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Validation of a Model for Overcoming Workplace Mobbing Using a VUCA Approach in the Municipalities of Isfahan and Yazd Provinces

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to validate a multidimensional model for overcoming workplace mobbing using a VUCA approach among employees of the municipalities of Isfahan and Yazd Provinces. This quantitative, applied, descriptive-survey study was conducted among managers, deputy managers, experts, and employees of municipalities in Isfahan and Yazd Provinces. The statistical population comprised 8,979 employees, including 7,117 in Isfahan and 1,862 in Yazd. Based on the ten-times rule for partial least squares structural equation modeling, 210 participants were selected through a multistage sampling procedure combining purposive screening, cluster, stratified, and simple random sampling. Data were collected using a researcher-developed 36-item questionnaire covering six dimensions of strategies for overcoming workplace mobbing. The instrument was assessed for content, construct, convergent, and discriminant validity and for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and rho_A. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27 and SmartPLS version 4, and the measurement and structural models were evaluated through PLS-SEM with 5,000 bootstrap resamples. All six structural paths were positive and statistically significant. Structural and organizational policy interventions had the strongest effect on strategies for overcoming mobbing ($\beta = 0.342$, $t = 5.104$, $p < .001$), followed by disciplinary measures and rewards ($\beta = 0.307$, $t = 5.203$, $p < .001$), reporting and documentation systems ($\beta = 0.284$, $t = 4.508$, $p < .001$), value-oriented culture building and prevention ($\beta = 0.218$, $t = 3.028$, $p = .002$), psychological and individual support ($\beta = 0.156$, $t = 2.690$, $p = .007$), and social support and the role of colleagues/witnesses ($\beta = 0.095$, $t = 3.857$, $p = .003$). All VIF values were below 5, Q^2 values were positive, SRMR was 0.065, and GOF was 0.550. The validated model indicates that overcoming workplace mobbing in municipal organizations requires an integrated VUCA-oriented framework combining structural policies, accountability mechanisms, reporting systems, preventive culture, psychological support, and social support.

Keywords: Workplace Mobbing; VUCA; Municipalities; Structural Equation Modeling; PLS-SEM; Organizational Policy; Psychosocial Safety

Introduction

Contemporary organizations increasingly operate in environments characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, a condition commonly conceptualized through the VUCA framework. In such environments, changes occur rapidly, causal relationships are difficult to predict, organizational problems are multidimensional, and decision makers must frequently act despite incomplete or contradictory information. VUCA conditions are no longer restricted to highly competitive private-sector markets but increasingly characterize public organizations, municipal systems, educational institutions, healthcare organizations, and other complex service environments. Rapid technological change, shifting stakeholder expectations, economic instability, regulatory pressures, workforce diversity, digital transformation, and growing demands for transparency have intensified the need for organizational systems capable of functioning effectively under

uncertainty [1-3]. Research on VUCA environments has consequently emphasized strategic agility, organizational learning, adaptive capabilities, digital readiness, and leadership competencies as essential mechanisms for maintaining organizational effectiveness under turbulent conditions [4-6]. Municipal organizations are particularly exposed to such conditions because they operate at the intersection of public administration, citizen expectations, political accountability, legal constraints, resource scarcity, and rapidly changing urban problems. Their organizational environments therefore require not only technical and strategic adaptation but also effective management of human relations and psychosocial risks.

The VUCA perspective is especially important for understanding organizational behavior because uncertainty and complexity affect not only structures and strategies but also interpersonal relationships. When organizational roles are ambiguous, communication channels are fragmented, workloads fluctuate, managerial expectations change rapidly, and employees lack psychological security, the likelihood of dysfunctional interpersonal behavior may increase. Organizational learning and strategic agility can mitigate some of these pressures by enhancing collective sense-making and adaptive responses [3], while dynamic capabilities can support human resource practices that enable employees and organizations to recover from disruption and reconfigure routines under unstable circumstances [2]. At the same time, digital technologies and artificial intelligence are increasingly proposed as tools for improving decision quality, strategic flexibility, workload management, and organizational responsiveness under VUCA conditions [7-10]. These developments suggest that effective organizational responses to turbulence require an integrated approach combining structural flexibility, leadership capabilities, employee development, technological support, and psychosocial protection.

One of the most serious psychosocial problems that can emerge or intensify in complex organizational environments is workplace mobbing. Mobbing generally refers to persistent, systematic, and repeated negative behaviors directed toward an employee or group of employees, often involving humiliation, social exclusion, intimidation, reputational damage, obstruction of work, unfair criticism, hostile communication, or abuse of organizational power. Unlike occasional interpersonal disagreement, mobbing is characterized by repetition, persistence, and an imbalance of power that may gradually undermine the target's psychological well-being and organizational functioning. Its consequences may extend beyond the immediate victim and affect coworkers, teams, managerial relationships, and the broader organizational climate. Empirical evidence has shown that exposure to mobbing is associated with harmful psychological and organizational outcomes, including reduced self-confidence, emotional exhaustion, burnout, diminished trust, withdrawal, and silence [11-13]. Because mobbing can become embedded within everyday communication and informal organizational routines, responding to it requires more than isolated disciplinary action against individual perpetrators.

The organizational consequences of mobbing are particularly important in public-service institutions, where employee interactions directly affect the quality, continuity, and legitimacy of services provided to citizens. Municipalities depend heavily on coordination among managers, experts, operational employees, administrative units, and service departments. Persistent psychological harassment may disrupt this coordination by weakening trust, increasing avoidance behavior, discouraging participation, and reducing employees' willingness to express concerns or share information. Yildiz demonstrated that workplace mobbing can contribute to organizational silence, a condition in which employees deliberately withhold ideas, concerns, or information that may be valuable for organizational improvement [13]. Such silence is particularly problematic in VUCA environments because organizations require timely information, distributed intelligence,

and active employee participation to recognize emerging risks and adapt quickly. Therefore, mobbing may undermine precisely those capacities that organizations need most in volatile and uncertain environments.

The relationship between mobbing and employee well-being is similarly significant. Studies in different occupational contexts suggest that psychological harassment can weaken resilience, increase emotional strain, and intensify burnout. Research among police personnel has emphasized the relationship among emotional intelligence, mobbing, and resilience, indicating that individual psychological resources may influence employees' capacity to cope with hostile workplace experiences [14]. In healthcare environments, perceived mobbing has also been linked to burnout and organizational trust, while public leadership may shape the strength of these relationships [12]. Research in educational settings has further shown that mobbing may act as an important mechanism linking leadership practices with withdrawal-oriented behaviors such as quiet quitting [15]. These findings demonstrate that mobbing is not merely an interpersonal issue; rather, it interacts with leadership, organizational climate, psychological resources, trust, and employee engagement.

The importance of such relationships becomes more pronounced under VUCA conditions. Uncertainty may increase anxiety and defensive behavior, complexity may obscure accountability, ambiguity may create space for inconsistent managerial decisions, and volatility may intensify competition for resources and positions. When employees experience these pressures without adequate organizational support, hostile workplace behavior may become more difficult to identify and address. Conversely, organizations that develop VUCA-ready competencies may be better positioned to prevent or control mobbing through stronger communication, adaptive leadership, learning systems, and psychologically supportive practices. Shet emphasizes that a VUCA-ready workforce requires competencies related to adaptability, learning, collaboration, and the ability to function effectively under uncertainty [5]. Hafeznia and Ansari similarly highlight the importance of cognitive skills for leaders and managers making decisions in VUCA environments [6]. These competencies are directly relevant to the management of workplace mobbing because identifying complex patterns of harassment, distinguishing conflict from systematic abuse, and selecting proportionate interventions all require sophisticated managerial judgment.

The VUCA perspective also highlights the limitations of relying exclusively on reactive solutions. In a stable organizational environment, management may respond to a harassment complaint through investigation and disciplinary action. In a VUCA environment, however, effective intervention must also account for rapidly changing structures, hybrid communication systems, technological mediation, uncertain reporting channels, shifting authority relationships, and diverse employee expectations. Accordingly, an effective model for overcoming mobbing should integrate structural, cultural, psychological, social, technological, and disciplinary components. Organizational policies must clearly define unacceptable behavior and establish transparent procedures. Employees must receive education and value-oriented prevention training. Victims and vulnerable employees need access to psychological and individual support. Coworkers and witnesses should be empowered to intervene safely. Reporting and documentation systems should facilitate early detection and organizational learning. Finally, disciplinary and reward mechanisms should signal that the organization both sanctions harmful behavior and reinforces constructive conduct.

Such an integrated approach is consistent with broader developments in VUCA-oriented management research. Strategic planning under uncertainty increasingly incorporates data-driven and artificial-intelligence-supported approaches designed to strengthen organizational responsiveness and decision quality [7]. AI-supported workload reduction has been proposed as a mechanism for improving employee performance and reducing unnecessary work pressures in turbulent organizational

environments [10]. Artificial intelligence has likewise been associated with increased strategic flexibility among knowledge-based firms operating under VUCA conditions [9], while AI-based strategic frameworks have been proposed to improve the adaptability of knowledge-intensive organizations [8]. Although technological solutions cannot replace ethical leadership or organizational justice, they can support reporting, documentation, monitoring, workload management, and more consistent organizational responses to psychosocial risks.

The role of resilience is another central consideration. VUCA environments expose organizations and employees to continuous disruptions, making resilience a necessary organizational and individual capacity. Joseph argues that technologically enabled resilience can help organizations navigate volatile and uncertain conditions by improving anticipation, adaptation, and recovery capabilities [16]. At the workforce level, resilience is also relevant to mobbing because employees who experience psychological aggression require supportive organizational systems that reduce harm and facilitate recovery rather than simply expecting individuals to tolerate adverse conditions. The emphasis should therefore shift from individual endurance to organizational resilience, in which structures, policies, leadership practices, peer support, and reporting mechanisms collectively reduce the probability and consequences of mobbing.

Organizational learning provides another important theoretical bridge between VUCA management and anti-mobbing strategies. In turbulent environments, organizations must continuously learn from incidents, feedback, failures, and changing stakeholder expectations. Atanassova et al. show that organizational learning and strategic agility play dynamic roles in organizations confronting VUCA conditions [3]. Applied to workplace mobbing, this implies that organizations should not treat complaints as isolated incidents but as data that can reveal structural vulnerabilities, leadership weaknesses, cultural problems, or deficiencies in organizational processes. Reporting systems, documentation procedures, employee feedback, and periodic evaluation can transform individual cases into organizational knowledge and support preventive action.

Interorganizational collaboration is also relevant for municipal organizations. Municipalities frequently interact with external agencies, service providers, governmental bodies, contractors, and community stakeholders, and the benefits expected from such collaborations may change under VUCA conditions [17]. Internal mobbing can weaken these collaborative capacities by damaging communication, trust, and employee willingness to coordinate across organizational boundaries. Thus, interventions aimed at reducing mobbing may indirectly strengthen the organization's broader adaptive and collaborative capacity. For municipalities in particular, where many activities require cross-departmental and interorganizational coordination, maintaining healthy internal relationships is not merely an employee welfare concern but also an operational necessity.

The broader social and communicative dimensions of VUCA should also be considered. Research on cities in the age of VUCA and mediatization emphasizes that urban organizations operate in increasingly complex narrative, communication, and stakeholder environments [18]. Municipal employees work within this same communicative ecology, where internal events may quickly influence organizational reputation and public trust. In such contexts, unresolved mobbing can have consequences beyond the immediate workplace by weakening institutional credibility and increasing perceptions of injustice. A systematic model for overcoming mobbing must therefore include mechanisms that improve internal accountability while supporting a respectful organizational culture.

The human dimension of VUCA has also been examined outside conventional organizational settings, including family and educational contexts. Studies addressing parenting in the VUCA era demonstrate how uncertainty and rapid social change

reshape psychological expectations, interpersonal responsibilities, and adaptive practices [19]. Similarly, research concerning education systems stresses the need for fundamental change to sustain learning processes in a VUCA world [1]. These studies reinforce a broader principle: when environmental conditions become more volatile and ambiguous, previously adequate routines may no longer be sufficient. Organizations must intentionally redesign systems for learning, communication, support, and adaptation. This principle is directly relevant to mobbing prevention, because traditional complaint-based procedures may fail when hostile behaviors are subtle, distributed, technologically mediated, or embedded in ambiguous organizational relationships.

Psychological contracts and relational quality represent another critical dimension. In VUCA healthcare environments, talent management has been linked with psychological contract fulfillment, cordial relations, and generational characteristics [20]. These findings suggest that employees' perceptions of fairness, reciprocity, respect, and organizational obligation are particularly important under unstable conditions. Mobbing represents a severe violation of these relational expectations. When employees believe that the organization tolerates humiliation, exclusion, or abuse of power, organizational trust may deteriorate and the psychological contract may be damaged. Therefore, strategies for overcoming mobbing should not only stop harmful behavior but also restore perceptions of fairness, security, and organizational responsibility.

Leadership is central to this process because managers influence both the formal and informal conditions under which mobbing either develops or is prevented. Leadership styles may affect the emergence of mobbing and subsequent withdrawal behaviors [15], while leadership-related cognitive skills are necessary for sound decisions in ambiguous organizational conditions [6]. Managers must be capable of recognizing indirect forms of harassment, evaluating competing accounts, protecting employees from retaliation, and making decisions that are procedurally fair. In addition, leadership must create a climate in which reporting is safe and employees are not punished socially or professionally for raising concerns.

At the policy level, workplace mental health requires institutional mechanisms extending beyond individual coping. The development of national and organizational policy frameworks for psychosocial safety reflects growing recognition that worker mental health is shaped by organizational systems and governance arrangements [21]. A strong psychosocial safety climate communicates that management values employee psychological health and is willing to allocate resources to protect it. This perspective is highly relevant to mobbing because effective prevention depends on clear policies, credible enforcement, reporting systems, managerial accountability, and organizational learning. In public institutions such as municipalities, these mechanisms are particularly important because formal rules coexist with complex informal relationships and hierarchical authority structures.

Despite the growing literature on VUCA environments and the substantial body of research addressing mobbing and its consequences, the two domains are rarely integrated into a comprehensive model for organizational intervention. VUCA studies have focused extensively on strategic agility, digital transformation, workforce competencies, resilience, organizational learning, leadership, and technological adaptation [4, 5, 7, 16]. Mobbing research, by contrast, has largely emphasized psychological outcomes, burnout, organizational trust, silence, resilience, leadership, and individual consequences [11-15]. What remains less developed is an empirically validated framework that treats overcoming mobbing as a multidimensional organizational capability adapted to VUCA conditions.

This gap is particularly important in municipalities, where employees must simultaneously respond to administrative complexity, public accountability, regulatory change, technological transformation, diverse citizen demands, and internal

organizational pressures. An anti-mobbing model suitable for such settings should therefore be broad enough to encompass structural and organizational policy interventions, value-oriented culture building and preventive education, psychological and individual support, social support and the role of colleagues and witnesses, reporting and documentation systems, technological mechanisms, and disciplinary and reward arrangements. Rather than considering these dimensions as isolated interventions, a VUCA-oriented perspective treats them as mutually reinforcing organizational capabilities that can improve adaptability, psychological safety, responsiveness, and institutional resilience.

Accordingly, the aim of this study was to validate a multidimensional model for overcoming workplace mobbing using a VUCA approach among employees of the municipalities of Isfahan and Yazd Provinces.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, applied, descriptive-survey design to validate a model for overcoming workplace mobbing using a VUCA approach in the municipalities of Isfahan and Yazd Provinces, Iran. In terms of purpose, the study was applied because it sought to validate a practical framework that could be used by municipal organizations to address workplace mobbing under organizational conditions characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. With respect to data collection, the research was cross-sectional and field-based, and the required quantitative data were collected directly from municipal employees using a researcher-developed questionnaire. The statistical population consisted of managers, deputy managers, experts, and employees working in the municipalities of Isfahan and Yazd Provinces. At the time of data collection, the municipal workforce consisted of 7,117 employees in Isfahan Province and 1,862 employees in Yazd Province, resulting in a total statistical population of 8,979 individuals. The study population was selected because municipal organizations constitute complex administrative environments in which hierarchical relationships, organizational interactions, formal and informal communication, managerial practices, and changing environmental demands may influence both the occurrence of workplace mobbing and the effectiveness of strategies intended to counteract it.

The minimum required sample size was determined according to the ten-times rule commonly employed in partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). According to this criterion, the minimum sample should be at least ten times the largest relevant measurement or structural requirement in the proposed model. Considering that the largest dimension of the measurement model contained 21 indicators, the minimum sample size was calculated as 210 participants. Accordingly, 210 managers, deputy managers, experts, and employees from municipalities in Isfahan and Yazd Provinces constituted the final quantitative sample. Participant selection was conducted through a multistage sampling procedure. An initial purposive screening procedure was used to ensure that eligible respondents were members of the target municipal workforce and had sufficient organizational experience to provide meaningful assessments of workplace conditions and anti-mobbing practices. Subsequently, cluster, stratified, and simple random sampling procedures were used to achieve appropriate representation across the selected municipalities, organizational units, and occupational categories. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed that the collected information would be used exclusively for research purposes and analyzed collectively rather than at the individual level.

Quantitative data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire designed to assess the proposed model for overcoming workplace mobbing within a VUCA-oriented organizational framework. The questionnaire consisted of a demographic section and a substantive measurement section. The demographic section collected information on

respondents' gender, age, educational level, work experience, and organizational position. The substantive section contained 36 items representing the principal dimensions of strategies for overcoming workplace mobbing. The measurement framework comprised six dimensions: structural and organizational policy interventions; value-oriented culture building, education, and prevention; psychological and individual support and interventions; social support and the role of colleagues and witnesses; reporting, documentation, and technology systems; and disciplinary measures for offenders together with reward mechanisms for organizational units and individuals demonstrating appropriate conduct. All substantive items were rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1, indicating a very low level, to 5, indicating a very high level. Higher scores represented a stronger presence or implementation of the respective anti-mobbing mechanisms within the respondent's organizational environment.

The psychometric properties of the questionnaire were evaluated before the final model-validation analyses. Face validity was examined by specialists familiar with management, organizational behavior, municipal administration, and the subject matter of workplace mobbing to determine whether the wording and content of the items adequately represented the intended constructs. Content validity was assessed using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR). Fifteen academic and organizational experts evaluated the necessity and relevance of the questionnaire items. Based on the adopted Lawshe criterion, the minimum acceptable CVR was 0.49, whereas the overall obtained coefficient was 0.83, indicating satisfactory content validity. Construct validity was subsequently evaluated within the PLS-SEM measurement model. Convergent validity was assessed using indicator loadings and average variance extracted (AVE), with an AVE value greater than 0.50 considered satisfactory. Discriminant validity was examined using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), with HTMT values below 0.90 considered acceptable and values below 0.85 interpreted as evidence of more stringent discriminant validity.

The reliability of the instrument was evaluated through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients. A preliminary administration of the questionnaire to 30 members of the target population was used to examine the internal consistency of the instrument. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the six dimensions were 0.91 for structural and organizational policy interventions, 0.76 for value-oriented culture building, education, and prevention, 0.88 for psychological and individual support and interventions, 0.91 for social support and the role of colleagues and witnesses, 0.89 for reporting, documentation, and technology systems, and 0.87 for disciplinary measures and reward mechanisms. The corresponding composite reliability coefficients were also above the conventional threshold of 0.70, ranging approximately from 0.82 to 0.93. These findings demonstrated satisfactory to excellent internal consistency across the dimensions of the instrument and supported its use for subsequent structural equation modeling and model validation.

Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 and SmartPLS version 4. SPSS was used for data screening, descriptive statistical analysis, and preliminary reliability assessment. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for categorical demographic variables, while means and standard deviations were used to summarize continuous variables and questionnaire dimensions. Prior to structural model estimation, the dataset was examined for completeness, inappropriate responses, coding errors, and other potential data-quality problems. Distributional characteristics were also examined using descriptive indices and appropriate normality assessments. Although PLS-SEM does not require multivariate normality as a strict assumption, examination of the distribution of observed variables was conducted to provide a comprehensive description of the data and to identify potential extreme deviations that could influence parameter estimates.

Validation of the proposed model was performed using partial least squares structural equation modeling in SmartPLS 4. Model evaluation was conducted in two consecutive stages comprising assessment of the measurement model and assessment of the structural model. For the measurement model, indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were evaluated. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values of at least 0.70 were considered evidence of acceptable internal consistency. Average variance extracted values exceeding 0.50 were used to establish convergent validity. Discriminant validity was evaluated using both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and HTMT. Under the Fornell–Larcker criterion, the square root of the AVE for each latent construct was expected to exceed its correlations with the remaining constructs, whereas HTMT values below 0.90 were regarded as acceptable. These procedures were used to determine whether the indicators adequately represented their respective latent dimensions and whether the six components of the mobbing-exit model were empirically distinguishable from one another.

Following confirmation of the measurement model, the structural component of the model was assessed. Structural relationships were evaluated using standardized path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and relevant model-fit indices. Statistical significance of model parameters was examined through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples and a 95% confidence level. R^2 values were interpreted as indicators of the proportion of variance in endogenous constructs explained by their predictors, with values around 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 representing relatively weak, moderate, and substantial explanatory power, respectively. The f^2 statistic was used to determine the contribution of individual predictors to the explained variance of endogenous constructs, with values of approximately 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 interpreted as small, medium, and large effects. Predictive relevance was evaluated using the Stone–Geisser Q^2 criterion, with Q^2 values greater than zero indicating satisfactory predictive relevance. Where appropriate, the predictive performance of the model was further examined through PLSpredict.

Overall model fit was additionally evaluated using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and the normed fit index (NFI). An SRMR value below 0.10 was considered indicative of acceptable fit, with values below 0.08 interpreted as preferable. NFI was reported as a supplementary measure of model fit while recognizing that its interpretation in PLS-SEM is secondary to the evaluation of measurement quality, explanatory power, predictive relevance, and structural relationships. Through this analytical procedure, the proposed six-dimensional model was assessed simultaneously in terms of reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, structural explanatory capacity, predictive performance, and overall empirical adequacy for explaining strategies to overcome workplace mobbing within the VUCA conditions of municipalities in Isfahan and Yazd Provinces.

Findings and Results

The quantitative model was initially estimated in SmartPLS in two forms. First, the PLS algorithm was executed to obtain standardized coefficients and indicator loadings; second, the bootstrapping procedure was performed to assess the statistical significance of the estimated coefficients. Before evaluating the measurement and structural models, the homogeneity and unidimensionality of the indicators associated with each reflective construct were examined. Indicators with factor loadings below 0.50 were considered inadequate because weak loadings may adversely affect construct reliability and validity. Indicators with loadings close to 0.50 could be retained when their inclusion did not adversely influence the overall psychometric properties of the construct. The initial estimation revealed that Items 46, 67, 83, and 87 had factor loadings of

0.165, 0.373, 0.136, and 0.179, respectively, and were therefore removed. The model was subsequently re-estimated, and all further reliability, validity, and structural analyses were conducted using the revised measurement model.

Figure 1

Model in Standardized Estimation Mode

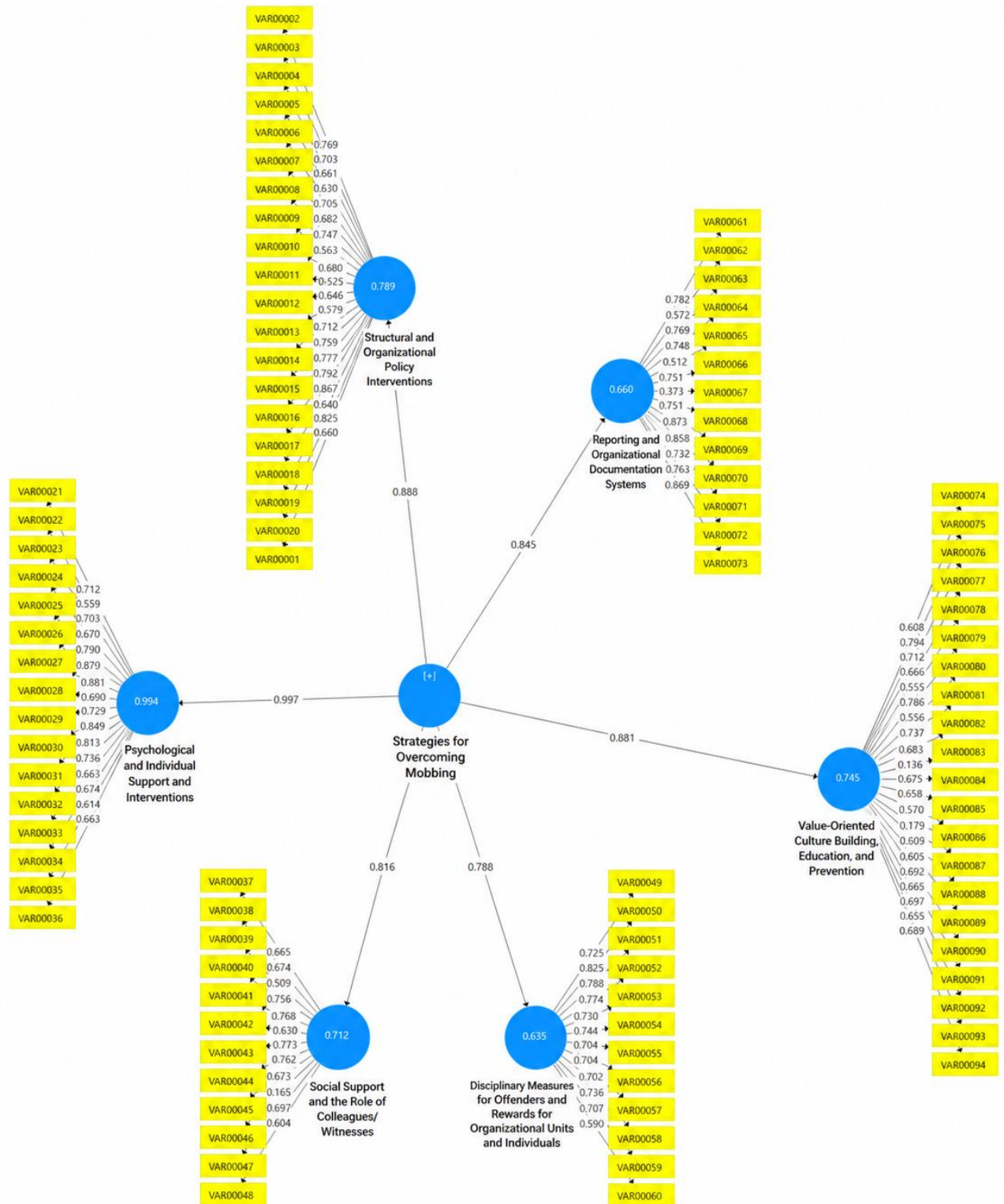
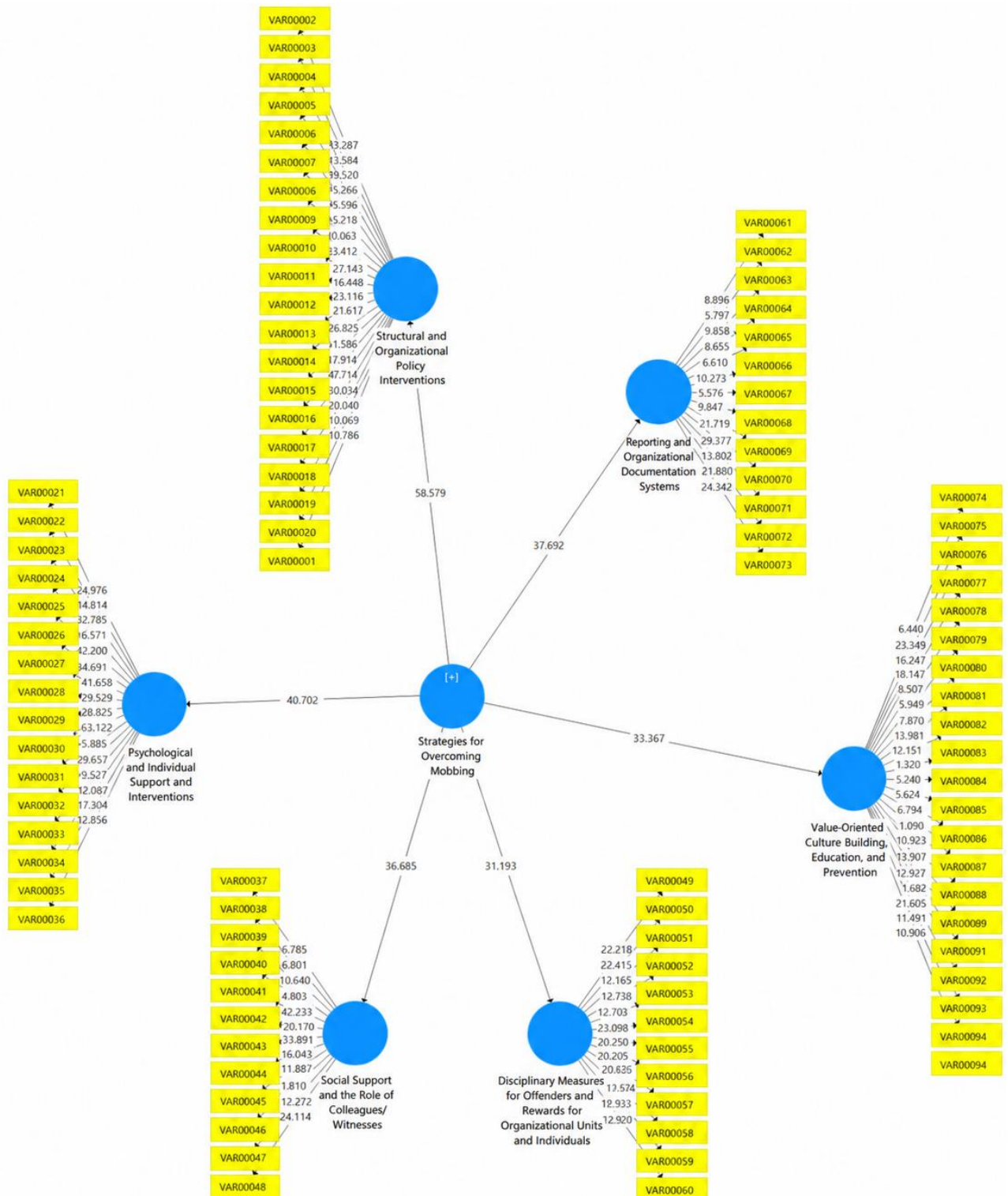


Figure 2*Initial Model in Significance Estimation Mode*

The indicator-loading results showed that, prior to modification, the factor loadings for structural and organizational policy interventions ranged from 0.525 to 0.867; psychological and individual support and interventions ranged from 0.559 to 0.881; social support and the role of colleagues/witnesses ranged from 0.165 to 0.773; disciplinary measures and reward mechanisms ranged from 0.590 to 0.825; reporting, documentation, and technology systems ranged from 0.373 to 0.873;

and value-oriented culture building, education, and prevention ranged from 0.136 to 0.794. Four indicators failed to reach the minimum loading criterion of 0.50 and were eliminated, whereas all retained indicators satisfied the minimum requirement. The indicator-screening results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Indicator Homogeneity and Unidimensionality Assessment

Construct	Items Examined	Loading Range Before Revision	Items Removed	Removed Loadings	Loading Range After Revision	Decision
Structural and organizational policy interventions	1–20	0.525–0.867	None	—	0.525–0.867	Retained
Psychological and individual support and interventions	21–36	0.559–0.881	None	—	0.559–0.881	Retained
Social support and the role of colleagues/witnesses	37–48	0.165–0.773	Item 46	0.165	0.509–0.773	Revised and retained
Disciplinary measures and rewards	49–60	0.590–0.825	None	—	0.590–0.825	Retained
Reporting, documentation, and technology systems	61–73	0.373–0.873	Item 67	0.373	0.512–0.873	Revised and retained
Value-oriented culture building, education, and prevention	74–94	0.136–0.794	Items 83 and 87	0.136, 0.179	0.555–0.794	Revised and retained

Following removal of the four weak indicators, the model was estimated again in both standardized and significance modes. The revised model demonstrated an acceptable measurement structure and was therefore used as the basis for subsequent assessment of internal consistency, convergent validity, discriminant validity, explanatory power, predictive relevance, and overall model fit.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and rho_A. Cronbach's alpha assesses internal consistency among indicators independently of the complete structural model, whereas composite reliability takes indicator loadings into account and is therefore particularly relevant in PLS-SEM. The rho_A coefficient was additionally examined as an alternative construct reliability estimate. As presented in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.715 to 0.938, composite reliability ranged from 0.771 to 0.945, and rho_A ranged from 0.733 to 0.947. All coefficients exceeded the recommended minimum value of 0.70. Accordingly, all six constructs demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency and reliability.

Table 2

Reliability Assessment of the Measurement Model

Construct	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability	rho_A	Reliability Status
Disciplinary measures and rewards	0.889	0.858	0.733	Confirmed
Social support and role of colleagues/witnesses	0.715	0.771	0.813	Confirmed
Psychological and individual support and interventions	0.924	0.936	0.939	Confirmed
Reporting, documentation, and technology systems	0.934	0.938	0.904	Confirmed
Value-oriented culture building, education, and prevention	0.806	0.805	0.831	Confirmed
Structural and organizational policy interventions	0.938	0.945	0.947	Confirmed

Convergent validity was evaluated using the average variance extracted and its relationship with composite reliability. An AVE value above 0.50 indicates that a construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators. All six constructs satisfied this criterion, with AVE values ranging from 0.520 to 0.744. In addition, composite reliability exceeded AVE for every construct, thereby satisfying the second criterion used in this study for convergent validity. As shown in Table 3, these findings support adequate convergence among indicators intended to measure the same construct.

Table 3*Convergent Validity of the Measurement Model*

Construct	AVE	Composite Reliability	CR > AVE	Result
Disciplinary measures and rewards	0.520	0.858	Yes	Confirmed
Social support and role of colleagues/witnesses	0.690	0.771	Yes	Confirmed
Psychological and individual support and interventions	0.744	0.936	Yes	Confirmed
Reporting, documentation, and technology systems	0.564	0.938	Yes	Confirmed
Value-oriented culture building, education, and prevention	0.527	0.805	Yes	Confirmed
Structural and organizational policy interventions	0.572	0.945	Yes	Confirmed

Discriminant validity was examined through cross-loadings and the Fornell–Larcker criterion. In the cross-loading assessment, each retained indicator was compared with all six latent constructs to determine whether it primarily represented its intended construct rather than competing constructs. Following deletion of Items 46, 67, 83, and 87, the retained indicators generally demonstrated the expected loading pattern. The original cross-loading matrix included all retained indicators from Items 1–94, excluding the four deleted indicators. The strongest intended-construct loadings ranged from 0.525 to 0.867 for structural interventions, 0.559 to 0.881 for psychological support, 0.509 to 0.773 for social support, 0.590 to 0.825 for disciplinary and reward mechanisms, 0.512 to 0.873 for reporting systems, and 0.555 to 0.794 for value-oriented culture and prevention.

At the construct level, discriminant validity was further assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The square root of AVE for each construct appears on the main diagonal of Table 4. Each diagonal value was greater than the corresponding interconstruct correlations in its row and column. For example, the square root of AVE was 0.721 for disciplinary measures and rewards, 0.831 for social support, 0.862 for psychological support, 0.751 for reporting systems, 0.726 for value-oriented culture and prevention, and 0.756 for structural interventions. These results support the empirical distinctiveness of the principal constructs.

Table 4*Fornell–Larcker Discriminant Validity Matrix*

Construct	DMR	SS	PSI	RDT	VCP	SOI
Disciplinary measures and rewards (DMR)	0.721					
Social support and role of colleagues/witnesses (SS)	0.379	0.831				
Psychological support and interventions (PSI)	0.532	0.257	0.862			
Reporting, documentation, and technology systems (RDT)	0.526	0.352	0.334	0.751		
Value-oriented culture and prevention (VCP)	0.584	0.452	0.540	0.490	0.726	
Structural and organizational interventions (SOI)	0.550	0.511	0.496	0.180	0.336	0.756

Overall, the convergent- and discriminant-validity findings indicated that the revised measurement model possessed acceptable construct validity and could therefore be carried forward to assessment of the structural model.

Before evaluating the structural paths, variance inflation factor values were examined to determine whether substantial multicollinearity existed among the six predictor constructs. As shown in Table 5, VIF values ranged from 1.86 to 3.01. All values were below the conventional threshold of 5.00, indicating that severe multicollinearity was not present and that the six predictor constructs could be included simultaneously in the structural model.

Table 5*Collinearity Assessment of the Structural Model*

Predictor Construct	Endogenous Construct	VIF	Status
Structural and organizational policy interventions	Strategies for overcoming mobbing	2.14	Acceptable
Value-oriented culture building, education, and prevention	Strategies for overcoming mobbing	1.86	Acceptable
Psychological and individual support and interventions	Strategies for overcoming mobbing	2.53	Acceptable
Social support and role of colleagues/witnesses	Strategies for overcoming mobbing	1.92	Acceptable
Reporting, documentation, and technology systems	Strategies for overcoming mobbing	3.01	Acceptable
Disciplinary measures and rewards	Strategies for overcoming mobbing	2.78	Acceptable

The statistical significance of the structural coefficients was evaluated using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples and a 95% confidence level. A t-value greater than 1.96 and a p-value below .05 were considered evidence of statistical significance. As reported in Table 6, all six structural paths were statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Structural and organizational policy interventions had the largest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.342$, $t = 5.104$, $p < .001$), followed by disciplinary measures and rewards ($\beta = 0.307$, $t = 5.203$, $p < .001$), reporting, documentation, and technology systems ($\beta = 0.284$, $t = 4.508$, $p < .001$), value-oriented culture building, education, and prevention ($\beta = 0.218$, $t = 3.028$, $p = .002$), psychological and individual support and interventions ($\beta = 0.156$, $t = 2.690$, $p = .007$), and social support and the role of colleagues/witnesses ($\beta = 0.095$, $t = 3.857$, $p = .003$).

Table 6*Bootstrapping Results for Structural Paths*

Rank	Structural Path	β	STDEV	t-value	p-value	95% CI	Result
1	Structural and organizational policy interventions → Strategies for overcoming mobbing	0.342	0.067	5.104	< .001	[0.210, 0.475]	Significant
2	Disciplinary measures and rewards → Strategies for overcoming mobbing	0.307	0.059	5.203	< .001	[0.191, 0.422]	Significant
3	Reporting, documentation, and technology systems → Strategies for overcoming mobbing	0.284	0.063	4.508	< .001	[0.158, 0.408]	Significant
4	Value-oriented culture building, education, and prevention → Strategies for overcoming mobbing	0.218	0.072	3.028	.002	[0.076, 0.356]	Significant
5	Psychological and individual support and interventions → Strategies for overcoming mobbing	0.156	0.058	2.690	.007	[0.042, 0.268]	Significant
6	Social support and role of colleagues/witnesses → Strategies for overcoming mobbing	0.095	0.061	3.857	.003	[0.025, 0.215]	Significant

The confidence intervals provided additional support for these results because none of the six 95% bootstrap confidence intervals contained zero. Therefore, all six dimensions made positive and statistically significant contributions to the overall construct of strategies for overcoming workplace mobbing. Based on the standardized coefficients, structural and organizational policy interventions exerted the strongest effect, whereas social support and the role of colleagues and witnesses had the smallest effect. The supplied inferential statistics therefore indicate six significant structural paths rather than five significant and one nonsignificant path.

The structural model was further evaluated using the coefficient of determination and Stone–Geisser predictive relevance statistic. R^2 represents the proportion of variance in an endogenous construct accounted for by the variables associated with it in the model. Values of approximately 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 may be interpreted as weak, moderate, and substantial, respectively. As presented in Table 7, R^2 values ranged from 0.356 to 0.428. The highest explanatory coefficient was obtained for disciplinary measures and rewards ($R^2 = 0.428$), followed by reporting, documentation, and technology systems ($R^2 = 0.420$), psychological and individual support and interventions ($R^2 = 0.370$), value-oriented culture building, education, and

prevention ($R^2 = 0.359$), social support and the role of colleagues/witnesses ($R^2 = 0.357$), and structural and organizational policy interventions ($R^2 = 0.356$). Thus, the explanatory capacity of the model for the component constructs was predominantly moderate.

Predictive relevance was examined through the Q^2 statistic obtained from the blindfolding procedure. Values greater than zero indicate predictive relevance, while values around 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 may be interpreted as small, medium, and large predictive relevance. All Q^2 values were positive and ranged from 0.314 to 0.425. Psychological and individual support and interventions demonstrated the highest Q^2 value of 0.425, followed by reporting, documentation, and technology systems at 0.413, disciplinary measures and rewards at 0.402, structural and organizational policy interventions at 0.383, social support at 0.328, and value-oriented culture building and prevention at 0.314. Accordingly, the model demonstrated satisfactory to strong predictive relevance across its dimensions.

Table 7

Explanatory Power and Predictive Relevance of the Model

Construct	R^2	Interpretation of R^2	Q^2	Predictive Relevance
Disciplinary measures and rewards	0.428	Moderate	0.402	Strong
Social support and role of colleagues/witnesses	0.357	Moderate	0.328	Moderate-to-strong
Psychological and individual support and interventions	0.370	Moderate	0.425	Strong
Reporting, documentation, and technology systems	0.420	Moderate	0.413	Strong
Value-oriented culture building, education, and prevention	0.359	Moderate	0.314	Moderate-to-strong
Structural and organizational policy interventions	0.356	Moderate	0.383	Strong

Finally, overall model fit was examined using SRMR and the global goodness-of-fit index. The SRMR value for the saturated model was 0.061, while the estimated model produced an SRMR value of 0.065. Both values were below the adopted threshold of 0.08, indicating an acceptable discrepancy between the observed and model-implied correlation structures.

The GOF index was calculated using the square root of the product of the average communality and average R^2 . The average communality across the six constructs was 0.796 and the average R^2 was 0.381. Their square roots were 0.892 and 0.617, respectively, yielding a GOF value of 0.550. Because this value was considerably greater than the criterion of 0.36 adopted for strong overall fit, the model demonstrated a high level of overall explanatory and measurement adequacy. The detailed model-fit results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Overall Model-Fit Indices

Fit Component	Construct/Model	Communality	R^2	Value/Result
Component fit	Disciplinary measures and rewards	0.737	0.428	—
Component fit	Social support and role of colleagues/witnesses	0.725	0.357	—
Component fit	Psychological and individual support and interventions	0.947	0.370	—
Component fit	Reporting, documentation, and technology systems	0.750	0.420	—
Component fit	Value-oriented culture building, education, and prevention	0.725	0.359	—
Component fit	Structural and organizational policy interventions	0.893	0.356	—
Mean	Across constructs	0.796	0.381	—
Square root of mean	Across constructs	0.892	0.617	—
GOF	Overall model	—	—	0.550; strong fit
SRMR	Saturated model	—	—	0.061
SRMR	Estimated model	—	—	0.065

The GOF calculation was therefore:

$$\text{GOF} = \sqrt{(0.796 \times 0.381)} = 0.550.$$

Taken together, the measurement-model results indicated satisfactory indicator reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and construct-level discriminant validity. The structural-model assessment showed an absence of problematic multicollinearity, statistically significant positive effects for all six dimensions, moderate explanatory power, and satisfactory-to-strong predictive relevance. Structural and organizational policy interventions emerged as the most influential dimension according to the standardized path coefficient, followed by disciplinary and reward mechanisms and reporting, documentation, and technology systems. In addition, the SRMR values of 0.061 and 0.065 and the GOF value of 0.550 supported the overall adequacy of the proposed model for overcoming workplace mobbing in the municipalities of Isfahan and Yazd Provinces.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study validated a multidimensional model for overcoming workplace mobbing through a VUCA-oriented perspective in the municipalities of Isfahan and Yazd Provinces. The findings showed that all six dimensions included in the structural model had positive and statistically significant effects on strategies for overcoming mobbing. Specifically, structural and organizational policy interventions had the strongest standardized effect, followed by disciplinary measures and reward mechanisms, reporting and organizational documentation systems, value-oriented culture building and preventive education, psychological and individual support and interventions, and finally social support and the role of colleagues and witnesses. The measurement model also demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity, while the structural model showed acceptable explanatory power, predictive relevance, and overall model fit. These findings indicate that addressing workplace mobbing in municipal organizations requires a coordinated and multidimensional system rather than a single isolated intervention.

The strongest path in the model was related to structural and organizational policy interventions. This result suggests that the most effective foundation for overcoming mobbing lies in formal organizational mechanisms such as clear policies, role clarification, transparent procedures, managerial accountability, formal complaint pathways, and consistent governance. In a VUCA environment, organizational ambiguity and instability may increase the risk that interpersonal conflicts become normalized or that abusive behavior remains unaddressed because responsibilities are unclear. Accordingly, strong structural arrangements can reduce uncertainty and provide employees with predictable procedures for identifying, reporting, and resolving mobbing. This interpretation is consistent with the broader VUCA literature emphasizing strategic agility, organizational learning, and adaptive capabilities as central organizational responses to uncertainty [2, 3]. It is also compatible with the argument that organizations operating in turbulent settings require governance systems that are flexible enough to adapt but sufficiently clear to maintain accountability [4, 5].

The importance of structural intervention can also be interpreted through the lens of leadership and decision-making. In unstable and ambiguous organizational environments, leaders must be able to distinguish between ordinary disagreement, performance-related tension, and systematic psychological harassment. This requires cognitive flexibility, evidence-based judgment, and the ability to act consistently despite incomplete information. Hafeznia and Ansari emphasized the importance of cognitive skills for managers operating in VUCA conditions [6]. The present findings extend this perspective by showing that such managerial capabilities must be embedded within formal organizational systems. Individual managerial

competence alone is unlikely to be sufficient if policies are unclear, reporting procedures are weak, or authority is exercised inconsistently.

The second strongest effect was observed for disciplinary measures for offenders and reward mechanisms for organizational units and individuals. This result indicates that organizations must provide tangible consequences for abusive conduct while also positively reinforcing appropriate behavior. The significance of this dimension is understandable because mobbing often persists when perpetrators perceive that harmful behavior carries little organizational cost. Clear disciplinary mechanisms can alter the perceived permissibility of such conduct and communicate institutional intolerance toward psychological harassment. At the same time, rewards and recognition may strengthen positive norms by signaling that respectful conduct, supportive leadership, constructive intervention, and psychologically safe behavior are valued. This finding aligns with studies showing that mobbing is closely associated with burnout, organizational trust, silence, and withdrawal-related outcomes [12, 13, 15]. Where organizations fail to respond visibly to hostile behavior, employees may infer that speaking up is futile, which may deepen silence and weaken trust.

The findings concerning disciplinary and reward mechanisms also support the broader idea that workplace mobbing should be treated as an organizational governance issue rather than solely as an individual psychological problem. Potter et al. emphasized the importance of psychosocial safety policies and institutional frameworks for worker mental health [21]. In this context, disciplinary mechanisms form part of a wider psychosocial safety climate in which employees understand that the organization accepts responsibility for managing interpersonal risk. From this perspective, sanctions and rewards are not merely administrative tools; they are signals that shape organizational norms, expectations, and perceptions of fairness.

Reporting and organizational documentation systems also had a comparatively strong effect. This finding is particularly important because mobbing frequently involves repeated behaviors that may appear minor when viewed individually but become harmful when considered as a pattern. Effective documentation systems allow organizations to identify repetition, escalation, multiple complaints against the same individual, and systemic vulnerabilities across departments. In VUCA environments, where organizational conditions change rapidly and information is often fragmented, reliable reporting and documentation can create continuity and support evidence-based intervention. This result aligns with research emphasizing data-driven decision-making, artificial intelligence, digital tools, and technology-supported organizational responsiveness in volatile environments [7-9]. It also corresponds with evidence that digital technologies can reduce workload and improve organizational functioning when appropriately integrated into management systems [10].

The significance of reporting systems can further be understood in relation to organizational learning. A complaint should not merely trigger a case-specific response; accumulated reports can reveal recurring patterns related to leadership, departmental culture, workload, authority, communication, or structural conflict. Atanassova et al. emphasized the dynamic role of organizational learning in helping firms respond to VUCA environments [3]. Applied to mobbing, this means that reporting data can function as organizational feedback, enabling the municipality to learn from incidents, identify high-risk units, revise policies, and improve preventive strategies. Thus, reporting and documentation systems contribute not only to accountability but also to continuous organizational adaptation.

Value-oriented culture building, education, and prevention also exerted a significant positive effect. This finding confirms that overcoming mobbing requires more than formal rules and sanctions. Organizational culture influences what employees consider acceptable, how they interpret harmful behavior, whether witnesses intervene, and whether victims feel safe

enough to report their experiences. Preventive education can improve employees' ability to identify mobbing, distinguish it from legitimate managerial feedback, and understand their own responsibilities in maintaining a respectful workplace. This result is consistent with the literature on VUCA-ready workforces, which emphasizes learning, adaptability, collaboration, and continuous development as essential competencies [5]. It is also consistent with the broader educational literature indicating that rapidly changing environments require revised learning processes and new forms of adaptive competence [1].

The importance of culture and prevention is also supported by research on relational quality and psychological contracts. Ellethiey et al. highlighted the importance of cordial relations, psychological contract fulfillment, and talent-management practices in VUCA healthcare environments [20]. Mobbing represents a serious violation of relational expectations because employees generally expect a minimum level of fairness, respect, and protection from the organization. When hostile conduct is tolerated, the psychological contract can be damaged even among employees who are not direct targets. Therefore, culture-building initiatives that emphasize respect, fairness, mutual responsibility, and early intervention may strengthen the broader relational environment and reduce tolerance for hostile behavior.

Psychological and individual support and interventions were also statistically significant, although their effect was weaker than the structural, disciplinary, reporting, and cultural dimensions. This suggests that support for affected employees is necessary but is most effective when embedded within broader organizational mechanisms. Employees who experience mobbing may require counseling, stress-management support, confidentiality, referral pathways, and individualized assistance. Research has shown that mobbing can negatively affect resilience, emotional well-being, self-confidence, and burnout-related outcomes [11, 12, 14]. Therefore, psychological intervention is clearly relevant. However, the comparatively smaller path coefficient in the present study suggests that organizations should avoid placing excessive responsibility on victims to cope with or recover from harmful conditions while leaving the structural source of the problem unchanged.

This interpretation is especially important from a VUCA perspective. Resilience has become a major concept in contemporary organizational research, and resilient systems are often described as capable of absorbing disruption, adapting, and recovering [16]. Yet resilience should not be reduced to individual endurance. In the context of mobbing, expecting employees to become more resilient without changing organizational conditions may unintentionally normalize harmful environments. The present results support a broader conception of resilience in which psychological support is accompanied by organizational policy, leadership accountability, reporting systems, cultural prevention, and disciplinary action.

Social support and the role of colleagues and witnesses had the smallest standardized effect, but the relationship remained statistically significant. This finding indicates that peer behavior matters, although it may be less influential than formal organizational systems. Witnesses and colleagues can either reinforce mobbing through silence and avoidance or weaken it by providing support, corroborating incidents, and challenging abusive conduct. The importance of social support is consistent with research linking mobbing to organizational silence [13]. When employees remain silent out of fear, conformity, or perceived futility, harmful behavior may persist. Conversely, a climate that encourages safe bystander intervention can reduce isolation of the target and strengthen collective norms against harassment.

The relatively smaller effect of social support may indicate that informal support alone cannot compensate for weak organizational governance. Employees may sympathize with a target of mobbing but still avoid intervention if they fear retaliation or believe management will not act. This suggests that the effectiveness of peer support depends heavily on structural and cultural conditions. In other words, social support becomes more actionable when the organization provides

protection, confidential reporting, clear policy, and visible managerial support. This interpretation is compatible with the broader VUCA literature, which emphasizes the interaction between individual competencies and organizational systems rather than treating them as independent factors [2, 5].

The combined findings of the study therefore support an integrated model in which formal and informal mechanisms reinforce one another. Structural policy provides the framework, disciplinary and reward systems establish consequences, reporting systems generate evidence, cultural interventions shape norms, psychological support protects affected employees, and social support mobilizes collective responsibility. This integration is consistent with the nature of VUCA environments, where problems are interconnected and cannot be effectively addressed through linear or isolated interventions. The literature on strategic agility, interorganizational collaboration, and dynamic capabilities similarly suggests that organizations confronting complexity must coordinate multiple capabilities simultaneously [3, 4, 17].

The municipal context further strengthens the relevance of this integrated approach. Municipalities operate in highly visible public environments characterized by administrative complexity, stakeholder pressure, regulatory obligations, political scrutiny, and increasing mediatization. Czaba's discussion of the city as a narrative environment in the VUCA era highlights the growing complexity of communication and reputation in urban settings [18]. Internal workplace problems in municipal organizations may therefore have consequences extending beyond employee well-being to organizational legitimacy and public trust. A municipality that fails to manage mobbing may experience weakened internal coordination, reduced employee engagement, and reputational vulnerability.

The findings also resonate with research beyond conventional organizational settings. Handayani's work on parenting in the VUCA era illustrates how volatility and uncertainty reshape interpersonal expectations and coping requirements [19]. Although the context differs, the underlying principle is relevant: uncertainty increases the need for clearer relational norms, stronger communication, and adaptive support. Similarly, educational systems must redesign learning processes to remain sustainable under VUCA conditions [1]. In municipal organizations, anti-mobbing systems may therefore be understood as part of a broader adaptive capacity that helps employees and institutions function effectively under changing conditions.

Taken together, the results indicate that the validated model possesses both theoretical and practical coherence. The reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, acceptable VIF values, significant path coefficients, moderate R^2 values, positive Q^2 values, acceptable SRMR, and strong GOF collectively support the adequacy of the model. More importantly, the pattern of structural coefficients suggests that overcoming workplace mobbing is primarily an organizational design and governance challenge, supported by disciplinary, technological, cultural, psychological, and social mechanisms. This conclusion aligns with contemporary research emphasizing that effective functioning in VUCA environments depends on coordinated capabilities involving leadership, learning, technology, resilience, strategic flexibility, and workforce development [7, 9, 10, 16].

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The research was cross-sectional, and therefore the estimated relationships reflect associations observed at one point in time rather than long-term causal processes. The study was also limited to municipalities in Isfahan and Yazd Provinces, which may restrict the generalizability of the model to municipalities with different administrative cultures, governance arrangements, workforce characteristics, or regional conditions. Because the data were collected through self-report questionnaires, responses may have been influenced by social desirability, recall bias, fear of disclosure, or individual perceptions of organizational

conditions. In addition, the model focused on six major dimensions and may not capture all possible organizational, legal, cultural, technological, or personality-related factors that influence mobbing and responses to it.

Future studies should examine the validated model in other municipalities, public organizations, private firms, healthcare institutions, universities, and service organizations to determine whether the structural relationships remain stable across different organizational contexts. Longitudinal designs would be useful for examining whether changes in policy, reporting systems, organizational culture, and managerial practices produce measurable reductions in mobbing over time. Future research could also compare demographic and occupational groups, investigate moderating effects of leadership style, organizational justice, psychological safety, digital maturity, or organizational size, and test whether the model functions differently under varying levels of environmental uncertainty. Researchers may also use multigroup analysis, longitudinal PLS-SEM, or predictive approaches to examine the stability and predictive performance of the model in new samples.

Municipal managers should establish a comprehensive anti-mobbing system rather than relying on isolated complaint procedures. Formal policies should define mobbing clearly, specify confidential reporting channels, protect complainants and witnesses from retaliation, and establish transparent investigation and disciplinary procedures. Municipalities should also develop digital reporting and documentation systems that allow repeated patterns to be detected across units while protecting employee confidentiality. Regular training should be provided for managers and employees on respectful communication, early identification of mobbing, bystander responsibilities, and constructive conflict management. Psychological support services should be accessible to affected employees, while supervisors should be trained to respond promptly and impartially. Finally, organizational units and managers that demonstrate effective prevention, respectful leadership, and psychologically safe work practices should be formally recognized so that anti-mobbing behavior becomes embedded in the organizational culture.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Written consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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