withdraw from career progression opportunities, leading to long-term economic losses. For organisations, harassment fosters a hostile work environment, reduces productivity, and increases turnover rates (ILO, 2022). It also damages corporate reputation and exposes firms to legal liability, with significant financial implications (Hoel & Vartia, 2018).

Addressing sexual harassment requires structural and cultural reforms. Scholars emphasise the importance of zero-tolerance policies, clear grievance procedures, and ethical infrastructures to prevent harassment (Cortina & Areguin, 2021). Leadership commitment is crucial, as managers serve as role models whose actions shape organisational culture (Healy et al., 2022). Training programmes, particularly those focused on bystander intervention, have been identified as effective in empowering employees to challenge harassment (Buchanan & Fitzgerald, 2008). Promoting inclusivity and open dialogue also helps dismantle silent networks that sustain harassment. In Nigeria, Odeku (2022) recommends organisational reforms that combine awareness campaigns with strict sanctions for perpetrators, ensuring that victims are not penalised by being transferred or excluded from opportunities.

#### **2.2.2.6 Cyberbullying**

Workplace cyberbullying has emerged as a significant concern in contemporary organisational life, particularly in an era where digital technologies have become integral to communication and work processes. It is distinguished from traditional bullying by its online and mediated nature, which makes it more pervasive, harder to escape, and often more anonymous (Coyne et al., 2023). As digital platforms increasingly blur the boundaries between personal and professional spaces, cyberbullying introduces new forms of interpersonal mistreatment that pose serious risks to employee well-being and organisational productivity.

Workplace cyberbullying is defined as repeated exposure to negative acts conducted through technology, such as emails, instant messaging, social media, or organisational platforms, within the context of work (Forsell, 2020). It is often categorised into two forms: work-related cyberbullying, which includes behaviours such as withholding work-related information, excessive monitoring, or sabotaging tasks; and person-related cyberbullying, which encompasses gossip, personal attacks, and hostile communication via digital means (Hong et al., 2022). This technological mediation means that unlike face-to-face bullying, the aggression may persist outside normal working hours, leaving employees with little opportunity to disengage.

Scholars have identified several predictors and contextual factors that contribute to workplace cyberbullying. Employees in managerial roles are found to be more vulnerable, possibly due to higher visibility and accountability in digital communication networks (Kowalski et al., 2021). Organisational climates that lack supportive structures and effective policies also increase susceptibility, while individual characteristics, such as poor physical health and low digital resilience, are associated with higher exposure (Kakarika et al., 2022). Furthermore, the rise of remote and hybrid work arrangements has created new dynamics in which digital hostility may be amplified, especially where organisational boundaries are poorly defined.

The consequences of workplace cyberbullying are profound and multifaceted. For individuals, it is linked to heightened psychological distress, job dissatisfaction, disengagement, and reduced performance, with research suggesting that remote workers in particular report stronger negative effects on well-being compared to those in hybrid arrangements (Chen & Wang, 2023). For organisations, cyberbullying undermines collaboration, erodes trust, and increases turnover intentions, which collectively diminish innovation and long-term performance (Einarsen et al., 2020). The indirect costs, such as reduced employee commitment and reputational risks, further emphasise the importance of addressing the phenomenon.

In terms of organisational response, effective prevention and intervention strategies are essential. Research underscores the role of active bystander behaviour in mitigating the negative consequences of cyberbullying, highlighting the importance of cultivating cultures where colleagues are empowered to intervene (Gardner et al., 2021). Similarly, resilience training, particularly in high-pressure sectors such as information technology, has been recommended to equip employees with coping mechanisms (Coyne et al., 2023). Beyond individual-level responses, the development of reliable measurement tools such as the Workplace Cyberbullying Measure (WCM) provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for better understanding the phenomenon and designing targeted interventions (Farley et al., 2016). Thus, workplace cyberbullying, though relatively under-researched, is a critical issue that demands sustained scholarly and managerial attention.

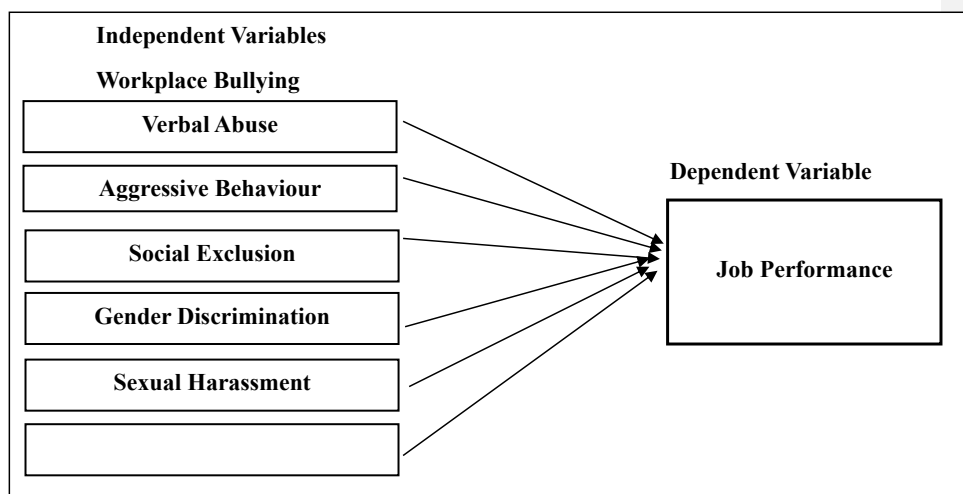
### 2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the hypothesised relationship between workplace bullying and employee performance within agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State. It provides a schematic representation of how different forms of workplace bullying act influence employee performance. The framework recognises workplace bullying as a multidimensional construct encompassing verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, social exclusion, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying.

In this framework, each form of bullying is theorised to contribute negatively to employee performance by affecting psychological well-being, job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment. Verbal abuse and aggressive behaviour are associated with psychological distress and emotional exhaustion, reducing productivity. Social exclusion undermines team cohesion and organisational trust, while gender discrimination and sexual harassment perpetuate inequality and demotivation. Cyberbullying, an emerging dimension of bullying facilitated by digital platforms, disrupts employee focus and work engagement.

Employee performance is conceptualised in terms of task completion, productivity, efficiency, job satisfaction, and overall contribution to organisational goals. The assumption underpinning the framework is that higher prevalence and intensity of bullying behaviours correspond to lower levels of employee performance. The framework thus provides the basis for empirically testing the relationship between workplace bullying and employee performance in the Nigerian agro-industrial sector by guiding the operationalisation of the research variables while highlighting the contextual gaps in existing literature, particularly in African industrial settings.

*Figure 1: Conceptual Representation*



**Source: Researcher's Conceptualisation (2025)**

## **2.4 Theoretical Review**

This section examines certain organisational behaviour theories that are related to the topic under discourse.

### ***Social Exchange Theory***

Social Exchange Theory (SET) was formally articulated by George Homans in 1958, later expanded by Peter Blau in 1964 and Richard Emerson in 1976. Homans focused on the micro-level interactions between individuals, Blau extended the theory to organisational and societal settings, while Emerson developed its structural basis, linking exchange to power and dependence relations.

The central premise of SET is that social relationships are governed by a cost-benefit analysis and reciprocity principle (Blau, 1964). Individuals engage in interactions when they perceive potential rewards (e.g., support, respect, resources) outweighing the costs (e.g., stress, conflict). Reciprocity ensures mutual benefit and sustains relationships, while imbalance or exploitation leads to dissatisfaction and withdrawal (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Trust, commitment, and fairness serve as mediating mechanisms in maintaining positive exchanges.

A key strength of SET lies in its explanatory power across a wide range of workplace behaviours, including commitment, trust, and performance outcomes. It highlights the relational dynamics between employees and organisations, providing insights into why fairness and respect are critical for positive outcomes (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). Another strength is its adaptability, as it applies to both formal and informal relationships. However, the theory has weaknesses. Critics argue that it assumes rationality, whereas human relationships often involve

emotions, power asymmetries, and cultural factors not easily reduced to cost-benefit analysis (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). It also tends to underplay structural inequalities that shape exchanges, an issue partly addressed by more recent perspectives such as the intersectionality framework.

SET has been widely applied in organisational behaviour research to explain employee attitudes and behaviours such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, citizenship behaviour, and turnover intentions (Shore et al., 2020). It frames the employment relationship as an exchange process where organisations provide resources, rewards, and fair treatment, while employees reciprocate with loyalty, effort, and performance. It is also useful in explaining how violations of trust and fairness (e.g., perceived injustice) lead to disengagement and negative work behaviours.

In the context of workplace bullying, including cyberbullying, SET explains how negative interactions violate the expected norms of reciprocity. Instead of mutual respect and fairness, victims are subjected to harmful behaviours that impose high psychological costs with little or no benefit. This perceived imbalance undermines their trust in colleagues and the organisation, reducing commitment and performance (Samnani & Singh, 2016). Cyberbullying, in particular, exacerbates the imbalance since it extends beyond the physical workplace and often involves power misuse through technology. Employees who experience such breaches in exchange relationships may withdraw, exhibit reduced innovation, or consider exit (Liu et al., 2021). Hence, SET offers a valuable framework for understanding how bullying behaviours damage social exchange relationships and why organisations must foster fairness and reciprocity to mitigate these harms.

### ***Organisational Justice Theory***

The concept of organisational justice emerged in the 1960s from J. Stacy Adams' *Equity Theory* (1963), which explained fairness in social exchange. Later, Greenberg (1987, 1990) extended and popularised the notion of organisational justice, identifying it as a multi-dimensional construct encompassing distributive, procedural, and interactional justice.

The central argument of the theory is that employees' perceptions of fairness in outcomes, processes, and interpersonal interactions shape their attitudes and behaviours at work. Greenberg's contributions identified three main dimensions of justice: distributive justice, which concerns the fairness of resource allocation; procedural justice, which relates to the fairness of the processes that determine outcomes; and interactional justice, which deals with the quality of interpersonal treatment, later separated into informational and interpersonal fairness. Collectively, these dimensions suggest that perceptions of justice foster trust, commitment, and cooperation, while injustice breeds resentment, withdrawal, and counterproductive behaviour (Colquitt et al., 2013).

A major strength of this theory is its comprehensive coverage of fairness across outcomes, processes, and interactions, making it highly applicable to workplace research. It also explains a wide range of employee behaviours, including performance, job satisfaction, and organisational citizenship (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009). However, a key weakness is its reliance on subjective perceptions, which vary across individuals and cultures. The theory also struggles to fully account for power dynamics, structural inequalities, and systemic biases that influence fairness in organisations (Byrne & Cropanzano, 2001).

Organisational Justice Theory has been applied broadly in management and human resource studies to explain employee engagement, motivation, turnover, and trust in leadership. It has been influential in understanding workplace dynamics such as compliance with policies, acceptance of organisational change, and willingness to contribute beyond formal duties (Colquitt et al., 2013). It is also useful in designing fair policies and grievance mechanisms in organisations.

In the context of workplace bullying and cyberbullying, Organisational Justice Theory explains how employees subjected to unfair treatment, ridicule, or exclusion perceive a violation of justice. Bullying erodes both interactional justice (through disrespectful treatment) and procedural justice (when organisations fail to prevent or address the behaviour). This perceived injustice undermines trust in management, reduces morale, and negatively affects performance

(Einarsen et al., 2020). Employees experiencing workplace cyberbullying, for instance, often feel that organisational policies inadequately protect them, exacerbating their sense of injustice and further reducing engagement and productivity (Branch et al., 2019). The theory thus provides a lens to analyse how fairness and respect are integral to healthy workplace relationships, and how bullying represents a breach of justice expectations.

### ***Stress Response Theory***

This theory was originally advanced by Hans Selye in 1936 and was later elaborated in his *General Adaptation Syndrome* (1950). The theory provides a foundational understanding of how individuals react physiologically and psychologically to stressors in their environment. According to Selye, the body responds to prolonged stress through three stages: the alarm reaction, where the individual initially perceives the threat and activates the “fight or flight” response; the resistance stage, where the body attempts to adapt to ongoing stress; and the exhaustion stage, where prolonged exposure to stress depletes resources, leading to burnout, illness, or decreased functioning (Selye, 1950). The theory essentially posits that stress, if unrelieved, erodes individual capacity, undermining health, performance, and overall well-being. Later extensions, such as Lazarus and Folkman’s transactional model of stress and coping (1984), emphasised the cognitive appraisal process, whereby individuals evaluate whether situations are threatening and whether they possess the resources to cope effectively.

The strength of Stress Response Theory lies in its clear articulation of the physiological underpinnings of stress and its intuitive explanation of how sustained stress affects both health and behaviour. It has been widely applied in occupational health psychology, explaining how work-related stress contributes to absenteeism, burnout, and reduced productivity (Ganster & Rosen, 2013). Furthermore, its staged model provides a useful diagnostic lens for identifying where individuals are in their stress journey, enabling the design of interventions at different stages. However, the theory has notable weaknesses. Critics argue that it is overly deterministic, as not all individuals progress uniformly through the stages, and it underestimates the role of psychological, social, and cultural resources in moderating stress effects (Koolhaas et al., 2011).

Moreover, the model tends to focus on physiological strain, often neglecting broader organisational dynamics such as leadership style, fairness, and workplace culture that can exacerbate or mitigate stress.

In terms of general application, Stress Response Theory has been influential in clinical and organisational settings, shaping stress management interventions, employee assistance programmes, and workplace wellness strategies. It provides a framework for understanding how occupational stress translates into health outcomes such as cardiovascular disease, depression, and anxiety, while also guiding preventive measures such as job redesign, work–life balance initiatives, and resilience training (Richardson, 2017).

Specifically, in the context of workplace bullying, Stress Response Theory offers critical insights into how prolonged exposure to negative acts such as verbal abuse, social exclusion, and undue criticism can trigger the stress cycle. Victims of bullying often enter the alarm stage due to perceived threat, but as the hostile acts persist, they transition into the resistance stage, where coping resources are stretched. Eventually, without organisational intervention, employees may reach the exhaustion stage, resulting in severe psychological distress, reduced job performance, absenteeism, or eventual exit from the organisation (Einarsen et al., 2020). The same logic applies in cases of cyberbullying, where constant digital exposure prolongs stressors beyond the physical workplace. Thus, Stress Response Theory provides a robust explanatory lens for understanding the health and performance consequences of workplace bullying, while also reinforcing the urgency of organisational interventions to prevent escalation into exhaustion and burnout.

### ***Power and Dominance Theory***

Power and Dominance Theory can be traced to the classical works of Max Weber (1922), who conceptualised power as the ability of an actor to realise their will in a social relationship, even against resistance. This foundation was expanded by French and Raven (1959), who articulated five bases of power: coercive, reward, legitimate, expert, and referent, explaining how individuals or groups exert control over others. Later scholarship, particularly in organisational

behaviour and sociology, examined how dominance relationships emerge when one party consistently exercises power to influence or control another, often leading to asymmetrical interactions and, in some cases, exploitative or abusive behaviours (Raven, 2008). The core tenet of the theory is that social and workplace interactions are often structured by unequal power dynamics, which, when abused, create conditions for dominance, subordination, and sometimes, victimisation.

The strengths of Power and Dominance Theory lie in its ability to explain structural inequalities and hierarchical relationships in organisations. It helps to illuminate how authority, when combined with dependency, creates opportunities for coercion and exploitation (Hollander, 2012). Its emphasis on different power bases also provides practical insights into how leaders and supervisors influence employee behaviour. However, the theory's weaknesses include its limited attention to the agency of subordinates, as it often assumes that those in weaker positions are passive recipients of domination. Additionally, critics argue that it can overemphasise structural power at the expense of cultural, interpersonal, and psychological factors that shape workplace dynamics (Clegg et al., 2019).

In terms of general application, the theory has been widely used in political science, sociology, and organisational studies to explain phenomena such as leadership effectiveness, authority structures, and patterns of obedience and resistance. It has been particularly useful in understanding authoritarian regimes, patriarchal systems, and workplace hierarchies where unequal power distribution is institutionalised.

In the specific context of workplace bullying, Power and Dominance Theory is especially relevant. Bullying often occurs when individuals in positions of formal or informal power misuse their authority to dominate subordinates, co-workers, or even peers. For example, supervisors may employ coercive or legitimate power to intimidate employees, while peers may use social exclusion or withholding of resources to establish dominance (Einarsen et al., 2020). In this way, bullying is not simply a behavioural issue but a reflection of deeper structural and relational inequalities within the organisation. The theory highlights how hierarchical organisational

cultures, weak accountability structures, and dependency relationships can create fertile ground for bullying behaviours. It also provides a framework for explaining why victims often remain silent, as fear of retaliation or loss of resources reinforces the power imbalance. Thus, Power and Dominance Theory provides a compelling lens for analysing how authority and control, when abused, manifest as bullying, ultimately undermining employee well-being and performance.

### ***Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory***

The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory was originally proposed by Hobfoll (1989) and has since become one of the most influential frameworks for understanding stress, motivation, and behaviour in organisational and social psychology. The central tenet of the theory is that individuals are motivated to acquire, protect, and retain resources that they value, which may include objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies. Stress arises when these resources are threatened, lost, or insufficient to meet demands, while resource gain is associated with positive outcomes such as enhanced well-being, motivation, and performance (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

A key principle of COR Theory is the “loss spiral,” which suggests that once resources begin to deplete, individuals are more vulnerable to further losses, often leading to stress, burnout, and disengagement. Conversely, resource gain spirals demonstrate how accumulating and reinforcing resources can create resilience and support sustainable performance. The theory is widely recognised for shifting the focus of stress research from a purely psychological perspective to one that considers tangible and social resources, thereby offering a comprehensive view of how people cope with and adapt to stressors (Halbesleben et al., 2014).

The strengths of COR Theory include its broad applicability across different contexts and its flexibility in accounting for both individual and organisational factors. It is also empirically supported in explaining burnout, resilience, and workplace engagement. However, one limitation is its sometimes vague definition of what constitutes a “resource,” which makes operationalisation difficult in research. Furthermore, critics argue that it may not fully capture

the dynamic and contextual aspects of stress responses, as the value of resources may vary across individuals and cultures (Westman et al., 2021).

In general application, COR Theory has been extensively employed in organisational behaviour, occupational health, and psychology to explain phenomena such as job stress, employee resilience, work–family conflict, and performance outcomes. It is particularly useful in designing interventions that focus on building employee resources, such as social support, skills development, and organisational support systems, to buffer against job-related stress.

In the specific context of workplace bullying and employee performance, COR Theory provides valuable insights. Bullying is a significant stressor that depletes vital resources, such as emotional energy, self-esteem, and social support. Victims of bullying often enter a resource loss spiral, experiencing reduced psychological well-being, impaired concentration, and declining performance. At the organisational level, bullying disrupts the collective resource pool by eroding trust, cohesion, and morale, which further undermines productivity. Conversely, organisations that actively build resources, through strong leadership, supportive policies, and resilience training, can buffer employees against the negative impact of bullying. Thus, COR Theory underscores the importance of organisational strategies that not only mitigate resource loss but also foster resource gain to sustain employee performance in challenging environments.

### ***The Intersectionality Framework***

The Intersectionality Framework was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 as a critical response to the limitations of traditional approaches to understanding inequality and discrimination. Crenshaw argued that individuals' experiences cannot be explained solely by single categories such as race, gender, or class, but must instead be understood at the intersections of multiple, overlapping social identities and structures of power (Crenshaw, 1989). The framework therefore highlights how systems of oppression, such as sexism, racism, classism, ableism, or ageism, interact to create unique experiences of disadvantage and privilege. The core tenet of intersectionality is that social categories are not independent but interdependent, shaping the lived realities of individuals in complex and dynamic ways. It rejects

the notion of “single-axis” analysis, which treats identities such as gender or ethnicity as isolated determinants of inequality, and instead emphasises their simultaneous operation. Intersectionality has evolved from its feminist legal origins into a widely adopted lens across disciplines such as sociology, political science, management, and organisational studies (Cho et al., 2013).

The strengths of the framework lie in its ability to capture the complexity of human experience and expose how systems of inequality operate in subtle, layered ways. It enables more inclusive research and policies that account for diverse voices, especially those marginalised in dominant discourses. However, critics argue that intersectionality is often difficult to operationalise in empirical research because of its broad scope and conceptual complexity. There is also debate over the risk of “infinite regress,” where too many intersecting categories complicate analysis and policy design (Nash, 2019).

In general application, the Intersectionality Framework has been instrumental in examining workplace diversity, social justice, and organisational equity. It provides insights into how overlapping identities influence employment outcomes, leadership opportunities, and exposure to workplace mistreatment. For instance, women of colour may experience discrimination not only based on gender or race alone but through their combined, intersecting effects.

In the specific context of workplace bullying and employee performance, intersectionality is highly relevant. Bullying may not affect all employees equally but is often intensified when individuals hold multiple marginalised identities, such as being female, ethnic minority, or junior staff in hierarchical organisations. These employees may face heightened risks of social exclusion, power imbalances, and lack of institutional support, which exacerbate resource depletion and performance decline. Applying an intersectional lens allows organisations to understand how different groups experience bullying differently and to design tailored interventions that address structural inequalities. Ultimately, the Intersectionality Framework highlights that workplace bullying is not a neutral phenomenon but one shaped by the interaction of social identities and power dynamics within organisational contexts.

### *Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model*

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model was originally introduced by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli in 2001 as a framework to explain how different job characteristics influence employee well-being and performance. The central tenet of the model is that every occupation has its unique job demands and job resources, and the interaction between these two categories determines employee outcomes (Demerouti et al., 2001). Job demands are aspects of work that require sustained effort and are associated with psychological or physiological costs, such as workload, role conflict, or workplace bullying. In contrast, job resources are aspects of the job that help achieve work goals, reduce job demands, or stimulate personal growth, such as autonomy, social support, and organisational justice (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

The strengths of the JD-R Model lie in its flexibility and broad applicability across different professions and organisational settings. It provides a balanced perspective by recognising both the negative impact of excessive demands and the positive role of resources. The model has been widely validated and extended, including its integration into the health impairment process (where excessive demands lead to strain and burnout) and the motivational process (where resources foster engagement and performance). However, a notable weakness is that its generality may limit precision; because demands and resources can vary widely across contexts, researchers sometimes struggle to specify consistent constructs, leading to potential measurement challenges (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

In its general application, the JD-R Model has been employed to study burnout, engagement, organisational commitment, and performance in various sectors, including education, healthcare, and corporate environments. It has also been extended to include personal resources such as resilience and self-efficacy, highlighting the interaction between individual traits and workplace conditions.

Specifically applied to workplace bullying and employee performance, the JD-R Model is particularly insightful. Workplace bullying, including cyberbullying, is conceptualised as a significant job demand because it depletes emotional and psychological resources, leading to

strain, disengagement, and impaired performance. When resources such as managerial support, fairness, and active bystander intervention are lacking, the detrimental effects of bullying intensify. Conversely, the presence of adequate resources can buffer the negative consequences of bullying, sustaining employee well-being and productivity despite adverse experiences (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). This makes the JD-R Model a robust theoretical lens for examining how bullying undermines employee performance and how organisational interventions can mitigate these effects.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on the Organisational Justice Theory and the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, both of which provide complementary perspectives for understanding the relationship between workplace bullying and employee performance.

The Organisational Justice Theory emphasises the role of perceived fairness in shaping employee attitudes and behaviours. It is predicated on three core dimensions: distributive justice, which relates to the perceived fairness of outcomes; procedural justice, which concerns the fairness of processes used in decision-making; and interactional justice, which focuses on the fairness of interpersonal treatment within the workplace (Colquitt et al., 2013). The theory argues that when employees perceive fairness in their organisations, they are more likely to demonstrate commitment, satisfaction, and higher performance. Conversely, violations of justice expectations, such as through bullying behaviours that deny employees respect, voice, or fair treatment, foster resentment, disengagement, and performance decline. In the context of this study, workplace bullying constitutes a breach of justice principles by undermining equitable treatment and eroding trust, thereby reducing employee performance.

The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory complements this perspective by focusing on the resources individuals value and strive to protect. According to the theory, people are motivated to acquire, retain, and safeguard resources such as energy, social support, self-esteem, and professional standing. Stress arises when these resources are threatened, lost, or insufficiently replenished. Workplace bullying, as a persistent stressor, leads to significant resource depletion

through emotional exhaustion, loss of confidence, and reduced psychological safety. Over time, these losses impair employees' capacity to perform effectively. However, the availability of organisational resources, such as supportive leadership, collegial networks, and effective anti-bullying policies, can buffer against these negative effects by replenishing depleted resources and fostering resilience (Halbesleben et al., 2014).

Integrating both theories, this study conceptualises workplace bullying as a violation of fairness expectations (Organisational Justice Theory) and as a stressor that depletes valuable resources (COR Theory). The interaction of these perspectives underscores that bullying not only signals unfair treatment but also triggers a cycle of resource loss that undermines employee well-being and productivity. Thus, the theoretical framework provides a dual lens for examining how bullying behaviours adversely affect employee performance in organisational settings.

## **2.6 Empirical Review**

### **2.6.1 Verbal Abuse and Employee Performance**

Nishimura, Matsumoto, Sasaki and Kubo (2024) investigated the relationship between exposure to various types of aggressive words at work and their impact on the victim's depressive symptoms and sleep disturbance. Conducting a longitudinal survey with 800 workers in wholesale and retail companies, the authors employ text mining to categorize aggressive words encountered at work. Their findings suggest that exposure to words threatening one's life is significantly associated with depression risk, while words criticizing job performance relate to sleep disturbance risk. The study underscores the importance of considering different forms of verbal aggression and their effects on workers' health, advocating for effective communication strategies and psychological detachment from work to mitigate adverse impacts.

Madlock and Kennedy-Lightsey (2009) examined the relationship between supervisors' mentoring and verbal aggression and their subordinates' perceived communication satisfaction, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Their study, involving 200 full-time working adults, supports prior research indicating positive associations between supervisor mentoring and

subordinates' outcomes, and negative associations between supervisors' verbal aggression and subordinates' outcomes. Regression analysis reveals that verbal aggression is a stronger negative predictor of subordinates' outcomes than mentoring is a positive predictor, underscoring a negativity bias in the supervisor-subordinate relationship. Path analysis further elucidates the mediating role of communication satisfaction in the relationship between mentoring and subordinate organizational commitment. The study contributes to understanding supervisor-subordinate dynamics and their impact on organizational outcomes.

Cahú et al (2014) conducted a cross-sectional study with 259 nurses in primary healthcare units and public hospitals in Brazil to investigate moral harassment. The tool used was a questionnaire accessible through the union council's website, demonstrating the prevalence and consequences of moral harassment in the workplace. Findings indicate that nurses commonly perceive moral harassment as manipulation by aggressors against the victim's interests and hindrance of professional development. The study concludes that moral harassment significantly impacts nurses' work performance, health, and emotional well-being.

### **2.6.2 Aggressive Behaviour and Employee Performance**

Owoyemi and Akintayo (2015) examined workplace bullying in Nigeria, highlighting its prevalence in the public sector, influenced by cultural acceptance. The study, using qualitative methods, uncovers underreporting due to fear of retribution, with religion emerging as a coping mechanism in the absence of social benefits. Bullying's impact on productivity is profound, leading to disenchanted workforces, resignations, and psychosomatic symptoms. The authors stress the need for proactive management to analyse risk factors, emphasizing the urgency for Nigerian establishments to create more productive work climates to stay competitive globally.

Arubayi (2023) addressed a gap in previous studies by investigating the relationship between workplace toxicity variables (narcissistic behaviour, harassment, offensive/aggressive leadership, bullying, and ostracism) and employee performance. Conducted in Nigerian water production factories, the study, involving 132 participants, used a structured questionnaire.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation results establish a significant relationship between all workplace toxicity variables and employee performance. Recommendations include implementing zero harassment policies and fostering an environment where victims feel safe to report workplace toxicity.

Ucho (2013) investigated the impact of workplace bullying and job satisfaction on job performance in a Nigerian federal hospital. The study, involving 192 employees, utilized questionnaires to gather responses. Findings revealed that employees experiencing lower levels of bullying performed better, as did those with higher job satisfaction. A significant negative relationship was found between workplace bullying and job satisfaction. Despite no significant interaction effect, the study emphasizes the need for support for employees facing workplace bullying to mitigate negative consequences on well-being and performance.

Oghojafor [et al](#) (2012) conducted an empirical study on workplace bullying in Nigeria, motivated by the observed increase in bullying incidents and limited empirical research. Employing a descriptive research design, the study utilized questionnaires to gather data from employees in government and private institutions. Findings indicated a growing incidence of workplace bullying in Nigeria, contrasting with England where it is reportedly steady. The study highlights a lack of anti-bullying policies in many organizations, raising concerns about potential escalation. Leadership styles, particularly bureaucratic and authoritarian styles, are identified as contributors to bullying. Various forms of bullying include unfair treatment, verbal insults, misuse of power, and obstruction of promotion or training opportunities. Targeted groups include subordinates, directors, external clients, peers, and managers.

Douglas, Harcourt, and Harcourt (2017) examined workplace violence and ethnic discrimination in a Nigerian tertiary institution. Surveying 600 University of Port Harcourt staff, the study finds a 9.9% prevalence of physical assault and 7% of ethnic/tribal discrimination. Risk factors include high workloads, home-work interface, career concerns, interpersonal relationships, and lack of

career development. The study emphasizes the need for the university to adopt and enforce occupational health and safety policies to mitigate these psychosocial hazards and ensure a safer work environment.

Malik et al (2018) investigated the relationships between supervisor- and customer-initiated psychological aggression and vigor across time, examining the mediating role of job stress in these relationships. Conducting a two-wave longitudinal study with 215 branch office employees of five large commercial banks in Islamabad, Pakistan, the authors find that both supervisor and customer aggression negatively predict vigor, with job stress partially mediating these relationships. Contrary to expectations, they find no significant differences between supervisor and customer aggression in relation to job stress and vigor. The findings underscore the importance of addressing workplace aggression and job stress to promote employee well-being and organizational performance.

LeBlanc and Barling (2004) explored workplace aggression perpetrated by organizational insiders and its predictors and outcomes. Their study reveals that while the majority of workplace aggression comes from outsiders, insiders engage in less dramatic acts such as spreading rumours and shouting at colleagues. Individual and organizational factors predict insider aggression, and victims experience negative personal and organizational outcomes. The findings underscore the need to address workplace aggression comprehensively, considering both its individual and organizational determinants and impacts.

Arubayi and Eruvbedede (2022) shed light on the prevalence of workplace harassment and favouritism across various organizations, both in the public and private sectors. Through a survey method involving structured questionnaires administered to 100 staff members of Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) Headquarters, the authors explored two objectives and corresponding research hypotheses. Employing simple linear regression analysis, they found significant statistical evidence indicating that workplace harassment and favouritism adversely affect staff performance. These findings underscore the prevalence of such practices among

employees and highlight the detrimental consequences they pose for employee performance. The authors recommend strategic efforts by BEDC management to eradicate workplace injustices and establish fair human resource systems to enhance staff performance in Nigeria.

### **2.6.3 Social Exclusion and Employee Performance**

Ugwu (2023) explored employee cynicism and workplace ostracism as mediators in the relationship between perceived organizational politics (POPs) and counterproductive work behavior (CWB) targeted at individual co-workers (CWB-I) and the organization (CWB-O). Conducting a longitudinal study with 794 university employees in south-eastern Nigeria, the authors utilize structural equation modelling to analyse data collected at three points of measurement. Their findings reveal that while POPs positively predict CWB-I, they do not directly predict CWB-O. However, POPs positively predict employee cynicism and workplace ostracism, with the latter significantly predicting both CWB-I and CWB-O. The study contributed to understanding the indirect relationship between POPs and CWB, highlighting the role of affect-laden processes in shaping employee behavior in a context previously overlooked.

Haldorai et al. (2020) investigated the influence of workplace ostracism on employee work engagement, exploring the mediating role of workplace belongingness and moderating role of intrinsic work motivation. Drawing on data from 402 hotel employees in Thailand, the authors find that workplace ostracism negatively impacts work engagement, with workplace belongingness mediating this relationship. Moreover, the negative effect of workplace ostracism on work engagement through workplace belongingness is stronger for employees with high intrinsic motivation. The study highlights the importance of fostering social connection and inclusivity in the workplace to enhance employee engagement and well-being.

Vijayakumar and Rajagopal (2025) examined the effects of workplace bullying on organisational commitment among nurses. The objective of their study was to explore the relationship between workplace bullying and organisational commitment, with emphasis on the sub-variables of

bullying. The study was carried out among 331 nurses drawn from 69 hospitals in Tamil Nadu, India. Workplace bullying was assessed using an adapted version of the Negative Acts Questionnaire, where respondents rated the frequency of 16 bullying behaviours, including personal attacks, physical assaults, work-related bullying, and experiences of being underestimated or undervalued. Organisational commitment was measured with an 18-item scale covering affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and partial least squares regression analysis, with significance set at the 0.05 level. Findings indicated that more than half of the respondents experienced workplace bullying very often or extremely often. Notably, work-related bullying and feelings of being undervalued were positively correlated with organisational commitment, suggesting that nurses exposed to such forms of bullying appeared more committed. However, personal and physical attacks showed no significant relationship with commitment. The authors concluded that while bullying is widespread in healthcare settings, the connection with organisational commitment is complex and may represent coping strategies rather than genuine commitment. They recommended that healthcare managers address bullying through awareness programmes, conflict-resolution mechanisms, strict anti-bullying policies, and support structures for affected staff.

Khan and Nazir (2025) investigated the impact of narcissistic supervision and workplace bullying on employee wellbeing and silence, considering psychological contract violation and emotional exhaustion as mediating factors. A pilot study involving 51 employees in the fast-food industry was initially carried out to validate the measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis. Thereafter, data were collected from 616 employees and analysed through Andrew Hayes' PROCESS macro to test the proposed relationships. The results revealed that narcissistic supervision and workplace bullying were positively associated with employee silence but negatively related to job wellbeing. Moreover, significant indirect relationships emerged through the mediating roles of psychological contract violation and emotional exhaustion, thereby supporting the research hypotheses. The study concluded that destructive supervisory practices and bullying behaviours severely compromise employee wellbeing while encouraging silence in

organisations. The authors emphasised the importance of organisational interventions to reduce the prevalence of such negative supervisory practices. They also acknowledged the limitations of their study, particularly with respect to generalisability, and called for future research across diverse sectors.

Tatar (2025) investigated employees' experiences of bullying in a leading textile company in Türkiye, using online employee reviews as a data source. A total of 104 reviews posted on Indeed.com were subjected to thematic analysis with the aid of Maxqda software. The findings revealed four dominant forms of workplace bullying: verbal, nonverbal, practical, and performance-related. Among these, practical and verbal bullying were the most frequently reported. Subthemes that emerged included persistent work pressure, unfair tasks, and direct insults, which were highlighted as the most common bullying behaviours. The study concluded that bullying remains a significant concern within the textile sector, with both overt and subtle mistreatment shaping employee experiences. Beyond its substantive findings, the research also demonstrated the methodological value of online reviews as a data source for workplace bullying research.

Mehmood et al (2024) examined how bullying and incivility affect employee performance through perceived psychological wellbeing (PWB), with perceived organisational support (POS) considered as a moderating factor. The research was focused on female nurses in the healthcare sector of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Findings revealed that both workplace bullying and incivility significantly harmed employee performance, with PWB mediating these relationships. Moreover, POS was found to moderate the negative effects, thereby cushioning employees from the full impact of bullying and incivility. The study concluded that supportive organisational climates are critical in protecting employee performance from destructive workplace behaviours. It recommended that healthcare organisations invest in creating positive, supportive environments to minimise the harmful effects of bullying and incivility.

Tiwari, Mathur, Narula and Verma (2024) investigated how workplace bullying influences self-concept, employee cynicism, and life satisfaction, which in turn affect performance. Data were collected from 200 employees across several banks, including ICICI and Axis, using standardised tools. Analysis was conducted through G\*power and SmartPLS4 software, applying structural equation modelling. Results showed that both workplace and personal bullying significantly increased employee cynicism and negatively influenced self-concept, which in turn harmed job performance and overall life satisfaction. Furthermore, bullying was found to heighten turnover intentions among banking employees. The study concluded that bullying adversely affects both professional and personal domains of employees, with serious implications for retention and productivity in the banking sector. It recommended that managers in the sector prioritise strategies that foster employee motivation and wellbeing in order to maintain a healthy and productive work environment.

Mabasa (2024) examined workplace bullying through the lived experiences of South African employees, with emphasis on cultural and contextual factors. A qualitative research design was employed, with purposive sampling used to select 21 employees who participated in semi-structured interviews. The data, analysed using content analysis, revealed two major themes: responses to bullying behaviour and the management of bullying behaviour. Subthemes under response to bullying included passive and active responses, while management of bullying behaviour was discussed in terms of personal management, organisational management, responsibility for managing bullying, and prevention. The study found that most participants responded to bullying by “doing nothing”, with age and gender playing important roles shaped by cultural beliefs and customs. A model for managing workplace bullying within an African context was proposed, incorporating indigenous knowledge. The study concluded that workplace bullying legislation was urgently needed in South Africa to address the severity of the problem, and it contributed both theoretically and practically to context-specific approaches for healthier workplaces.

In another related study, Mabasa and Maluka (2024) determined the effects of workplace bullying on victims, bystanders, and organisations, while situating the findings within an indigenous South African framework. Using a qualitative approach, the authors conducted semi-structured interviews with 21 employees recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. Analysis of the data identified three main outcomes of bullying: high turnover, compromised employee wellbeing, and compromised organisational performance. The study concluded that workplace bullying produces significant negative consequences for both individuals and organisations, and highlighted the importance of anti-bullying policies that incorporate indigenous knowledge. The authors recommended that government should enact legislation specific to workplace bullying, rather than relying on existing harassment laws, to provide a robust framework for addressing the issue.

Kurniasari [et al.](#) (2024) analysed the effects of job insecurity and workplace bullying on mental health, and to determine how mental health mediates the relationship between these factors and employee performance. The study targeted 64 employees of MTs Wajak District in Malang Regency, Indonesia, using a census sampling technique. Data were analysed using validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, and path analysis. The results indicated that both job insecurity and workplace bullying had significant negative effects on mental health. Job insecurity was found to negatively and significantly affect employee performance, while workplace bullying negatively but insignificantly affected performance. Mental health had a positive and significant influence on employee performance and was shown to mediate the relationship between both job insecurity and bullying with employee performance. The authors concluded that protecting employee mental health is critical for sustaining performance and suggested that organisations should adopt supportive policies to reduce job insecurity and bullying.

Mehmood [et al.](#) (2024) studied the impact of workplace bullying (WB) and workplace incivility (WI) on employee performance, focusing on the mediating role of

psychological wellbeing (PW). The study sampled female nurses and their supervisors working in public sector hospitals in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan. Using AMOS 21.0 to estimate structural equation models, the findings demonstrated that both workplace bullying and incivility had significant negative effects on employee performance. Importantly, psychological wellbeing mediated these relationships, with the harmful effects of bullying and incivility being reduced when wellbeing was considered. The authors concluded that psychological wellbeing plays a crucial role in mitigating the adverse consequences of toxic workplace behaviours. They recommended that healthcare organisations establish stress-free environments and adopt policies that enhance employee wellbeing to boost productivity and performance.

Buriro [et al](#) (2023) explored the prevalence and intensity of workplace bullying in the healthcare sector and its effects on employee performance. Data were collected from 318 hospital employees, using measures of negative acts behaviour and self-identification as bullying targets. The findings revealed that bullying prevalence was higher when measured through negative acts than when employees self-identified as targets. The study also found that the intensity of bullying was similar across targets, witnesses, and non-exposed employees, underscoring the widespread nature of the problem. Results indicated that bullying had detrimental effects on the quality of work and employee performance, affecting not only mental health but also the physical and social wellbeing of healthcare workers. The authors concluded that workplace bullying significantly undermines healthcare delivery and emphasised the need for stronger organisational interventions to protect employees.

Moffat [et al](#) (2023) investigated the relationship between environmental bullying, turnover intention, and the mediating effects of secure workplace attachment and environmental satisfaction, drawing on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and environmental psychology. The study was premised on the understanding that organisational sustainability relies heavily on minimising turnover and supporting employee well-being, motivation and performance. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, with data collected

from 182 office employees. Hypotheses were tested through a serial mediation model using the PROCESS macro. The findings revealed that employees subjected to environmental bullying, such as manipulation of office temperature or noise disturbance around workstations, exhibited higher turnover intentions. Furthermore, secure workplace attachment and environmental satisfaction significantly mediated this relationship, indicating that adverse environmental experiences weaken employees' attachment and satisfaction, thereby heightening their likelihood of leaving the organisation. The study concluded that environmental bullying undermines organisational sustainability by threatening employee retention, and recommended that management prioritise workplace spatial and physical features to foster attachment and satisfaction among employees.

Khairiyah [et al](#) (2023) conducted a study to examine the relationship between self-esteem and workplace bullying among employees of PT. Cahaya Murni Andalas Padang in Indonesia. The study conceptualised self-esteem as the independent variable and workplace bullying as the dependent variable. Data were collected from 108 employees through a saturated sampling technique, using validated scales for self-esteem and workplace bullying. Reliability tests showed strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.914 for self-esteem and 0.927 for workplace bullying. Correlation analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between self-esteem and workplace bullying ( $r = -0.663$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming the hypothesis that employees with lower self-esteem are more vulnerable to bullying behaviours. The study highlighted the importance of fostering self-esteem among employees as a strategy to mitigate bullying in the workplace. The authors recommended that organisations implement psychological support initiatives and promote positive workplace interactions to reduce bullying incidents.

Salin [et al](#) (2023) examined the impact of high-performance work practices (HPWPs) on employee wellbeing, focusing on engagement and workplace bullying, while testing the mediating role of organisational identification. A two-wave survey was

conducted among 213 psychologists in Finland. Findings revealed that HPWPs were positively associated with engagement and negatively associated with workplace bullying. Organisational identification mediated the relationship between HPWPs and engagement, though HPWPs also exerted a significant direct effect. The study contributed to debates on whether HPWPs enhance or undermine wellbeing, highlighting their role in fostering relationship wellbeing and underlining organisational identification as a crucial explanatory mechanism in the HPWPs–engagement linkage.

Olaleye and Lekunze (2023) investigated the influence of emotional intelligence and psychological resilience on workplace bullying and employee performance in manufacturing SMEs in south western Nigeria. A total of 512 employees completed online surveys, and data were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). Results demonstrated that workplace bullying was positively associated with employee performance, emotional intelligence, and psychological resilience. Psychological resilience moderated the bullying–performance and emotional intelligence–performance relationships, while mental health partially mediated the bullying–performance linkage. The study’s originality lay in its heuristic model, being the first to explore these relationships within Nigerian manufacturing SMEs. It recommended that managers foster bullying-free workplaces that uphold employee rights and wellbeing, thereby enhancing efficiency.

Gómez and Quintos (2023) explored the effects of workplace bullying on productivity, teamwork, sales, and income in the food service industry in Bulacan, Philippines. Employing a descriptive-correlational design, survey data were collected from service crew members across five quick-service restaurants. The findings revealed that employees strongly disagreed with experiencing workplace bullying, and similarly, disagreed with high levels of productivity, teamwork, and contribution to sales and income. However, a significant relationship was found between bullying experiences and employee productivity, teamwork, and sales contribution, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The study recommended that managers implement

proactive strategies to create conducive work environments that promote teamwork, productivity, and employee well-being.

Andriyani [et al.](#) (2023) examined workplace bullying from the perspective of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, emphasising its detrimental psychological effects. Data from employees in the food industry in Semarang, Indonesia, were analysed using Smart PLS. Results showed that workplace bullying had a significant positive effect on employees' anxiety and emotional exhaustion, which, in turn, negatively impacted performance. The study highlighted bullying as a key risk factor for depression and long-term hostility in organisations, undermining both individual and organisational health. It recommended proactive mitigation through awareness campaigns and organisational policies aimed at preventing bullying and addressing its adverse effects on employees' mental and physical wellbeing.

Emon [et al](#) (2023) investigated the role of employee stress in workplace bullying and its subsequent effect on organisational performance in Bangladeshi workplaces. Using a qualitative approach through open-ended interviews and focus groups, the study gathered insights from employees who had experienced or witnessed bullying. Findings indicated that work overload and personal factors such as age, gender, and education were major causes of stress, which heightened employees' vulnerability to bullying. Stress manifested through anxiety, depression, and disengagement, thereby making employees more susceptible to negative treatment by colleagues or superiors. The study further revealed that bullying had significant adverse effects on motivation, job satisfaction, absenteeism, and overall morale, ultimately reducing organisational productivity. Cultural elements, including collectivist norms and hierarchical respect for authority, were also identified as factors enabling bullying in Bangladeshi workplaces.

Arubayi (2023) examined workplace toxicity and employee performance in Nigerian manufacturing firms, focusing on variables such as narcissistic behaviour, harassment, aggressive leadership, bullying, and ostracism. Data were collected through structured

questionnaires administered to 132 respondents in water production factories within the Niger Delta Region. Using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, the study established a significant relationship between all workplace toxicity variables and employee performance. The findings highlighted that toxic behaviours, including bullying, eroded employee performance, underscoring the detrimental impact of negative organisational climates. The study recommended the adoption of zero-tolerance policies against harassment and bullying, alongside safe reporting channels to protect victims and enhance employee wellbeing.

Divyakala and Vasumathi (2023) explored workplace bullying, psychological wellbeing, and employee performance by reviewing publications indexed in the Web of Science database. Employing techniques such as citation, co-citation, co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence, and bibliographic coupling analyses, the study mapped the intellectual structure of research in the field. Key themes identified included positive psychology and wellbeing, therapeutic interventions for mental health, and gender-based differences in workplace experiences. The study provided a quantitative overview of influential works, collaboration trends, and emerging research areas, thereby offering valuable direction for future scholarship. Practically, it suggested that organisations could draw from existing research to design interventions and policies aimed at reducing bullying, supporting employee wellbeing, and improving performance.

Tubussum et al (2023) developed a conceptual framework to investigate the moderating role of organisational culture in the relationship between workplace bullying and organisational performance. The researchers argued that workplace bullying negatively affects both employees and organisational outcomes, but a strong organisational culture can help mitigate its harmful effects. Data is expected to be gathered from academic staff in 20 public universities in Malaysia, analysed through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using Smart PLS. While the study contributes by proposing a model that incorporates organisational culture as a moderator, it does not account for specific dimensions of organisational culture nor mediating factors. The authors recommended that future research

should extend the framework by including these aspects. The study is significant as it provides managers and policymakers with insights into how organisational culture can act as a buffer against workplace bullying, ultimately enhancing performance.

Anasori [et al](#) (2023) examined the effect of workplace bullying on employee creativity and job performance, using psychological distress as a mediator and resilience as a moderator within the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework. Data were collected from employees and supervisors of four- and five-star hotels and analysed using PLS-SEM. The findings revealed that workplace bullying increases psychological distress and decreases employee creativity. While psychological distress had a negative effect on creativity, employee creativity positively influenced job performance. Furthermore, resilience was found to moderate the relationships between workplace bullying and creativity, and between distress and creativity, thereby reducing the harmful impacts of bullying. The study makes an original contribution to hospitality research by highlighting resilience as a crucial personal resource in coping with workplace bullying and protecting creativity and performance.

Farley [et al](#) (2023) did a systematic review and analysed moderators of the relationship between workplace bullying and employee well-being, drawing on the Job Demands–Resources model. The review covered 68 studies and 209 moderation tests, categorising moderators into home, personal, job, social, and organisational demands/resources. Findings showed that social resources (such as co-worker support) and organisational resources (such as supportive climates) consistently buffered the negative effects of bullying on well-being. However, personal resources were found to have limited moderating influence. The review highlighted the need for more cross-cultural and longitudinal studies to examine the stability and applicability of moderators across different settings. This research is valuable as it integrates scattered evidence into a structured framework, providing clarity on which resources are most effective in mitigating the effects of workplace bullying.

Ati and Abubakari (2022) investigated the prevalence and effects of workplace bullying against Certified Registered Anaesthetists (CRAs) in Tamale Metropolis, Ghana. Using interviews, questionnaires, and observations, the study revealed a high prevalence of bullying (56.5% using quantitative inventory and 74.2% through subjective reporting). Bullying behaviours included hostile assignments, intimidation, unmanageable workloads, and physical threats. The findings showed that 75.3% of victims reported both physical and psychological effects, while 16.1% had missed workdays due to bullying within the last six months. These outcomes posed serious risks to quality patient care, health outcomes, and hospital productivity. The study recommended the introduction of workplace policies and staff education programmes by the metropolitan health directorate to address bullying urgently.

Zedlacher and Snowden (2022) investigated how attribution of blame affects the labelling of workplace bullying and organisational intervention measures. A sample of 187 Austrian HR professionals and employee representatives were presented with fictional workplace bullying complaints. Results showed that when complaints were rejected, respondents tended to attribute blame internally to the target and trivialised the bullying as normal conflict. When complaints were supported, blame was often directed at perpetrators but diluted through multi-blame attributions involving supervisors, colleagues, and the target. Structural causes were rarely acknowledged, and relational attributions were often used to minimise the severity of bullying. Despite these variations, most third parties recommended reconciliatory approaches, such as mediation, instead of structural organisational interventions. The study underscores the importance of training HR professionals to recognise bias in blame attribution and to adopt more effective organisational measures for addressing bullying.

#### **2.6.4 Gender Discrimination and Employee Performance**

Noor et al (2023) investigated organizational-level factors contributing to hostile behaviors among female nurses, focusing on gender discrimination and lack of administrative support. Drawing on Freire's theory of oppression, they developed a

conceptual framework and empirically verify it using a quantitative research approach. Through questionnaires administered to 707 female nurses in public sector hospitals across four main cities of Pakistan, the authors find that gender discrimination and lack of administrative support positively correlate with person-related hostility, leading to poor job performance in the healthcare sector. The study employs statistical tools such as SPSS 20 and Smart PLS 3 for data analysis, confirming all hypotheses regarding the direct and indirect relationships between variables. The findings emphasize the need for HR strategies and policies to address gender discrimination and enhance administrative support for nursing professionals, thereby fostering a healthy work environment.

Marchiondo (2015) highlighted that individuals experiencing discrimination often feel isolated and lack motivation to fulfil their daily responsibilities. Women, perceived as weak, are denied opportunities to undertake challenging yet achievable tasks within the organization. Discrimination prevents capable employees from demonstrating their abilities, leading to negative impacts on team dynamics and employee morale. The study emphasized that discrimination contributes to feelings of isolation and decreased motivation among affected individuals.

Omoh (2018) conducted research on the effects of workplace discrimination on employee performance in Ghana. The study involved 159 employees from five different businesses across five distinct sectors. Statistical analysis using a chi-square test statistic ( $X^2$ ) yielded results below the threshold, indicating that Ghanaian workers do not perceive workplace discrimination as having a significant adverse impact on their performance, thus accepting the null hypothesis.

Abbas et al. (2021) identified three dimensions of gender discrimination hiring, promotion, and facility discrimination that affect employee performance in Nigeria. Through data analysis involving 200 Pakistani telecom administrators, the study concluded that gender discrimination, particularly in facilities and promotions, significantly influences employee performance.

Akua and Cecilia (2015) investigated the phenomenon of gender discrimination in the workplace, particularly focusing on its impact on women and the factors influencing their participation in management roles in Higher Education (HE). They explored the presence of gender biases in the workplace and how these biases hinder women's advancement to higher management positions. Primary data collected through interviews with 10 women administrative professionals from five public institutions in Ghana were used to assess the impact of gender discrimination on individuals and their careers. The study revealed a gender underrepresentation in higher education institution management in Ghana.

Agbasi et al (2022) examined workplace bullying and occupational stress with specific emphasis on the relationship between work overload and employee absenteeism in selected microfinance banks in Anambra State. Using a survey research design with 100 employees drawn from 10 banks, the study employed a structured questionnaire subjected to validity and reliability tests. Correlation analysis was used to test the hypothesis at a 5% significance level. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between work overload and employee absenteeism ( $r = .807; p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that workplace bullying significantly affects employee performance, particularly through increased absenteeism, and recommended equitable distribution of tasks based on employee capacity. This suggests that bullying-related practices such as work overload can impair attendance and diminish overall productivity.

Similarly, Malik and Sattar (2022) investigated the ramifications of workplace bullying in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan through the lens of Conservation of Resource (COR) Theory. Data were collected from 387 respondents in four telecommunications companies in southern Punjab using purposive sampling and analysed with SMART-PLS. The study specifically tested the mediating role of emotional exhaustion and the moderating effect of organisational cynicism in the relationship between workplace bullying and job performance. Findings showed a significant negative relationship between workplace bullying and employee

performance. Furthermore, workplace bullying had a positive association with emotional exhaustion, which in turn depleted psychological resources and worsened employee outcomes. The presence of organisational cynicism further aggravated this relationship. The study underscored the importance of combating bullying through managerial interventions to safeguard employee psychological well-being and performance.

### **2.6.5 Sexual Harassment and Employee Performance**

Zare Khafri [et al](#) (2022) conducted a cross-sectional study on 597 nurses in southern Iran. Using a workplace discrimination questionnaire, the study found a moderate overall mean score for workplace discrimination. Vertical and horizontal discrimination, consequences of discrimination, and unfair promotion dimensions scored moderately, while gender and cultural-organizational discrimination scored lower. Significant correlations were observed with employment status and work experience. The study emphasized the need for hospital managers to address workplace discrimination, enhance organizational justice, and improve nurses' morale and performance.

Madheswaran and Singhari (2016) conducted an empirical analysis of caste discrimination in India's urban labour market. Using data from the National Sample Survey Organisation, the study focuses on wage gaps between forward castes and Scheduled Castes in both public and private sectors. The findings indicated that endowment differences contribute more to the wage gap than discrimination. Scheduled Castes experience lower wages, with occupational discrimination being more significant than wage discrimination in both sectors. The study highlights a "glass ceiling effect" in the private sector and a "sticky floor effect" in the public sector, advocating for extending affirmative action policies to the private sector.

Ehiahuruike (2023) explored the impact of workplace bullying on human resources management for corrections employees in Texas. Utilizing Homans's social exchange and Bourdieu's social capital theories, the study examines the relationships between workplace bullying, turnover intention, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. Survey data from 114 correctional

employees indicated a significant relationship between workplace bullying and organizational commitment. The multivariate analysis results do not show significant relationships with turnover intention or job satisfaction. The study suggests potential areas for HRM improvement in correctional facilities to enhance employee retention and create a positive work environment for organizational success.

### **2.6.6 Cyberbullying and Employee Performance**

Ullah et al. (2025) investigated how workplace cyberbullying influences innovative performance, focusing on the mediating role of work disengagement and the moderating effects of bystander behaviour and employee resilience. Using snowball sampling, the researchers identified 263 victims of workplace cyberbullying in Pakistan's IT sector, collecting data through an online survey. Structural equation modelling was employed to test the hypothesised relationships. The findings revealed that workplace cyberbullying directly undermines innovation performance and does so indirectly through increased work disengagement. Active bystander behaviour was shown to reduce these negative impacts, while passive bystander behaviour worsened them. Contrary to expectations, employee resilience did not significantly moderate the relationship between workplace cyberbullying and disengagement. The study concluded that cyberbullying weakens innovation by disengaging employees, but organisational policies encouraging active bystander support can mitigate such effects. It further suggested that resilience training tailored to high-pressure IT environments is necessary.

Aboobaker and Shanujas (2024) assessed how workplace cyberbullying affects wellbeing and employees' intention to remain in their organisations, comparing fully remote employees with those in hybrid settings. The research, conducted among 373 employees in the Indian IT sector, adopted a descriptive and time-lagged design, using self-report questionnaires validated in earlier studies. Data analysis was performed through structural equation modelling and multi-group analysis with IBM SPSS, AMOS, and STATs Tools. Results showed that workplace cyberbullying negatively influenced both wellbeing and intention to stay. Furthermore, the

adverse effects were stronger among remote employees than their hybrid counterparts. Wellbeing mediated the relationship more strongly for remote workers, suggesting they are more vulnerable to the harmful consequences of cyberbullying. The study concluded that hybrid work arrangements provide some protective effect against cyberbullying, while remote workers require tailored support and organisational resources. It also contributed theoretically by advancing understanding of workplace cyberbullying within digital work arrangements.

## 2.7 Tabular Summary of Empirical Literature

Author(s)	Year	Location	Title of Study	Variables Used	Methodology	Key Findings
Nishimura <i>et al.</i> ; Teshima & Watanabe	2024	Japan	Verbal Abuse, Depression, and Sleep Disturbance among Teachers	Verbal abuse, depression, sleep disturbance	Quantitative survey, SEM	Verbal abuse increased depression and poor sleep quality, harming teacher wellbeing.
Madlock & Kennedy-Lightsey	2009	USA	Supervisor Verbal Aggression: Its Impact on Job Satisfaction & Commitment	Verbal aggression, job satisfaction, organisational commitment	Survey research	Verbal abuse by supervisors reduced job satisfaction and weakened organisational commitment.
Cahú <i>et al.</i>	2014	Brazil	Consequences of Verbal Abuse as Moral Harassment among Nurses	Moral harassment, professional development	Cross-sectional survey	Verbal abuse eroded professional identity, trust, and hindered nursing practice.
Mabasa	2024	South Africa	Workplace Bullying and Employee Performance in Public Sector	Aggressive behaviour, employee performance	Qualitative case study	Aggressive behaviours lowered morale and hindered performance in public organisations.
Mehmood <i>et al.</i>	2024	Pakistan	Workplace Bullying and Creativity in the Banking Sector	Bullying behaviours, employee creativity	Survey research, SEM	Bullying reduced creativity, psychological safety, and innovation among employees.
Karatuna	2015	Turkey	Targets' Coping with Social Exclusion at Work	Social exclusion, coping strategies	Mixed-method survey & interviews	Exclusion reduced commitment and increased turnover intentions.
Öcel & Aydın	2012	Turkey	Organisational Justice as a Moderator of Social Exclusion Effects	Social exclusion, organisational justice, performance	Survey research	Justice perception reduced negative effects of social exclusion on performance.
Addae <i>et al.</i>	2008	Trinidad	Workplace Mistreatment, Social Exclusion & Job Outcomes	Social exclusion, job satisfaction, turnover	Cross-sectional survey	Exclusion increased turnover intentions and reduced satisfaction.
Agbasi <i>et al.</i>	2022	Nigeria	Workplace Bullying and Occupational Stress in Microfinance Banks	Work overload, absenteeism, performance	Survey research, correlation	Work overload significantly increased absenteeism, harming performance.

Malik & Sattar	2022	Pakistan	Workplace Bullying and Emotional Exhaustion in Telecom Sector	Bullying, emotional exhaustion, cynicism, performance	SMART-PLS, mediation model	Bullying led to exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced performance.
Salin	2003	Finland	Prevalence of Workplace Bullying and Gender Differences	Gender discrimination, bullying prevalence	Survey research	Women reported higher bullying exposure; gender discrimination was significant.
Parzefall & Salin	2010	Finland	Gender Discrimination and Workplace Bullying: A Structural Analysis	Gender discrimination, bullying	Structural equation modelling	Gender discrimination predicted bullying exposure, undermining wellbeing.
Escartín et al.	2011	Spain	Gender, Power & Workplace Bullying	Gender discrimination, bullying	Qualitative interviews	Women faced bullying rooted in power dynamics and patriarchal norms.
Einarsen & Raknes	1997	Norway	Harassment and Sexual Harassment at Work	Sexual harassment, health, wellbeing	Survey research	Sexual harassment linked to anxiety, depression, and stress.
Fitzgerald et al.	1997	USA	Antecedents & Consequences of Sexual Harassment	Sexual harassment, job satisfaction, organisational commitment	Large-scale survey	Harassment reduced satisfaction, increased turnover, harmed commitment.
McDonald	2012	Australia	Sexual Harassment at Work: A Review of Policies & Practices	Sexual harassment, policy effectiveness	Review of empirical studies	Harassment remained prevalent despite policies; enforcement gaps persisted.
Privitera & Campbell	2009	UK	Cyberbullying in Work Contexts	Cyberbullying, employee wellbeing	Online survey	Cyberbullying caused stress, anxiety, and withdrawal.
Farley et al.	2016	UK	Cyberbullying, Workplace Harassment & Job Outcomes	Cyberbullying, job satisfaction, turnover	Survey research	Cyberbullying reduced job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions.
Gardner et al.	2016	UK	An Exploratory Study on Cyberbullying in Academia	Cyberbullying, academics, wellbeing	Mixed-method research	Cyberbullying negatively affected wellbeing and academic productivity.

Source: Researcher's Compilation (2025)

## 2.8 Research Gaps

From the review of empirical studies on workplace bullying and employee performance across different contexts and countries, several research gaps have been identified. Most studies on workplace bullying have been conducted in developed economies such as the United States (Madlock & Kennedy-Lightsey, 2009), Finland (Salin, 2003; Parzefall & Salin, 2010), the United Kingdom (Privitera & Campbell, 2009; Farley et al., 2016), and Australia (McDonald, 2012). While some recent works have examined African contexts (Mabasa, 2024; Agbasi et al., 2022), there remains a paucity of research within Nigeria, especially in the agro allied industry. Given the socio-cultural and economic dynamics of Nigeria, there is a need to explore workplace bullying and its effects on employee performance within this unique setting.

Prior studies have focused largely on specific dimensions of workplace bullying such as verbal abuse (Nishimura et al., 2024), social exclusion (Karatuna, 2015; Addae et al., 2008), gender discrimination (Escartín et al., 2011), and cyberbullying (Farley et al., 2016; Gardner et al., 2016). However, few studies have comprehensively examined these dimensions together to provide a holistic understanding of how they collectively influence employee performance. While research exists on workplace bullying within healthcare (Cahú et al., 2014; Nishimura et al., 2024), education (Gardner et al., 2016), and telecommunications (Malik & Sattar, 2022), limited studies have been conducted in the Nigerian agro-industrial sector.

Given the critical nature of the agricultural and allied industry, employees in this sector may be particularly vulnerable to bullying behaviours, yet the empirical evidence remains scarce. Most studies have linked workplace bullying to outcomes such as emotional exhaustion (Malik & Sattar, 2022), absenteeism (Agbasi et al., 2022), turnover intentions (Addae et al., 2008; Farley et al., 2016), and reduced job satisfaction (Madlock & Kennedy-Lightsey, 2009). However, there is still insufficient empirical work that directly examines the relationship between workplace bullying and employee performance in Nigerian organisations, despite performance being a critical determinant of organisational survival.

## CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Preamble

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted for this study. It describes the research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling technique, sources of data, research instrument, reliability and validity of the instrument, model specification, operationalisation and measurement of variables, and the methods of data analysis.

### 3.2 **Research Design**

This study adopted a survey research design, specifically the cross-sectional variant. A cross-sectional survey was used to systematically collect data from respondents at a single point in time for the purpose of understanding and explaining behavioural outcomes. The design is suitable because it allows the researcher to gather quantitative data on employees' experiences of workplace bullying and how such experiences influence their performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City. Structured questionnaire was utilised as the primary instrument of data collection, enabling the researcher to obtain standardised information from a large number of employees.

### 3.3 **Population of the Study**

The target population for this study comprises all employees of selected agro-industrial firms operating in Edo State, particularly in Benin City and its environ. These firms were selected based on their strategic role in oil palm production, food processing, crop farming, livestock production, and other agro-allied ventures, which collectively form the backbone of the state's agro-industrial base. The study population includes management, senior, and junior employees working across plantations, processing plants, administrative units, and ancillary departments. Based on available industry reports, company disclosures, and field enquiries, the combined workforce of the selected firms is estimated at 3,184 employees. Provide citation(s)

### Table 3.1: Sampling Frame

S/No	Organisation	Estimated Number of Employees
1	Presco Plc	1705
2	Okomu Oil Palm Plc	358
3	Nosak Group (Saturn Farm Produce Ltd)	283
4	Ellah Lakes Plc	124
5	Wells Hosa Greenhouse Farms Ltd	167
6	Vesa Farms Ltd	205
7	Raphowens Farms Ltd	87
8	Biya Farms Nigeria Ltd	75
9	Aloiye Farms	86
10	Asanita Agricultural Processing Co. Ltd	94
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,184</b>

Source: Edo State Ministry of Agriculture database, and field enquiries (2025).

### 3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

To ensure robust representation, stratified random sampling ~~will be was~~ adopted. Stratification ~~will be was~~ based on managerial and non-managerial staff to capture hierarchical diversity. The required sample size ~~will be was~~ determined using Yamane's (1967) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

$N$  = population size (3,184)

$e$  = margin of error (0.05)

$n$  = sample size

$$n = \frac{3184}{1 + 3184(0.05)^2} = \frac{3184}{1 + 3184(0.0025)} = \frac{3184}{8.96} \approx 355$$

Thus, the required sample size is 355 employees. However, in order to account for ~~lost questionnaires non-response~~, incomplete responses, and other unforeseen circumstances, a 20% markup was added:

$$= \frac{20}{100} \times 355 = 71$$

$$n = 355 + 71 = 426$$

Thus, the ~~minimum~~ sample size for this study ~~will be comprised~~ 426 employees. This figure ~~will be was~~ proportionately distributed across the selected firms according to their staff strength.

**Table 3.2: Proportionate Allocation of Sample Size**

S/No	Organisation	Number of Employees	Proportionate Sample
1	Presco Plc	1,705	227
2	Okomu Oil Palm Plc	358	48
3	Nosak Group (Saturn Farm Produce Ltd)	283	38
4	Ellah Lakes Plc	124	17
5	Wells Hosa Greenhouse Farms Ltd	167	22
6	Vesa Farms Ltd	205	27
7	Raphowens Farms Ltd	87	12
8	Biya Farms Nigeria Ltd	75	10
9	Aloiye Farms	86	12
10	Asanita Agricultural Processing Co. Ltd	94	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,184</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>426</b>

Source: Researcher's computation, 2025.

### 3.5 Sources of Data

This study relies primarily on primary data. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered directly to the selected respondents. The questionnaire ~~will consist of~~ comprised two sections: Section A ~~focused on~~ will capture socio-demographic ~~characteristics information~~ of respondents, while Section B ~~comprised~~ will focus on workplace bullying indicators and employee performance measures. Please provide information about the sources of secondary data used for the study.

### 3.6 Research Instrument

The instrument for data collection ~~will be~~ was a structured questionnaire designed in line with the study objectives. Closed-ended questions ~~were~~ will be adopted to facilitate ease of response, uniformity, and efficient analysis. The questionnaire ~~was~~ will be structured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). ~~The items will~~ measured different dimensions of workplace bullying, such as verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, social exclusion, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, cyberbullying, and unjustified criticism, as well as indicators of employee performance including productivity, job engagement, and job satisfaction. Please provide details on how the study objectives were translated into questionnaire items.

### 3.7 Validity of the Research Instrument

In this study, different forms of validity were ensured. Content validity was established by subjecting the questionnaire items to thorough review by the research supervisor and other academics in the fields of human resource management and organisational behaviour. Their expert evaluation confirmed that the items adequately represent the constructs of workplace bullying and employee performance. Face validity was assessed by ensuring that the items were clearly worded, relevant, and understandable to the target respondents, thereby minimising ambiguity. Construct validity was further enhanced through a careful alignment of the questionnaire items with established theoretical perspectives and previous empirical studies. This multi-layered approach guarantees that the instrument appropriately captures the variables of interest and is suitable for the study context.

### 3.8 Reliability of the Research Instrument

To ascertain reliability in this study, a pilot test was carried out with 30 respondents drawn from a population similar to, but distinct from, the main study sample. Data from the pilot was subjected to statistical analysis using Cronbach Alpha to evaluate internal consistency. A Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher was deemed satisfactory, reflecting that the questionnaire items are measuring the constructs in a consistent manner. In addition, the reliability assessment helped refine the instrument by identifying any items that weaken overall consistency. This process ensures that the instrument not only produces stable and replicable results but also enhances confidence in the accuracy and trustworthiness of the data to be collected.

**Table 3.3: Reliability Test**

S/N	Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha Value
1	Verbal Abuse	5	0.81
2	Aggressive Behaviour	5	0.79
3	Social Exclusion	5	0.83
4	Gender Discrimination	5	0.77
5	Sexual Harassment	5	0.85
6	Cyberbullying	5	0.82
7	Employee Performance	5	0.88

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2025.

### 3.9 Model Specification

This study employed a multiple regression model adapted from prior works of Ashraf and Khan (2014), Malik and Sattar (2022) and Olaleye and Lekunze (2023) to test the effect of workplace bullying on employee performance. The model assumes that employee performance is a function of several bullying-related behaviours. The functional relationship is specified as:

$$EPF = f(WB)$$

Expanding further, we have

$$EPF = f(VA, AB, SE, GD, SH, CB)$$

The econometric model is written as:

$$EPF = \beta_0 + \beta_1VA + \beta_2AB + \beta_3SE + \beta_4GD + \beta_5SH + \beta_6CB + e_i$$

Where:

EPF = Employee Performance

VA = Verbal Abuse

AB = Aggressive Behaviour

SE = Social Exclusion

GD = Gender Discrimination

SH = Sexual Harassment

CB = Cyberbullying

$\beta_0$  = Constant term

$\beta_1 - \beta_7$  = Regression coefficients

$e_i$  = Error term

The expected signs of the coefficients are negative, as workplace bullying is anticipated to negatively influence employee performance.

### 3.10 Operationalisation of Variables

The variables of this study are operationalised as follows:

S/N	Items Construct	Operational Definition	Measurement	Question Number	Source	Apriori Expectation
1	Dependent Variable: Employee Performance	The extent to which employees achieve work targets, demonstrate commitment, and contribute to organisational goals	Likert-type five-point scale	Section B	Parker et al. (2022)	+
2	Independent Variable: Verbal Abuse	Use of insulting or demeaning language against employees	Likert-type five-point scale	Section B Q6-Q10	Einarsen et al. (2020)	-
3	Independent Variable: Aggressive Behaviour	Hostile or intimidating conduct that creates discomfort or fear	Likert-type five-point scale	Section B Q11-Q15	Hoel & Cooper (2021)	-
4	Independent Variable: Social Exclusion	Isolation of employees from work or social activities	Likert-type five-point scale	Section B Q16-Q20	D'Cruz (2012)	-
5	Independent Variable: Gender Discrimination	Unequal treatment of employees based on gender	Likert-type five-point scale	Section B Q21-Q25	Cortina (2008)	-
6	Independent Variable: Sexual Harassment	Unwelcome sexual conduct that disrupts work	Likert-type five-point scale	Section B Q26-Q30	Fitzgerald et al. (1997)	-
7	Independent Variable: Cyberbullying	Use of digital media to harass or intimidate	Likert-type five-point scale	Section B Q31-Q35	Farley et al. (2016)	-

Source: Researcher's Compilation (2025)

### 3.11 Methods of Data Analysis

Data ~~were~~ will be analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation ~~were utilised for~~ will summarise respondents' demographic characteristics and perceptions of workplace bullying and

employee performance. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the degree of association between workplace bullying dimensions and employee performance. Multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses and determine the extent to which workplace bullying predicts employee performance. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 was used for data analysis.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Preamble

This chapter presents, analyses, and interprets the data obtained from the respondents in the selected agro-industrial firms operating in Benin City, Edo State. It specifically provides descriptive statistics and interpretations relating to the demographic characteristics of the respondents, as well as their responses to items designed to measure workplace bullying and employee performance within the agro-industrial sector. Furthermore, the chapter includes the results of regression analysis, which are presented and interpreted in line with the hypothesised relationships between workplace bullying and employee performance in the selected agro-industrial firms.

#### 4.2 Retrieval Rate and Description of Respondents' Socio-Demographics

##### 4.2.1 Retrieval Rate

Out of the 426 copies of the questionnaire distributed to employees of the selected agro-industrial firms, 397 were successfully retrieved and found usable for analysis. The retrieval rate was computed using the below formula:

$$\text{Retrieval Rate} = \frac{\text{Total retrieved}}{\text{Total Distributed}} \times 100$$

$$RR = \frac{397}{426} \times 100$$

$$RR = 0.9326 \times 100$$

$$\text{Retrieval Rate} \approx 93.3\%$$

Thus, the retrieval rate for this study is approximately 93%, which is considered highly adequate for meaningful statistical analysis.

#### 4.2.2 Description of Respondents' Socio-Demographics

This section presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. The key variables considered include gender, age, educational qualification, job experience, marital status, and job designation. These demographic factors provide an important context for understanding the relationship between workplace bullying and employee performance in the selected agro-industrial firms. The details are presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

S/N	Categories	Frequency	
		No.	%
<b>1.</b>	<b>Gender</b>		
	Male	214	53.9
	Female	183	46.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Age</b>		
	30 years and below	105	26.4
	31-40	170	42.8
	41-50	73	18.4
	51-60	25	6.3
	Above 60	24	6.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Qualification</b>		
	First School Leaving Certificate or less	4	1.0
	SSCE/WASC	45	11.3
	OND/NCE	36	9.1
	HND/ <del>BSc</del> <u>Bachelor's Degree</u>	244	61.5
	<del>Master's Degree</del> <u>MBA/M.Sc/Ph.D</u>	63	15.9
	Others	5	1.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Work Job-Experience (Years)</b>		
	0 – 5 years	156	39.3
	5 – 10 years	181	45.6
	Above 10 years	60	15.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>		
	Single	212	53.4
	Married	185	46.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Job-Designation</b> <u>Employment Status</u>		
	Permanent	206	51.9
	Temporary	191	48.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: *Field-Survey, 2025.*

### ***Gender***

The distribution of respondents by gender shows that out of the 397 valid responses, 214 (53.9%) were male, while 183 (46.1%) were female. This reflects a slight predominance of male employees in the workforce of the selected firms, though the female representation is also substantial, indicating that both genders are adequately represented in the study sample.

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### ***Age***

In terms of age, 105 respondents (26.4%) were 30 years and below, making up the youngest age bracket. The majority of respondents fell within the 31–40 years category, accounting for 170 individuals (42.8%). This was followed by 73 respondents (18.4%) aged 41–50 years. Employees within the 51–60 years age group constituted 25 (6.3%) of the sample, while those above 60 years were 24 (6.0%). The distribution suggests that the workforce in agro-industrial firms is dominated by young and middle-aged employees, highlighting the presence of a relatively active and productive age group. Please ensure that only percentages are used for the interpretations

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### ***Educational Qualification***

Regarding educational attainment, 244 respondents (61.5%) held either a Higher National Diploma (HND) or Bachelor's degree, making this the largest category. This was followed by those with postgraduate qualifications (MBA, M.Sc, or Ph.D), who accounted for 63 respondents (15.9%). In addition, 36 respondents (9.1%) possessed OND/NCE qualifications, while 45 (11.3%) had SSCE/GCE/NECO certificates. A few respondents reported having FSLC (1.0%) and other unspecified qualifications (1.3%). This distribution shows that the workforce is generally well-educated, with a significant proportion holding tertiary-level qualifications. Please ensure that only percentages are used for the interpretations.

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### ***Job Experience***

On the issue of job experience, the data indicate that 156 respondents (39.3%) had 0–5 years of work experience, 181 respondents (45.6%) had between 5–10 years of experience, while 60 respondents (15.1%) had above 10 years of experience. This implies that the majority of employees are relatively experienced, with most having spent between 5 and 10 years in their organisations.

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### ***Marital Status***

Analysis of marital status shows that 212 respondents (53.4%) were single, while 185 respondents (46.6%) were married. The distribution suggests that more than half of the workforce sampled is unmarried, reflecting the relatively youthful composition of employees within the sector. Please

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### ***Job Designation***

Finally, in terms of job designation, 206 respondents (51.9%) were in permanent employment, while 191 respondents (48.1%) were engaged as temporary staff. This indicates that employment arrangements within the selected firms are fairly balanced between permanent and temporary roles, which may have implications for workplace relations and experiences of bullying. Please ensure

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## **4.3 Description of Research Variables**

The variables were described using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation. The independent variable is workplace bullying while the dependent variable is employee performance.

### **4.3.1 Description of Workplace Bullying**

In realising this objective, first of all, the computed mean scores and standard deviation of responses to each factor of workplace bullying which are assessed on a five-point Likert scale in which one represents a strong level of disagreement and five represents a strong level of agreement are presented below.

Table 4.2 below showed the description of workplace bullying and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

**Table 4.2: Description of Workplace Bullying**

Please present the frequency distributions of the Likert scale responses in percentages

Please write the options in full instead of using numbers

Q/N	Item	Frequency					Mean	SD	Decision Rule: <3.5 Reject ≥3.5 Accept
		1	2	3	4	5			
	<b>Verbal Abuse</b>								
7	Supervisors or colleagues often use insulting language toward employees.	11	16	54	170	146	4.07	0.955	Accepted
8	Criticism from management is usually harsh and unjustified.	13	18	55	187	124	3.98	0.964	Accepted
9	Verbal abuse at work reduces my job motivation.	8	21	76	160	132	3.97	0.958	Accepted
10	Verbal insults negatively affect my productivity.	10	19	55	166	147	4.06	0.962	Accepted
11	I find it difficult to concentrate on work when exposed to verbal aggression.	15	32	77	165	108	3.8	1.045	Accepted
	<b>Average Total</b>						<b>3.976</b>	<b>0.9768</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
	<b>Aggressive Behaviour</b>								
12	Some colleagues or supervisors display physical intimidation at work.	9	33	83	166	106	3.82	0.992	Accepted
13	Shouting or aggressive gestures	10	47	88	155	97	3.71	1.042	Accepted

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	are common in my workplace.								
<del>14</del>	Aggressive behaviour reduces team collaboration.	7	22	55	209	104	3.96	0.884	Accepted
<del>15</del>	Exposure to aggression reduces my willingness to engage with tasks.	23	45	67	179	83	3.64	1.107	Accepted
<del>16</del>	Aggressive behaviour leads to reduced work quality and efficiency.	10	21	61	188	117	3.96	0.942	Accepted
	<b>Average Total</b>						<b>3.818</b>	<b>0.9934</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
	<b>Social Exclusion</b>								
<del>17</del>	Certain employees are deliberately left out of important work activities.	33	45	86	151	82	3.51	1.18	Accepted
<del>18</del>	Social exclusion in the workplace reduces employee morale.	8	13	59	170	147	4.1	0.908	Accepted
<del>19</del>	Being ignored or isolated at work affects my job satisfaction.	5	20	64	166	142	4.06	0.912	Accepted
<del>20</del>	Exclusion from decision-making lowers employee engagement.	6	31	60	183	117	3.94	0.945	Accepted
<del>21</del>	Social exclusion reduces my sense of belonging to the organisation.	8	45	65	157	122	3.86	1.043	Accepted
	<b>Average Total</b>						<b>3.894</b>	<b>0.9976</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
	<b>Gender Discrimination</b>								
<del>22</del>	Some employees receive unfair treatment because of their gender.	10	47	88	155	97	3.71	1.042	Accepted
<del>23</del>	Gender bias negatively influences promotion and career opportunities.	8	13	59	170	147	4.1	0.908	Accepted
<del>24</del>	Female employees face more work-	5	20	64	166	142	4.06	0.912	Accepted

	related obstacles than male colleagues.								
<del>25</del>	Gender discrimination reduces employee confidence and morale.	6	31	60	183	117	3.94	0.945	Accepted
<del>26</del>	Discrimination based on gender affects overall organisational performance.	8	45	65	157	122	3.86	1.043	Accepted
	<b>Average Total</b>						<b>3.934</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
	<b>Sexual Harassment</b>								
<del>27</del>	Unwelcome sexual comments or jokes occur in my workplace.	7	45	81	165	99	3.77	1.007	Accepted
<del>28</del>	Sexual harassment creates an unsafe and uncomfortable work environment.	11	44	75	165	102	3.76	1.042	Accepted
<del>29</del>	Sexual advances from supervisors or colleagues affect employee focus.	19	35	61	172	110	3.8	1.086	Accepted
<del>30</del>	Sexual harassment reduces trust in management.	11	16	54	170	146	4.07	0.955	Accepted
<del>31</del>	Employees' productivity decreases when exposed to sexual harassment.	13	18	55	188	123	3.98	0.963	Accepted
	<b>Average Total</b>						<b>3.876</b>	<b>1.0106</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
	<b>Cyberbullying</b>								
<del>32</del>	Employees sometimes receive threatening or abusive messages through digital platforms.	5	30	65	195	102	3.9	0.911	Accepted
<del>33</del>	Cyberbullying reduces my willingness to participate in workplace communication.	11	15	53	171	147	4.08	0.949	Accepted

34	Negative comments or ridicule online affect my job satisfaction.	10	32	68	153	134	3.93	1.027	Accepted
35	Cyberbullying contributes to workplace stress.	15	32	77	165	108	3.8	1.045	Accepted
36	Exposure to cyberbullying reduces my performance and engagement.	9	33	83	166	106	3.82	0.992	Accepted
	<b>Average Total</b>						<b>3.906</b>	<b>0.992</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
	<b>Overall Workplace Bullying Score</b>						<b>3.900</b> <b>667</b>	<b>0.9888</b> <b>67</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Source: *Field Survey, 2025.*

*N.B: 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 denote strongly disagreed, disagreed, undecided, agreed, strongly agreed response rate respectively.*

Table 4.2 above provides a comprehensive description of workplace hostility in Benin Metropolis.

The analysis is based on a five-point scale, where a mean score below 3.5 indicates rejection, and a score above 3.5 signifies acceptance.

#### **Verbal Abuse**

Please ensure that only percentages are used for the interpretations.

The analysis of verbal abuse based on the provided questionnaire items indicates varied perceptions among respondents regarding verbal abuse in their workplace. From Table 4.2 above, as regards item 7, “Supervisors or colleagues often use insulting language toward employees”, 11

respondents strongly disagreed, 16 respondents disagreed, 54 respondents were undecided, 170 respondents agreed, and 146 respondents strongly agreed. For item 8, “Criticism from management

is usually harsh and unjustified”, 13 respondents strongly disagreed, 18 respondents disagreed, 55 respondents were undecided, 187 respondents agreed, and 124 respondents strongly agreed. For

item 9, “Verbal abuse at work reduces my job motivation”, 8 respondents strongly disagreed, 21 respondents disagreed, 76 respondents were undecided, 160 respondents agreed, and 132

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respondents strongly agreed. For item 10, “Verbal insults negatively affect my productivity”, 10 respondents strongly disagreed, 19 respondents disagreed, 55 respondents were undecided, 166 respondents agreed, and 147 respondents strongly agreed. For item 11, “I find it difficult to concentrate on work when exposed to verbal aggression”, 15 respondents strongly disagreed, 32 respondents disagreed, 77 respondents were undecided, 165 respondents agreed, and 108 respondents strongly agreed. The average total mean score of 3.976 indicates a consensus among respondents regarding the prevalence and impact of verbal abuse in the workplace, with a standard deviation of 0.977, suggesting moderate variability in responses.

### *Aggressive Behaviour*

Please ensure that only percentages are used for the interpretations.

The analysis of aggressive behaviour based on the provided questionnaire items indicates differing perceptions among respondents regarding aggressive behaviour in their workplace. From Table 4.2 above, as regards item 12, “Some colleagues or supervisors display physical intimidation at work”, 9 respondents strongly disagreed, 33 respondents disagreed, 83 respondents were undecided, 166 respondents agreed, and 106 respondents strongly agreed. For item 13, “Shouting or aggressive gestures are common in my workplace”, 10 respondents strongly disagreed, 47 respondents disagreed, 88 respondents were undecided, 155 respondents agreed, and 97 respondents strongly agreed. For item 14, “Aggressive behaviour reduces team collaboration”, 7 respondents strongly disagreed, 22 respondents disagreed, 55 respondents were undecided, 209 respondents agreed, and 104 respondents strongly agreed. For item 15, “Exposure to aggression reduces my willingness to engage with tasks”, 23 respondents strongly disagreed, 45 respondents disagreed, 67 respondents were undecided, 179 respondents agreed, and 83 respondents strongly agreed. For item 16, “Aggressive behaviour leads to reduced work quality and efficiency”, 10 respondents strongly disagreed, 21 respondents disagreed, 61 respondents were undecided, 188 respondents agreed, and 117 respondents strongly agreed. The average total mean score of 3.818 indicates a consensus among respondents regarding the prevalence and impact of aggressive

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behaviour in the workplace, with a standard deviation of 0.993, suggesting moderate variability in responses.

### ***Social Exclusion***

Please ensure that only percentages are used for the interpretations.

The analysis of social exclusion based on the provided questionnaire items indicates varied perceptions among respondents regarding social exclusion in their workplace. From Table 4.2 above, as regards item 17, “Certain employees are deliberately left out of important work activities”, 33 respondents strongly disagreed, 45 respondents disagreed, 86 respondents were undecided, 151 respondents agreed, and 82 respondents strongly agreed. For item 18, “Social exclusion in the workplace reduces employee morale”, 8 respondents strongly disagreed, 13 respondents disagreed, 59 respondents were undecided, 170 respondents agreed, and 147 respondents strongly agreed. For item 19, “Being ignored or isolated at work affects my job satisfaction”, 5 respondents strongly disagreed, 20 respondents disagreed, 64 respondents were undecided, 166 respondents agreed, and 142 respondents strongly agreed. For item 20, “Exclusion from decision-making lowers employee engagement”, 6 respondents strongly disagreed, 31 respondents disagreed, 60 respondents were undecided, 183 respondents agreed, and 117 respondents strongly agreed. For item 21, “Social exclusion reduces my sense of belonging to the organisation”, 8 respondents strongly disagreed, 45 respondents disagreed, 65 respondents were undecided, 157 respondents agreed, and 122 respondents strongly agreed. The average total mean score of 3.894 indicates a consensus among respondents regarding the prevalence and impact of social exclusion in the workplace, with a standard deviation of 0.998, suggesting moderate variability in responses.

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### ***Gender Discrimination***

Please ensure that only percentages are used for the interpretations.

The analysis of gender discrimination based on the provided questionnaire items indicates differing perceptions among respondents regarding gender-based unfair treatment in their workplace. From Table 4.2 above, as regards item 22, “Some employees receive unfair treatment because of their gender”, 10 respondents strongly disagreed, 47 respondents disagreed, 88 respondents were undecided, 155 respondents agreed, and 97 respondents strongly agreed. For item 23, “Gender bias negatively influences promotion and career opportunities”, 8 respondents strongly disagreed, 13 respondents disagreed, 59 respondents were undecided, 170 respondents agreed, and 147 respondents strongly agreed. For item 24, “Female employees face more work-related obstacles than male colleagues”, 5 respondents strongly disagreed, 20 respondents disagreed, 64 respondents were undecided, 166 respondents agreed, and 142 respondents strongly agreed. For item 25, “Gender discrimination reduces employee confidence and morale”, 6 respondents strongly disagreed, 31 respondents disagreed, 60 respondents were undecided, 183 respondents agreed, and 117 respondents strongly agreed. For item 26, “Discrimination based on gender affects overall organisational performance”, 8 respondents strongly disagreed, 45 respondents disagreed, 65 respondents were undecided, 157 respondents agreed, and 122 respondents strongly agreed. The average total mean score of 3.934 indicates a consensus among respondents regarding the prevalence and impact of gender discrimination in the workplace, with a standard deviation of 0.970, suggesting moderate variability in responses.

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### ***Sexual Harassment***

Please ensure that only percentages are used for the interpretations.

The analysis of sexual harassment based on the provided questionnaire items reveals varied perceptions among respondents regarding its occurrence and impact in their workplace. From Table 4.2 above, as regards item 27, “Unwelcome sexual comments or jokes occur in my workplace”, 7 respondents strongly disagreed, 45 respondents disagreed, 81 respondents were undecided, 165 respondents agreed, and 99 respondents strongly agreed. For item 28, “Sexual harassment creates an unsafe and uncomfortable work environment”, 11 respondents strongly

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disagreed, 44 respondents disagreed, 75 respondents were undecided, 165 respondents agreed, and 102 respondents strongly agreed. For item 29, “Sexual advances from supervisors or colleagues affect employee focus”, 19 respondents strongly disagreed, 35 respondents disagreed, 61 respondents were undecided, 172 respondents agreed, and 110 respondents strongly agreed. For item 30, “Sexual harassment reduces trust in management”, 11 respondents strongly disagreed, 16 respondents disagreed, 54 respondents were undecided, 170 respondents agreed, and 146 respondents strongly agreed. For item 31, “Employees’ productivity decreases when exposed to sexual harassment”, 13 respondents strongly disagreed, 18 respondents disagreed, 55 respondents were undecided, 188 respondents agreed, and 123 respondents strongly agreed. The average total mean score of 3.876 indicates a consensus among respondents regarding the prevalence and negative consequences of sexual harassment in the workplace, with a standard deviation of 1.011, suggesting moderate variability in responses.

### *Cyberbullying*

Please ensure that only percentages are used for the interpretations.

The analysis of cyberbullying based on the provided questionnaire items indicates varied perceptions among respondents regarding its occurrence and effects in their workplace. From Table 4.2 above, as regards item 32, “Employees sometimes receive threatening or abusive messages through digital platforms”, 5 respondents strongly disagreed, 30 respondents disagreed, 65 respondents were undecided, 195 respondents agreed, and 102 respondents strongly agreed. For item 33, “Cyberbullying reduces my willingness to participate in workplace communication”, 11 respondents strongly disagreed, 15 respondents disagreed, 53 respondents were undecided, 171 respondents agreed, and 147 respondents strongly agreed. For item 34, “Negative comments or ridicule online affect my job satisfaction”, 10 respondents strongly disagreed, 32 respondents disagreed, 68 respondents were undecided, 153 respondents agreed, and 134 respondents strongly agreed. For item 35, “Cyberbullying contributes to workplace stress”, 15 respondents strongly disagreed, 32 respondents disagreed, 77 respondents were undecided, 165 respondents agreed, and

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108 respondents strongly agreed. For item 36, “Exposure to cyberbullying reduces my performance and engagement”, 9 respondents strongly disagreed, 33 respondents disagreed, 83 respondents were undecided, 166 respondents agreed, and 106 respondents strongly agreed. The average total mean score of 3.906 indicates a consensus among respondents regarding the prevalence and detrimental impact of cyberbullying in the workplace, with a standard deviation of 0.992, suggesting moderate variability in responses.

The overall analysis of workplace bullying based on the six dimensions assessed in Table 4.2 (verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, social exclusion, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying) reveals a general consensus among respondents that bullying is a significant issue in their workplace. The aggregated results show that across all items, respondents consistently reported agreement with the indicators of workplace bullying, with mean scores exceeding the decision benchmark of 3. The computed overall workplace bullying mean score of 3.901, with a standard deviation of 0.989, confirms that employees in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City experience multiple forms of workplace bullying. This indicates that bullying is not only prevalent but also significantly affects employee well-being, motivation, and performance. The standard deviation suggests moderate variability, meaning that while some respondents may have experienced these behaviours more intensely than others, there is a broad pattern of shared recognition of workplace bullying.

#### 4.3.2 Description of Employee Performance

Table 4.3 showed the description of employee performance in the selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

**Table 4.3 Description of Employee Performance**

Please present the frequency distributions of the Likert scale responses in percentages

Please write the options in full instead of using numbers

Q/N	Item	Frequency	Decision Rule: <3.5 Reject	Formatted Table
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							Mean	SD	$\geq 3.5$ Accepted
	<b>EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE</b>	1	2	3	4	5			
37	I always strive to meet performance targets set by my organisation.	5	28	67	196	101	3.91	0.901	Accepted
38	I put in extra effort to ensure high productivity.	7	46	71	167	106	3.8	1.016	Accepted
39	I am committed and engaged in my assigned tasks.	29	31	59	186	92	3.71	1.126	Accepted
40	I derive satisfaction from the quality of work I deliver.	11	32	68	155	131	3.91	1.034	Accepted
41	My job performance has been negatively affected by workplace bullying.	21	36	43	190	107	3.82	1.09	Accepted
	<b>Total</b>						<b>3.83</b>	<b>1.0334</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

~~N.B: 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 denote strongly disagreed, disagreed, undecided, agreed, strongly agreed response rate respectively~~

### Employee Performance

Please ensure that only percentages are used for the interpretations.

From table 4.3 above, the analysis of employee performance based on the provided questionnaire items indicates respondents' perceptions of their productivity, commitment, and the influence of workplace bullying on their output. From Table 4.3 above, as regards item 37, "I always strive to meet performance targets set by my organisation", 5 respondents strongly disagreed, 28 respondents disagreed, 67 respondents were undecided, 196 respondents agreed, and 101 respondents strongly agreed. For item 38, "I put in extra effort to ensure high productivity", 7 respondents strongly disagreed, 46 respondents disagreed, 71 respondents were undecided, 167 respondents agreed, and 106 respondents strongly agreed. For item 39, "I am committed and

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engaged in my assigned tasks”, 29 respondents strongly disagreed, 31 respondents disagreed, 59 respondents were undecided, 186 respondents agreed, and 92 respondents strongly agreed. For item 40, “I derive satisfaction from the quality of work I deliver”, 11 respondents strongly disagreed, 32 respondents disagreed, 68 respondents were undecided, 155 respondents agreed, and 131 respondents strongly agreed. For item 41, “My job performance has been negatively affected by workplace bullying”, 21 respondents strongly disagreed, 36 respondents disagreed, 43 respondents were undecided, 190 respondents agreed, and 107 respondents strongly agreed. The average total mean score of 3.83 indicates that employees perceive themselves as productive, committed, and target-driven, but also acknowledge that workplace bullying negatively influences their performance. The standard deviation of 1.033 suggests moderate variability in responses, meaning that while most employees agree on their positive performance behaviours, the extent of bullying’s impact differs across individuals.

#### 4.4 Estimation and Interpretation of the Relationship between Workplace Bullying and Employee Performance

##### 4.4.1 Correlation Analysis

Bivariate Pearson correlation coefficients were conducted on the data for all the variables in the study. Table 4.4 shows the Pearson correlation coefficients among research variables.

**Table 4.4: Pearson Correlation Coefficients**

Variable		JP	VA	AB	SE	GD	SH	CB
Employee Performance (EP)	Pearson Correlation	1	.703**	.722**	.738**	.698**	.827**	.826**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	397	397	397	397	397	397	397
Verbal Abuse (VA)	Pearson Correlation	.703**	1	.749**	.824**	.790**	.853**	.894**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	397	397	397	397	397	397	397
Aggressive Behaviour (AB)	Pearson Correlation	.722**	.749**	1	.758**	.814**	.788**	.798**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	397	397	397	397	397	397	397
	Pearson Correlation	.738**	.824**	.758**	1	.933**	.810**	.829**

Social Exclusion (SE)	Sig. (2-tailed) N	.000 397	.000 397	.000 397	.933** 397	.000 397	.000 397	.000 397
Gender Discrimination (GD)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.698** .000 397	.790** .000 397	.814** .000 397	.933** .000 397	1 .000 397	.801** .000 397	.781** .000 397
Sexual Harassment (SH)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.827** .000 397	.853** .000 397	.788** .000 397	.810** .000 397	.801** .000 397	1 .000 397	.864** .000 397
Cyberbullying (CB)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.826** .000 397	.894** .000 397	.798** .000 397	.829** .000 397	.781** .000 397	.864** .000 397	1 .000 397

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings from Table 4.4 indicate that all the workplace bullying dimensions are significantly related to **eEmployee pPerformance** at the 0.01 level. Verbal **aAbuse** exhibited a strong positive correlation with **eEmployee pPerformance** ( $r = .703$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that as incidents of verbal abuse increase, employee performance is adversely affected. Similarly, **aAggressive bBehaviour** ( $r = .722$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and **sSocial eExclusion** ( $r = .738$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were both strongly correlated with **eEmployee pPerformance**, highlighting that hostile and exclusionary actions within the workplace undermine employees' ability to function effectively. Gender **dDiscrimination** ( $r = .698$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) also displayed a significant positive correlation, underscoring its detrimental impact on employee outcomes. Of particular note, **sSexual hHarassment** ( $r = .827$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and **cCyberbullying** ( $r = .826$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) demonstrated the strongest correlations with **eEmployee pPerformance**. This result indicates that harassment and online bullying exert especially harmful effects on employees' productivity and overall job performance. The strength of these associations **underscores emphasises** the urgency for management to implement policies and interventions that prevent such behaviours. The correlation matrix further revealed strong interrelationships among the independent variables. For instance, **sSocial eExclusion** and **gGender dDiscrimination** were highly correlated ( $r = .933$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that employees who experience social exclusion are often also subjected to discriminatory treatment. Similarly, **vVerbal**

abuse was strongly associated with cyberbullying ( $r = .894, p < 0.01$ ), showing that abusive language and online hostility tend to co-occur. These high inter-variable correlations suggest that workplace bullying is a multidimensional phenomenon, where different forms of negative behaviour reinforce and exacerbate one another, creating a toxic organisational environment.

#### 4.4.2 Results of Regression Analysis

The regression analysis was performed to determine the relationship between workplace bullying and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State. Below are tables representing the output of the regression analysis.

**Table 4.5: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.877 <sup>a</sup>	.770	.766		1.88953	1.739

a. Predictors: Social Exclusion, Aggressive Behaviour, Verbal Abuse, Sexual Harassment, Cyberbullying, Gender Discrimination

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

The correlation coefficient (R) stood at 0.877, suggesting that there is a very strong relationship between the independent variables (verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, social exclusion, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying) and employee performance. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) stood at 0.770, indicating that approximately 77.0% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by the independent variables included in the model. The adjusted  $R^2$ , which corrects for the number of predictors, is 0.766, further confirming the robustness of the model. The Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.739 falls within the acceptable range (1.5–2.5), suggesting no serious autocorrelation issues in the residuals.

**Table 4.6: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4649.198	6	774.866	217.029	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1392.429	390	3.570		

Total	6041.627	396			
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a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Exclusion, Aggressive Behaviour, Verbal Abuse, Sexual Harassment, Cyberbullying, Gender Discrimination

As shown in Table 4.6, the F-statistic is 217.029 with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This result confirms that the set of predictors; verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, social exclusion, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying jointly and significantly influence employee performance in the selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State.

#### 4.5 Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested using the p-values obtained from the regression results. A p-value greater than or equal to 0.05 implies that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is not rejected, while a p-value less than 0.05 implies that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected. The interpretations of the results are presented below.

**Table 4.7: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.441	.558		.791	.430
	Verbal Abuse (VA)	-.450	.061	-.440	-7.326	.000
	Aggressive Behaviour (AB)	-.094	.053	-.087	1.766	.078
	Social Exclusion (SE)	-.155	.080	-.152	-1.928	.055
	Gender Discrimination (GD)	-.585	.060	-.541	9.759	.000
	Sexual Harassment (SH)	-.648	.071	-.605	9.090	.000
	Cyberbullying (CB)	-.253	.084	-.237	3.003	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

### **Hypothesis One**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between verbal abuse and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State.

The analysis in Table 4.7 shows that verbal abuse has a coefficient of -0.450, indicating a negative association with employee performance. The relationship is statistically significant ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), with a notable negative standardized coefficient (Beta = -0.440). Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it is concluded that there is a significant negative relationship between verbal abuse and employee performance in the selected agro-industrial firms.

### **Hypothesis Two**

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between aggressive behaviour and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State.

The coefficient for aggressive behaviour is -0.094, showing a weak negative association with employee performance. However, the relationship is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.078 > 0.05$ ), and the standardized coefficient is also small (Beta = -0.087). Based on these results, the null hypothesis is not rejected, indicating that aggressive behaviour does not have a statistically significant effect on employee performance in the selected firms.

### **Hypothesis Three**

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between social exclusion and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State.

From the regression output, social exclusion has a coefficient of -0.155, suggesting a negative association with employee performance. The p-value (0.055) is slightly above the 0.05 significance threshold, and the standardized coefficient is -0.152. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected, implying that while social exclusion has a negative effect on employee performance, this effect is not statistically significant at the 5% level in the selected agro-industrial firms.

#### **Hypothesis Four**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between gender discrimination and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State.

The regression result indicates that gender discrimination has a coefficient of -0.585, with a highly significant p-value ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). The standardized coefficient (Beta = -0.541) also demonstrates a strong negative effect on employee performance. Based on these results, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that there is a significant negative relationship between gender discrimination and employee performance in the selected firms.

#### **Hypothesis Five**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between sexual harassment and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State.

Sexual harassment shows a regression coefficient of -0.648, indicating a strong negative relationship with employee performance. The p-value is statistically significant ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), and the standardized coefficient (Beta = -0.605) further reinforces the strength of this effect. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, leading to the conclusion that sexual harassment has a significant negative relationship with employee performance in the selected firms.

#### **Hypothesis Six**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between cyberbullying and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State.

The coefficient for cyberbullying is -0.253, reflecting a negative influence on employee performance. The relationship is statistically significant ( $p = 0.003 < 0.05$ ), with a standardized coefficient of -0.237. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it is established that cyberbullying has a significant negative relationship with employee performance in the selected agro-industrial firms.

#### **4.6 Discussion of Findings**

This study investigated the influence of workplace bullying dimensions on employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State. The hypotheses tested revealed varying effects of verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, social exclusion, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying on job performance. The findings are discussed below in line with previous empirical studies.

The results revealed that verbal abuse has a significant negative relationship with employee performance. This aligns with the findings of Abdulmuhsin et al. (2021) and Douglas et al. (2017), who established that verbal aggression reduces organisational commitment and undermines employee outcomes. Similarly, Gavya and Subashini (2025) confirmed that workplace bullying, including verbal harassment, erodes job satisfaction and commitment, thereby reducing employee performance. These findings underscore the need for organisational interventions to reduce verbal abuse as a means of enhancing productivity.

Aggressive behaviour, although negatively associated with employee performance, did not show a statistically significant relationship in this study. This contrasts with earlier findings by Arubayi (2023) and Malik and Sattar (2022), who reported that workplace aggression has an adverse effect on performance outcomes. The non-significance in this context may be explained by cultural or organisational coping mechanisms that reduce the impact of aggressive behaviour in agro-industrial firms. However, it remains consistent with the broader understanding that aggression threatens employee well-being and should be minimised to sustain performance.

Social exclusion was also negatively related to employee performance but failed to reach statistical significance at the 5% threshold. This finding partly corroborates the results of Asemota (2022) and Haldorai et al. (2020), who noted that workplace ostracism adversely affects employee outcomes. Although the effect was not strong in this study, the trend suggests that exclusionary practices remain detrimental and, if unaddressed, could escalate into more damaging forms of hostility affecting performance.

The regression results indicated that gender discrimination significantly undermines employee performance. This finding supports the empirical evidence of Oghojafor et al. (2012), Douglas et al. (2017), and Nishimura et al. (2024), all of whom identified gender-based inequities as detrimental to organisational outcomes. The negative coefficient found in this study reflects the persistence of gender-based hostility in agro-industrial firms, necessitating gender-sensitive policies and practices to enhance inclusivity and equity.

Similarly, sexual harassment exhibited a significant negative effect on employee performance. This is consistent with the findings of Malik et al. (2018), Abdulmuhsin et al. (2021), and Gavva and Subashini (2025), who identified sexual harassment as one of the strongest predictors of reduced job satisfaction and productivity. The strong negative effect observed in this study highlights the urgency for proactive organisational measures, including policy enforcement, employee sensitisation, and reporting mechanisms, to curb harassment in the workplace.

Lastly, cyberbullying was found to have a significant negative impact on employee performance. This resonates with the observations of Haldorai et al. (2020) and more recent workplace bullying research that emphasises the growing threat of technology-mediated harassment. In a digitalised workplace, cyberbullying introduces unique challenges such as anonymity and extended reach, making it a pressing concern for management in agro-industrial firms.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce the conclusions of prior empirical literature that workplace bullying, in its varied forms, negatively influences employee outcomes. While some factors like aggressive behaviour and social exclusion did not reach significance in this context, their negative coefficients suggest they remain latent threats to performance. The consistent significance of verbal abuse, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying underscores the need for comprehensive workplace interventions. Firms must therefore develop inclusive policies, strengthen grievance redress systems, and promote a culture of respect and fairness to mitigate these challenges and enhance employee productivity.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Preamble

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study. It provides a synthesis of the empirical results in relation to the study's objectives and hypotheses, thereby linking the data analysis with the practical and theoretical implications. This section ensures clarity in presenting the outcomes of the research and offers actionable recommendations for practice, policy, and further research.

#### 5.2 **Summary**

Provide a synopsis of the background to the study, literature review, theoretical framework, and methods of data collection and analysis.

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1. The study found a significant negative relationship between verbal abuse and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State.
2. The study established that aggressive behaviour exhibited no statistically significant relationship with employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State.
3. The findings also revealed that social exclusion has a negative influence on employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State, though this effect was not statistically significant at the 5% level.
4. The study showed that gender discrimination exerts a strong and significant negative effect on employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State.
5. The results further revealed that sexual harassment has a strong negative and significant relationship with employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State.
6. Finally, the study found that cyberbullying significantly reduces employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Edo State.

Present the summary of key findings in Roman numerals such as i, ii, iii, and so on.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

This study set out to examine the relationship between workplace bullying and employee performance in selected agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State. Drawing on survey data analysed through Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression, the study investigated six dimensions of workplace bullying, namely verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, social exclusion, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying, in order to determine their impact on employee performance.

The findings demonstrate that workplace bullying constitutes a serious threat to the performance and wellbeing of employees in agro-industrial organisations. Specifically, verbal abuse, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying were found to have statistically significant negative effects on employee performance. These results indicate that bullying behaviours which directly attack an individual's dignity, self-worth, and professional identity are most harmful to performance outcomes. In contrast, aggressive behaviour and social exclusion, although negatively related to performance, did not show statistically significant effects within the selected firms. This highlights the differentiated impact of bullying behaviours and underscores the need for organisations to prioritise interventions that address the most damaging forms of workplace hostility.

The conclusion drawn from the empirical evidence is that workplace bullying undermines organisational effectiveness by eroding employee motivation, productivity, and commitment. Agro-industrial firms, which are critical to food production and economic development in Edo State, risk reduced competitiveness and high staff turnover if workplace bullying is not effectively managed. The significance of this study lies not only in confirming the detrimental effects of bullying on performance but also in extending scholarly and practical understanding to an underexplored sector in Nigeria's industrial landscape.

Theoretically, the study affirms that the work environment plays a central role in shaping employee behaviour and output. The findings support the contention that hostile interpersonal relations at work, particularly in the form of harassment, discrimination, and cyber-based bullying, create negative psychological and emotional outcomes that translate into poor performance. From a managerial perspective, the study concludes that organisations must move beyond mere awareness of workplace bullying to the implementation of concrete anti-bullying policies, grievance procedures, and supportive workplace cultures that foster respect, inclusivity, and fairness.

In sum, the study concludes that workplace bullying is a pervasive organisational problem that significantly impairs employee performance in agro-industrial firms in Benin City. By establishing the dimensions of bullying that exert the greatest impact, the study provides both empirical and contextual evidence to guide managers, policymakers, and scholars in developing sustainable strategies to combat bullying, improve employee performance, and strengthen the overall productivity of Nigeria's agro-industrial sector.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. ***Development and Enforcement of Anti-Bullying Policies:*** Agro-industrial firms should establish clear workplace policies that explicitly define and prohibit all forms of bullying, including verbal abuse, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying. These policies should be communicated to all employees, with zero tolerance for violations. Enforcement mechanisms must be transparent, fair, and consistently applied to deter perpetrators.
2. ***Strengthening Organisational Culture and Leadership Commitment:*** Management should cultivate a workplace culture that emphasises respect, inclusivity, and fairness. Leaders must lead by example by demonstrating ethical behaviour and treating employees with dignity. Leadership training should be provided to supervisors and managers to help them identify bullying behaviours early and take corrective action before they escalate.

3. ***Establishment of Reporting and Grievance Mechanisms:*** A confidential and accessible reporting system should be developed to enable employees to lodge complaints without fear of retaliation. Such mechanisms could include anonymous hotlines, suggestion boxes, and dedicated human resource personnel. Firms should ensure that reported cases are investigated promptly and objectively, and that appropriate disciplinary measures are taken.
4. ***Awareness and Training Programmes:*** Regular workshops, seminars, and sensitisation campaigns should be conducted to raise awareness among employees about workplace bullying, its manifestations, and its consequences. Training should also focus on conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and respectful communication to prevent negative interactions from escalating into bullying.
5. ***Support Systems for Victims:*** Firms should provide counselling and support services for employees who have experienced bullying. Employee assistance programmes (EAPs), peer support networks, and access to professional counselling can help victims recover psychologically and emotionally, thereby minimising the adverse impact on their performance and wellbeing.
6. ***Integration of Bullying Prevention into Human Resource Practices:*** Human resource departments should integrate bullying prevention into recruitment, onboarding, appraisal, and promotion processes. For instance, behavioural assessments can be used during recruitment to identify candidates prone to aggressive or discriminatory behaviour. Similarly, performance appraisals should include metrics on interpersonal relations and respect for colleagues.

**Present the recommendations in Roman numerals.**

**5.4 Contributions to Knowledge**

This study has made the following contributions to the body of knowledge:

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1. the study provided empirical evidence that verbal abuse has a statistically significant negative effect on employee performance in the selected agro-industrial firms. While research on workplace bullying in Nigeria has often focused on the banking, educational, or public sectors, this study extends the discourse to the agro-industrial sector, which has received limited scholarly attention. By situating verbal abuse as a critical dimension of bullying that directly undermines employee productivity, the study adds sector-specific insights to the literature.
2. the findings show that aggressive behaviour and social exclusion, although negatively associated with employee performance, do not exert statistically significant effects in the sampled firms. This distinction advances theoretical knowledge by demonstrating that not all bullying behaviours impact employee performance equally. The study therefore refines the understanding of workplace bullying by identifying dimensions that are more harmful than others, thereby contributing to the ongoing discourse on which forms of bullying are most detrimental in different organisational contexts.
3. the study established that gender discrimination and sexual harassment significantly and negatively affect employee performance. This reinforces existing scholarship that highlights the damaging effects of workplace harassment and discriminatory practices but contributes new knowledge by demonstrating these effects within agro-industrial firms in Benin City. It highlights the urgent need for organisations in the sector to implement gender-sensitive workplace policies and zero-tolerance frameworks to address harassment and discrimination, thereby protecting employee wellbeing and performance.
4. the study makes a contemporary contribution by demonstrating that cyberbullying has a statistically significant negative influence on employee performance. The integration of cyberbullying into workplace bullying research within the Nigerian

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industrial context is novel, as most studies on the subject have concentrated on service organisations or Western economies. By establishing cyberbullying as a critical factor, the study expands the scope of workplace bullying literature to include technology-mediated hostility in agro-industrial organisations, which are increasingly reliant on digital communication systems.

5. methodologically, the study contributes by applying Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis to assess the effects of multiple dimensions of workplace bullying on employee performance. This approach provides a rigorous and replicable model for quantifying the extent of negative effects, thus enriching the methodological literature on bullying research in the Nigerian context.

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6. the contextual contribution of this study is notable. By focusing on agro-industrial firms in Benin City, Edo State, the research addresses a sector that is vital for food security, economic growth, and industrial development in Nigeria. Much of the existing empirical work on workplace bullying and employee performance has been dominated by Western contexts or service-based organisations. This study therefore fills a geographical and sectoral gap by offering insights relevant to industrial firms in a developing economy, which policymakers, managers, and researchers can use to design interventions that reduce bullying and enhance employee performance.

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### 5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

In the light of the findings made in this study, this study provided significant insights into the relationship between workplace bullying and employee performance in agro-industrial firms in Benin City, but certain limitations create opportunities for further scholarly inquiry. The following suggestions are therefore proposed for future studies.

Future studies could extend beyond Benin City to other parts of Edo State and Nigeria as a whole. This will allow for comparative analyses and a broader understanding of workplace bullying across diverse cultural, economic, and organisational contexts. Further research could investigate workplace bullying in other industries such as banking, healthcare, education, and the public

sector. Comparing the agro-industrial sector with these industries may reveal sector-specific patterns and provide more generalisable findings. This study adopted a cross-sectional approach, which only captured workplace bullying and employee performance at a single point in time. Longitudinal research could track these variables over an extended period, offering deeper insights into causality and long-term consequences of workplace bullying on performance.

Besides, the current study employed quantitative analysis; however, future research could adopt a mixed-method approach, combining surveys with interviews and focus group discussions. This would provide richer, more nuanced insights into the experiences of victims and the coping strategies they employ. Future studies could explore variables such as organisational culture, leadership style, job satisfaction, or emotional intelligence as mediators or moderators in the relationship between workplace bullying and employee performance. This would help to uncover underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that either exacerbate or mitigate the effects of bullying.

Additionally, while this study focused on employee performance, further research could examine the broader organisational implications of workplace bullying, such as employee turnover, absenteeism, productivity loss, innovation, and organisational reputation. Further studies could also investigate how gender, age, educational background, and other demographic variables influence employees' experiences and perceptions of bullying. This may provide more targeted interventions for vulnerable groups. With the rise of digital communication, cyberbullying in professional settings is becoming more prevalent.

Finally, future research could focus exclusively on cyberbullying, its unique manifestations, and its effects on both individual and organisational outcomes in Nigeria's work environment. To contextualise Nigerian findings, future studies could compare workplace bullying in Nigerian agro-industrial firms with those in other countries. This may reveal cultural differences in perceptions, reporting, and management of workplace bullying. Future research could evaluate the effectiveness of existing workplace policies, grievance mechanisms, and legal frameworks aimed

at curbing workplace bullying in Nigeria. Such studies would provide evidence-based guidance for improving policy and regulatory interventions.

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**APPENDIX**  
**APPENDIX I**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Department of Human Resources Management,  
Faculty of Management Sciences,  
University of Benin,  
Benin, Edo State.  
12<sup>th</sup> March, 2025.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a postgraduate student of the University of Benin carrying out a research study titled: *“Workplace Bullying and Employee Performance in Selected Agro-Industrial Firms in Benin City, Edo State.”* This study seeks to understand how different forms of workplace bullying influence employee performance. Your honest response will provide valuable data for academic purposes. All information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality and used strictly for research purposes.

Thank you for your anticipated co-operation

Yours Faithfully

**Frank Osemwegie AGBONGIAGUE**

Researcher

**SECTION A: Personal Details**

1. Gender:                      Male [  ]                      Female [  ]
2. Age:              30 years and Below [  ]              31-40 [  ]              41-50 [  ]              51-60 [  ]  
Above 60 [  ]
3. Qualification:              First School Leaving Certificate or less [  ]  
SSCE/GCE/NECO/NABTEB [  ]              OND/NCE [  ]              HND/Bachelor’s Degree [  ]  
Master’s Degree/Ph.D [  ]              Others [  ]
4. Job Experience:              0-5yrs [  ]              5-10yrs [  ]              Above 10 [  ]
5. Marital Status:                      Single [  ]              Married [  ]
6. Job Designation:              Permanent [  ]              Temporary [  ]

**SECTION B: Questionnaire Items on Workplace Bullying and Employee Performance in Selected Agro-Industrial Firms in Benin City.**

**Instruction:** Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement below using a 5-point Likert scale. Strongly Agree = SA, Agree = A, Undecided = UD, Disagree = D, Strongly Disagree = SD. Please tick (√) as it represents your view

No	Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA
	<b>Verbal Abuse</b>					
7	Supervisors or colleagues often use insulting language toward employees.					
8	Criticism from management is usually harsh and unjustified.					
9	Verbal abuse at work reduces my job motivation.					
10	Verbal insults negatively affect my productivity.					
11	I find it difficult to concentrate on work when exposed to verbal aggression.					
	<b>Aggressive Behaviour</b>	SD	D	U	A	SA
12	Some colleagues or supervisors display physical intimidation at work.					
13	Shouting or aggressive gestures are common in my workplace.					
14	Aggressive behaviour reduces team collaboration.					
15	Exposure to aggression reduces my willingness to engage with tasks.					
16	Aggressive behaviour leads to reduced work quality and efficiency.					
	<b>Social Exclusion</b>	SD	D	U	A	SA
17	Certain employees are deliberately left out of important work activities.					
18	Social exclusion in the workplace reduces employee morale.					
19	Being ignored or isolated at work affects my job satisfaction.					
20	Exclusion from decision-making lowers employee engagement.					
21	Social exclusion reduces my sense of belonging to the organisation.					
	<b>Gender Discrimination</b>	SD	D	U	A	SA
22	Some employees receive unfair treatment because of their gender.					
23	Gender bias negatively influences promotion and career opportunities.					
24	Female employees face more work-related obstacles than male colleagues.					
25	Gender discrimination reduces employee confidence and morale.					
26	Discrimination based on gender affects overall organisational performance.					
	<b>Sexual Harassment</b>	SD	D	U	A	SA

27	Unwelcome sexual comments or jokes occur in my workplace.					
28	Sexual harassment creates an unsafe and uncomfortable work environment.					
29	Sexual advances from supervisors or colleagues affect employee focus.					
30	Sexual harassment reduces trust in management.					
31	Employees' productivity decreases when exposed to sexual harassment.					
	<b>Cyberbullying</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
32	Employees sometimes receive threatening or abusive messages through digital platforms.					
33	Cyberbullying reduces my willingness to participate in workplace communication.					
34	Negative comments or ridicule online affect my job satisfaction.					
35	Cyberbullying contributes to workplace stress.					
36	Exposure to cyberbullying reduces my performance and engagement.					
	<b>Employee Performance</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
37	I always strive to meet performance targets set by my organisation.					
38	I put in extra effort to ensure high productivity.					
39	I am committed and engaged in my assigned tasks.					
40	I derive satisfaction from the quality of work I deliver.					
41	My job performance has been negatively affected by workplace bullying.					

Thank you very much for taking out time to fill this questionnaire.

## APPENDIX II

### Reliability Test Results

#### Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

#### RELIABILITY

/VARIABLES= VAR0007 VAR0008 VAR00009 VAR00010 VAR00011

/SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL

/MODEL=ALPHA.

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.810	5

RELIABILITY

/VARIABLES= VAR00012 VAR00013 VAR00014 VAR00015 VAR00016

/SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL

/MODEL=ALPHA.

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.790	5

RELIABILITY

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#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
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RELIABILITY

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#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
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RELIABILITY

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**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
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RELIABILITY

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**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.820	5

RELIABILITY

/VARIABLES= VAR00037 VAR00038 VAR00039 VAR00040 VAR00041  
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**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.880	5

## RESEARCH OUTPUT

### Frequencies

		Notes
Output Created		26-AUG-2025 13:10:48
Comments		
Input	Data	C:\Users\PP S\Desktop\Joseph Permanent 2025\Dr. Ogieva\Workplace Bullying\Frank New Data.sav
	Active Dataset	DataSet1
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	397
	Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing
	Cases Used	Statistics are based on all cases with valid data.
Syntax		FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Gender Age EducationalQualification JobExperience MaritalStatus JobDesignation VA7 VA8 VA9 VA10 VA11 AB12 AB13 AB14 AB15 AB16 SE17 SE18 SE19 SE20 SE21 GD22 GD23 GD24 GD25 GD26 SH27 SH28 SH29 SH30 SH31 CB32 CB33 CB34 CB35 CB36 EP37 EP38 EP39 EP40 EP41 /STATISTICS=STDDEV MEAN /ORDER=ANALYSIS.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.05
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.05

### Statistics

		Gender	Age	EducationalQuali fication	Job Experience	MaritalStatus
N	Valid	397	397	397	397	397

Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean				1.76	
Std. Deviation				.698	

**Statistics**

		Job Designation	VA7	VA8	VA9	VA10	VA11	AB12
N	Valid	397	397	397	397	397	397	397
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.48	4.07	3.98	3.97	4.06	3.80	3.82
Std. Deviation		.500	.955	.964	.958	.962	1.045	.992

**Statistics**

		AB13	AB14	AB15	AB16	SE17	SE18	SE19
N	Valid	397	397	397	397	397	397	397
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.71	3.96	3.64	3.96	3.51	4.10	4.06
Std. Deviation		1.042	.884	1.107	.942	1.180	.908	.912

**Statistics**

		SE20	SE21	GD22	GD23	GD24	GD25	GD26
N	Valid	397	397	397	397	397	397	397
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.94	3.86	3.71	4.10	4.06	3.94	3.86
Std. Deviation		.945	1.043	1.042	.908	.912	.945	1.043

**Statistics**

		SH27	SH28	SH29	SH30	SH31	CB32	CB33
N	Valid	397	397	397	397	397	397	397
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.77	3.76	3.80	4.07	3.98	3.90	4.08
Std. Deviation		1.007	1.042	1.086	.955	.963	.911	.949

**Statistics**

		CB34	CB35	CB36	EP37	EP38	EP39	EP40
N	Valid	397	397	397	397	397	397	397
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.93	3.80	3.82	3.91	3.80	3.71	3.91
Std. Deviation		1.027	1.045	.992	.901	1.016	1.126	1.034

**Statistics**

		EP41						
N	Valid	397						
	Missing	0						
Mean		3.82						
Std. Deviation		1.090						

## Frequency Table

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	183	46.1	46.1	46.1
	Male	214	53.9	53.9	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

		Age			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	30 years and below	105	26.4	26.4	26.4
	31-40	170	42.8	42.8	69.3
	41-50	73	18.4	18.4	87.7
	51-60	25	6.3	6.3	94.0
	Above 60	24	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

		EducationalQualification			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	FSLC	4	1.0	1.0	1.0
	HND/B.Sc	244	61.5	61.5	62.5
	MBA/M.Sc/Ph.D	63	15.9	15.9	78.3
	OND/NCE	36	9.1	9.1	87.4
	Others	5	1.3	1.3	88.7
	SSCE/GCE/NECO/	45	11.3	11.3	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

		Job Experience			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-5years	156	39.3	39.3	39.3
	5-10 years	181	45.6	45.6	84.9
	Above 10 years	60	15.1	15.1	100.0

Total	397	100.0	100.0
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**MaritalStatus**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	185	46.6	46.6	46.6
	Single	212	53.4	53.4	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**Job Designation**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Permanent	206	51.9	51.9	51.9
	Temporary	191	48.1	48.1	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**VA7**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Disagree	16	4.0	4.0	6.8
	Undecided	54	13.6	13.6	20.4
	Agree	170	42.8	42.8	63.2
	Strongly Agree	146	36.8	36.8	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**VA8**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	13	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Disagree	18	4.5	4.5	7.8
	Undecided	55	13.9	13.9	21.7
	Agree	187	47.1	47.1	68.8
	Strongly Agree	124	31.2	31.2	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**VA9**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	21	5.3	5.3	7.3
	Undecided	76	19.1	19.1	26.4
	Agree	160	40.3	40.3	66.8
	Strongly Agree	132	33.2	33.2	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**VA10**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Disagree	19	4.8	4.8	7.3
	Undecided	55	13.9	13.9	21.2
	Agree	166	41.8	41.8	63.0
	Strongly Agree	147	37.0	37.0	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**VA11**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	15	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Disagree	32	8.1	8.1	11.8
	Undecided	77	19.4	19.4	31.2
	Agree	165	41.6	41.6	72.8
	Strongly Agree	108	27.2	27.2	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**AB12**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
	Disagree	33	8.3	8.3	10.6
	Undecided	83	20.9	20.9	31.5
	Agree	166	41.8	41.8	73.3
	Strongly Agree	106	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**AB13**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Disagree	47	11.8	11.8	14.4
	Undecided	88	22.2	22.2	36.5
	Agree	155	39.0	39.0	75.6
	Strongly Agree	97	24.4	24.4	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**AB14**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Disagree	22	5.5	5.5	7.3
	Undecided	55	13.9	13.9	21.2
	Agree	209	52.6	52.6	73.8
	Strongly Agree	104	26.2	26.2	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**AB15**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	23	5.8	5.8	5.8
	Disagree	45	11.3	11.3	17.1
	Undecided	67	16.9	16.9	34.0
	Agree	179	45.1	45.1	79.1
	Strongly Agree	83	20.9	20.9	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**AB16**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Disagree	21	5.3	5.3	7.8
	Undecided	61	15.4	15.4	23.2
	Agree	188	47.4	47.4	70.5
	Strongly Agree	117	29.5	29.5	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**SE17**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	33	8.3	8.3	8.3
	Disagree	45	11.3	11.3	19.6
	Undecided	86	21.7	21.7	41.3
	Agree	151	38.0	38.0	79.3
	Strongly Agree	82	20.7	20.7	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**SE18**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	13	3.3	3.3	5.3
	Undecided	59	14.9	14.9	20.2
	Agree	170	42.8	42.8	63.0
	Strongly Agree	147	37.0	37.0	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**SE19**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Disagree	20	5.0	5.0	6.3
	Undecided	64	16.1	16.1	22.4
	Agree	166	41.8	41.8	64.2
	Strongly Agree	142	35.8	35.8	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**SE20**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagree	31	7.8	7.8	9.3
	Undecided	60	15.1	15.1	24.4
	Agree	183	46.1	46.1	70.5
	Strongly Agree	117	29.5	29.5	100.0

Total	397	100.0	100.0
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**SE21**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	45	11.3	11.3	13.4
	Undecided	65	16.4	16.4	29.7
	Agree	157	39.5	39.5	69.3
	Strongly Agree	122	30.7	30.7	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**GD22**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Disagree	47	11.8	11.8	14.4
	Undecided	88	22.2	22.2	36.5
	Agree	155	39.0	39.0	75.6
	Strongly Agree	97	24.4	24.4	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**GD23**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	13	3.3	3.3	5.3
	Undecided	59	14.9	14.9	20.2
	Agree	170	42.8	42.8	63.0
	Strongly Agree	147	37.0	37.0	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**GD24**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Disagree	20	5.0	5.0	6.3
	Undecided	64	16.1	16.1	22.4

Agree	166	41.8	41.8	64.2
Strongly Agree	142	35.8	35.8	100.0
Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**GD25**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagree	31	7.8	7.8	9.3
	Undecided	60	15.1	15.1	24.4
	Agree	183	46.1	46.1	70.5
	Strongly Agree	117	29.5	29.5	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**GD26**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	45	11.3	11.3	13.4
	Undecided	65	16.4	16.4	29.7
	Agree	157	39.5	39.5	69.3
	Strongly Agree	122	30.7	30.7	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**SH27**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Disagree	45	11.3	11.3	13.1
	Undecided	81	20.4	20.4	33.5
	Agree	165	41.6	41.6	75.1
	Strongly Agree	99	24.9	24.9	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**SH28**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8

Disagree	44	11.1	11.1	13.9
Undecided	75	18.9	18.9	32.7
Agree	165	41.6	41.6	74.3
Strongly Agree	102	25.7	25.7	100.0
Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**SH29**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	19	4.8	4.8	4.8
	Disagree	35	8.8	8.8	13.6
	Undecided	61	15.4	15.4	29.0
	Agree	172	43.3	43.3	72.3
	Strongly Agree	110	27.7	27.7	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**SH30**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Disagree	16	4.0	4.0	6.8
	Undecided	54	13.6	13.6	20.4
	Agree	170	42.8	42.8	63.2
	Strongly Agree	146	36.8	36.8	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**SH31**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	13	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Disagree	18	4.5	4.5	7.8
	Undecided	55	13.9	13.9	21.7
	Agree	188	47.4	47.4	69.0
	Strongly Agree	123	31.0	31.0	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**CB32**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Disagree	30	7.6	7.6	8.8
	Undecided	65	16.4	16.4	25.2
	Agree	195	49.1	49.1	74.3
	Strongly Agree	102	25.7	25.7	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**CB33**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Disagree	15	3.8	3.8	6.5
	Undecided	53	13.4	13.4	19.9
	Agree	171	43.1	43.1	63.0
	Strongly Agree	147	37.0	37.0	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**CB34**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Disagree	32	8.1	8.1	10.6
	Undecided	68	17.1	17.1	27.7
	Agree	153	38.5	38.5	66.2
	Strongly Agree	134	33.8	33.8	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**CB35**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	15	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Disagree	32	8.1	8.1	11.8
	Undecided	77	19.4	19.4	31.2
	Agree	165	41.6	41.6	72.8
	Strongly Agree	108	27.2	27.2	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**CB36**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
	Disagree	33	8.3	8.3	10.6
	Undecided	83	20.9	20.9	31.5
	Agree	166	41.8	41.8	73.3
	Strongly Agree	106	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**EP37**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Disagree	28	7.1	7.1	8.3
	Undecided	67	16.9	16.9	25.2
	Agree	196	49.4	49.4	74.6
	Strongly Agree	101	25.4	25.4	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**EP38**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Disagree	46	11.6	11.6	13.4
	Undecided	71	17.9	17.9	31.2
	Agree	167	42.1	42.1	73.3
	Strongly Agree	106	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**EP39**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	29	7.3	7.3	7.3
	Disagree	31	7.8	7.8	15.1
	Undecided	59	14.9	14.9	30.0
	Agree	186	46.9	46.9	76.8
	Strongly Agree	92	23.2	23.2	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**EP40**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Disagree	32	8.1	8.1	10.8
	Undecided	68	17.1	17.1	28.0
	Agree	155	39.0	39.0	67.0
	Strongly Agree	131	33.0	33.0	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**EP41**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	21	5.3	5.3	5.3
	Disagree	36	9.1	9.1	14.4
	Undecided	43	10.8	10.8	25.2
	Agree	190	47.9	47.9	73.0
	Strongly Agree	107	27.0	27.0	100.0
	Total	397	100.0	100.0	

**Correlations**

**Notes**

Output Created	26-AUG-2025 13:10:56	
Comments		
Input	Data	C:\Users\P P S\Desktop\Joseph Permanent 2025\Dr. Ogieva\Workplace Bullying\Frank New Data.sav
	Active Dataset	DataSet1
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	397
	Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing
	Cases Used	Statistics for each pair of variables are based on all the cases with valid data for that pair.

Syntax	CORRELATIONS	
	/VARIABLES=EmployeePerformance VerbalAbuse AggressiveBehaviour SocialExclusion GenderDiscrimination SexualHarassment Cyberbullying	
	/PRINT=TWOTAIL NOSIG	
	/MISSING=PAIRWISE.	
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.03
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.03

**Correlations**

		EmployeePerformance	VerbalAbuse	AggressiveBehaviour
EmployeePerformance	Pearson Correlation	1	.703**	.722**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	397	397	397
VerbalAbuse	Pearson Correlation	.703**	1	.749**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	397	397	397
AggressiveBehaviour	Pearson Correlation	.722**	.749**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	397	397	397
SocialExclusion	Pearson Correlation	.738**	.824**	.758**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	397	397	397
GenderDiscrimination	Pearson Correlation	.698**	.790**	.814**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	397	397	397
SexualHarassment	Pearson Correlation	.827**	.853**	.788**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	397	397	397
Cyberbullying	Pearson Correlation	.826**	.894**	.798**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	397	397	397

**Correlations**

		SocialExclusion	GenderDiscrimination	SexualHarassment
EmployeePerformance	Pearson Correlation	.738**	.698**	.827**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	397	397	397
VerbalAbuse	Pearson Correlation	.824**	.790**	.853**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	397	397	397
AggressiveBehaviour	Pearson Correlation	.758**	.814**	.788**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	397	397	397
SocialExclusion	Pearson Correlation	1	.933**	.810**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	397	397	397
GenderDiscrimination	Pearson Correlation	.933**	1	.801**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	397	397	397
SexualHarassment	Pearson Correlation	.810**	.801**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	397	397	397
Cyberbullying	Pearson Correlation	.829**	.781**	.864**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	397	397	397

### Correlations

		Cyberbullying
EmployeePerformance	Pearson Correlation	.826**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	397
VerbalAbuse	Pearson Correlation	.894**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	397
AggressiveBehaviour	Pearson Correlation	.798**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	397
SocialExclusion	Pearson Correlation	.829**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	397
GenderDiscrimination	Pearson Correlation	.781**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	397
SexualHarassment	Pearson Correlation	.864**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	397
Cyberbullying	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	397

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Regression

		Notes
Output Created		26-AUG-2025 13:11:06
Comments		
Input	Data	C:\Users\P P S\Desktop\Joseph Permanent 2025\Dr. Ogieva\Workplace Bullying\Frank New Data.sav
	Active Dataset	DataSet1
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	397
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	Statistics are based on cases with no missing values for any variable used.
Syntax		REGRESSION /MISSING LISTWISE /STATISTICS COEFF OUTS CI(95) BCOV R ANOVA CHANGE /CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10) /NOORIGIN /DEPENDENT EmployeePerformance /METHOD=ENTER VerbalAbuse AggressiveBehaviour GenderDiscrimination SexualHarassment Cyberbullying SocialExclusion /SCATTERPLOT=(*ZRESID ,*ZPRED) /RESIDUALS DURBIN.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.41
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.40
	Memory Required	7328 bytes

Additional Memory Required 0 bytes  
for Residual Plots

**Variables Entered/Removed<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	SocialExclusion, AggressiveBehaviour, VerbalAbuse, SexualHarassment, Cyberbullying, GenderDiscrimination <sup>b</sup>		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: EmployeePerformance

b. All requested variables entered.

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	df1
1	.877 <sup>a</sup>	.770	.766	1.88953	.770	217.029	6

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	df2	Change Statistics	
		Sig. F Change	
1	390	.000	1.739

a. Predictors: (Constant), SocialExclusion, AggressiveBehaviour, VerbalAbuse, SexualHarassment, Cyberbullying, GenderDiscrimination

b. Dependent Variable: EmployeePerformance

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4649.198	6	774.866	217.029	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1392.429	390	3.570		
	Total	6041.627	396			

a. Dependent Variable: EmployeePerformance

b. Predictors: (Constant), SocialExclusion, AggressiveBehaviour, VerbalAbuse, SexualHarassment, Cyberbullying, GenderDiscrimination

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	.441	.558		.791	.430
	VerbalAbuse	-.450	.061	-.440	-7.326	.000
	AggressiveBehaviour	-.094	.053	-.087	1.766	.078
	GenderDiscrimination	-.155	.080	-.152	-1.928	.055
	SexualHarassment	-.585	.060	-.541	9.759	.000
	Cyberbullying	-.648	.071	-.605	9.090	.000
	SocialExclusion	-.253	.084	-.237	3.003	.003

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)		
	VerbalAbuse		
	AggressiveBehaviour		
	GenderDiscrimination		
	SexualHarassment		
	Cyberbullying		
	SocialExclusion		

a. Dependent Variable: EmployeePerformance

**Coefficient Correlations<sup>a</sup>**

Model			SocialExclusion	AggressiveBehav	VerbalAbuse
			SocialExclusion	AggressiveBehav iour	VerbalAbuse
1	Correlations	SocialExclusion	1.000	.256	-.097
		AggressiveBehaviour	.256	1.000	.057
		VerbalAbuse	-.097	.057	1.000
		SexualHarassment	-.022	-.170	-.263
		Cyberbullying	-.311	-.335	-.495
		GenderDiscrimination	-.788	-.465	-.066
		Covariances	SocialExclusion	.007	.001
AggressiveBehaviour	.001		.003	.000	
VerbalAbuse	-.001		.000	.004	
SexualHarassment	.000		-.001	-.001	
Cyberbullying	-.002		-.001	-.002	
	GenderDiscrimination	-.005	-.002	.000	

**Coefficient Correlations<sup>a</sup>**

Model			SexualHarassment	Cyberbullying	GenderDiscrimination
1	Correlations	SocialExclusion	-.022	-.311	-.788
		AggressiveBehaviour	-.170	-.335	-.465
		VerbalAbuse	-.263	-.495	-.066
		SexualHarassment	1.000	-.282	-.112
		Cyberbullying	-.282	1.000	.258
		GenderDiscrimination	-.112	.258	1.000
	Covariances	SocialExclusion	.000	-.002	-.005
		AggressiveBehaviour	-.001	-.001	-.002
		VerbalAbuse	-.001	-.002	.000
		SexualHarassment	.004	-.001	-.001
		Cyberbullying	-.001	.005	.001
		GenderDiscrimination	-.001	.001	.006

a. Dependent Variable: EmployeePerformance

**Residuals Statistics<sup>a</sup>**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	5.3139	25.2189	19.1537	3.42643	397
Residual	-7.41117	6.12241	.00000	1.87516	397
Std. Predicted Value	-4.039	1.770	.000	1.000	397
Std. Residual	-3.922	3.240	.000	.992	397

a. Dependent Variable: EmployeePerformance

**Charts**

