Research Article

Multiple capable guardianship and workplace cyberbullying: A mediating moderating study in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study investigated the impact of multiple capable guardianship to academic staff's workplace cyberbullying under the mediation of emotional intelligence and moderation of power and control.

Design/methodology/approach – 406 questionnaires from academic staffs working in different universities in Vietnam were collected. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the data.

Findings – Results indicate that cyberbullying in the university workplace can be reduced by implementing mechanisms of multiple capable guardianship. Furthermore, the mediation role of emotional intelligence and moderation roles of power and control were statistically confirmed by an empirical study, as recommended by previous authors.

Originality/Value – The study found that multiple capable guardianship has positive impact in preventing workplace cyberbullying, unethical online routine activities of employees. This relationship is changed significantly when academic staffs have strong emotional intelligence and perceived power and control.

Keywords: multiple capable guardianship; cyberbullying; workplace; emotional intelligence; power; control; universities; academic staffs

1. Motivation and objectives

1.1. Context

1.1.1. Workplace bullying in higher education

Bullying can result into negative consequences in the workplace of higher education, for example, personal defeat, bad emotions, reduced commitment, withdrawal ability of academic staffs at Estonia universities[1], minimization of professional capacity, lecturers' contract breach of psychology[2,3]. Human

resource management factors facilitate bullying in a university such as employee perceptions, hierarchy, control mechanisms, assessment procedure, institutional codes of conduct[1]. Besides, reasons for bullying in the contexts of non-western countries include overlook, weaken capacity, lacking appreciation for performance and working barriers[3]. Moreover, face-to-face bullying may result into online bullies. Stronger negative relationship between cyberbullying and job satisfaction was proved than face-to-face bullying[4]. So, offline bullying may be the reason to cyber bullying but online bullying should be paid more attention to.

1.1.2. Workplace cyberbullying in general

The role of perpetrator traits and the occurrence context were emphasized in clarifying workplace cyberbullying with others like juvenile or adult cyberbullying[5]. The trend of cyberbullying in the workplace was emphasized when increasing the utilization of technology to communicate with colleagues[6]. It can be considered as negative online actions, for example, written channels: social media, forums, messages, blogs, emails conducted by groups or individuals against each other[7] which are direct or indirect negative behaviors. Direct behaviors may be public criticisms in corporate – level forums[8], however indirect behaviors are listed as online gossips or rumors through group emails or online working forums[9].

Workplace cyberbullying's psychological damage results into physical health and job performance[10], the workplace cyberbullying - individual outcomes link in disempowerment theory[4]. Most studies describe negative influences of workplace cyberbullying on interpersonal behaviors or individual psychology[11].

1.1.3. Workplace cyberbullying in higher education

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) platforms can make cyberbullying occur in the public Thai university[12]. Besides, popular factors impacting workplace cyberbullying of higher education include working environment, management mechanism, policies, organization culture, organizational politics and supervisors' ethical leadership that are sub-themes of multiple capable guardianship that haven't been mentioned in previous studies.

Workplace cyberbullying impacts productivity of academics staffs[13]. Workplace cyberbullying's negative correlation was with academic social capital in Jordanian universities[14]. The relationship between cyberbullying exposure and mental health from Saudi academic staffs' perception was recommended, leading to reduce organizational commitment[15].

Ethical leaders prevent cyberbullying by creating supportive working environment as well as ethical climate[12]. Deterrent variable of the guardians was suggested in alleviating negative behaviors and helping the victims to prevent cyberbullying[16], but the term "multiple" in "multiple capable guardianship" hasn't been classified. Therefore, given that in this paper, "multiple" is investigated using a combination of power and control dimensions, which is a contribution to Oguz et al.'s[16] research work. Moreover, previous researchers have not described the impact of multiple capable guardianships on emotional intelligence.

It has been proposed that in the relationship between emotions and cyberbullying, previous authors analyzed results of cyberbullying in the workplace, such as emotional exhaustion and ego depletion from ineffectiveness or lack of organizational interventions. So, it's important to explore new dimensions in emotion intelligence, for example, systems and power limitations[17], managing emotions between individuals regarding to problem solutions[18]. Few studies have described the effects of EI on workplace cyberbullying[19-21]. However, they also have not approved of EI's mediation role to promote multiple capable guardianships and workplace cyberbullying.

1.2. Research gaps

There is no synthesized multidimensional research about the role of multiple capable guardianship and emotional intelligence in mitigating cyberbullying in academic settings. In order to make room for developing the theme "multiple capable guardianship", researchers should reflect multi dimensions such as power and control perspectives of ethical leadership. Besides, although the relationship between multiple capable guardianship and workplace cyberbullying was investigated in research works about routine activities theory, it hasn't been analyzed in the context of Asian countries as well as in the relationship with emotional intelligence. Moreover, power and control in hierarchical structures, common in universities, can influence or moderate the impact of interventions like capable guardianship. So, it's necessary to analyze how power dynamics and control in the guardianship mechanism can either strengthen or weaken the effects of multiple capable guardianship on cyberbullying incidents.

In this study, the focus is on the relationship between multiple capable guardianship, emotional intelligence, and cyberbullying in universities of Vietnam. The first aim is to reveal the moderating impact of power and control in the relationship between multiple capable guardianship and workplace cyberbullying Vietnam. The second aim is to acknowledge the indirect effect of perceived multiple capable guardianship on workplace cyberbullying, mediated by emotional intelligence.

1.3. Research questions

Many studies conducted empirical studies about bullied university personnel[1,3]. However, research into the occurrence and manifestation of cyberbullying behavior in the academic workplaces of ASEAN countries is sparse.

In particular, there has been no research on workplace cyberbullying in Vietnam. Vietnamese authors have paid attention to cyberbullying in education, such as students and adolescents, in the Internet context. Workplace cyberbullying has mainly been studied in Europe, Asia, Oceania, Africa, and North America but has not been investigated in Vietnam[45].

Considering the rising importance of perpetrators in managing emotional-intelligence-oriented organizational behaviors in the context of the internet 4.0 era as well as enriching routine activities theory from the dimensions of multiple capable guardianship based on connecting power and control to develop the perspective of socially responsible power of ethical leadership in controlling employees' emotional intelligence to prevent cyberbullying in the universities. This is the reason why understanding well the impact of multiple capable guardianship and emotional intelligence can provide insights for university management to develop interventions, policies and training programs to reduce workplace cyberbullying. Research outcomes of this study is expected to contribute to the fields of educational management and workplace behavior by incorporating emotional intelligence and power dynamics into the framework of cyberbullying prevention.

The aim of this paper is to investigate factors impacting the relationship between capable guardianship and workplace cyberbullying in the higher education of Vietnam. Therefore, a research question is designed to investigate *how multiple capable guardianship can weaken cyberbullying in the context of reinforcing emotional intelligence of academic employees in Vietnam.*

2. Previous literature and framework

2.1. Multiple capable guardianship

Scientists and managers cope with cyberbullying differently, such as offering policies, regulations, mechanisms to control bullying behaviors, enhancing the guardianship capacity of managers, and improving the emotional intelligence of employees. They tried to connect the theoretical lens of different theories, for example, combined routine activities and the general theory of crime which considered exposure/proximity to the motivated offender, target suitability and absence of guardianship as three main terms[5]. In this study, motivated offenders are assumed as employees, and guardians who are top managers.

Most recent studies have focused on the impact of workplace bullying on mental health[23] or employee well-being[8]. More specifically, gender differences were presented in research on the relationship between the risk of bullying and mental health problems[23]. However, a few studies have investigated how to reduce cyberbullying in the workplace. Power is a source of workplace bullying in academic organizations[1].

Organizations should have formal and informal controls to avoid cyberbullying and implement behavioral reinforcement strategies[16]. The fast and timely direction and guidance of managers to employees were appreciated during the working process[24]. The capabilities of guardians could be enhanced by clear policies and norms of behavior, leading to decreased workplace bullying, managing conflicts, and increasing the effectiveness of systems[25]. In routine activity theory, one important term is "capable guardianship". The researchers of this theory define components of capable guardians, including leaders, colleagues, organizational policies, and organizational culture, which significantly influence cyberbullying chances. The role of organizational controls was appreciated in shaping capable guardianship, resulting in decreased cyberbullying[26].

The role of ethical leadership is important in reducing workplace cyberbullying in the universities[12]. Six components of ethical leadership such as charitableness, honesty, instructing people, illumination of role, moral advice and distribution of powers were described[27]. Ethical leaders should set standards and hold followers accountable for ethical behavior[28] by power and control. In order to develop routine activities theory, power and control are combined to reflect the socially-responsible-oriented power utilization that is a key element of ethical leadership dimension of "multiple" inside the term "capable guardianship" by analyzing literature review and suggesting hypothesis 1 (H1) and hypothesis 1a (H1a).

2.2. Multiple capable guardianship and emotional intelligence: H1, H1a

Many theories have studied the impact of objective actions on individual behaviors in workplace cyberbullying. Some factors are events[29] in affective events theory and offenders in neutralization theory[30,31], causing cyberbullying[32] in attribution theory. Recently, the theory of resource conservation was used to explore the interaction of workplace politics and employees' political skills to solve problems of workplace cyberbullying; and proved its effects on emotional exhaustion[33]. They also suggest the personal characteristics of employees to reduce this impact.

Most recent studies have analyzed factors impacting emotional intelligence in general; for example, some internal factors such as solidity of emotion, managing relationships, emotional stability, relationship management, benevolence, attempt, dignity, backwardness, antecedence and organizational consignment[34]. Other external factors include the external environment[35]. However, previous studies have not paid attention to workplace cyber-bullying-oriented EI or the impact of workplace cyber-bullying-oriented multiple capable guardianship on EI. The dimension of ethical leadership inside capable guardianship increases self-control skills – a component of emotional intelligence of employees. This is the reason for choosing the relationship

between multiple capable guardianships and EI to be included in this research model. Based on these findings, the first hypothesis is as follows:

H1: Multiple capable guardianship positively influences on emotional intelligence

The role of organizational controls in the control theory such as controlling behavior, outcome and clan in shaping capable guardianship[16]. They also proposed that both clan control and behavior control have positive impacts on capable guardianship, but outcome control is negative. Control mechanisms can support the reduction of misalignment between goals of organizations and employee capabilities[36]. Operating procedures, rules[36], people – oriented policies, and behavioral reinforcement strategies[37] are managerial implications of behavior control in order to intervene in time to avoid undesirable behaviors of employees[38]. In addition, outcome control includes future rewards (or punishments); key performance indicators, products of the project, and targeted schedules, financial plans, standard, and happiness[39,40], and all-at-once payment[36]. Self-control is excluded from the theory of routine activities[41]. Oguz et al.[16] imply some research questions as follows: How multiple capable guardianship reduce cyberbullying in the workplace, and Which organizational control can impact effectiveness of multiple capable.

Many previous studies have investigated the relationship between control and multiple capable guardianships, control and behaviors. However, the effects of control on emotional intelligence have not yet been clearly discovered. A negative relationship between the total effects of dispatching emotional intelligence and ethics and decreasing behaviors of audit quality was concluded[42]. Therefore:

H1a: Control positively moderate the relationship between multiple capable guardianship and emotional intelligence

2.3. Multiple capable guardianship and workplace cyberbullying: H2, H2a

Work-related bullying involves negative target-directed behavior through professional role affecting their effectively-working ability[43]. These behaviors may be happened regularly or once in internet conditions and remained in a lifetime circulation[44]. Cyberbullying is proved as a type of personal online victimization[45,46]. This study extends the current researches into workplace cyberbullying by approaching Felson's[47] personal responsibility to measure Hollis et al.'s[48] multiple guardianship in the case of academics employees. A few previous researches explained clearly how personal responsibility of multilevel managers in the guardianship changed perceptions of employees leading to decrease opportunities for negative behaviors[49] during online working time. Perceptions of employees are expressed by emotional intelligence, resulting into avoiding cyberbullying in the workplace. Based on routine activities theory, a negative relationship between capable guardians and cyberbullying was analyzed in the workplace[16].

Considering the theoretical gap, the following hypothesis H2 is proposed:

H2: Multiple capable guardianship has a significant negative influence on workplace cyberbullying

The exercise of power by investigating the role of individual employees was appreciated in implementing organizational responses to the increasing problems of workplace bullying[50]. Specifically, both individual and organizational powers create and maintain this problem. In their research, mechanisms against workplace bullying contributed to protecting institutional power and developing the main power structures. Capable guardianship intends to use stronger power to prevent powerful individuals' bullying. Many employees and groups may be powerful to make workplace bullying[51]. Therefore, the relationship between power and workplace bullying has attracted many researchers, but the effects of power on workplace cyberbullying in general and on guardianship in particular have not been explored. Recognizing the moderating role of power, the following additional hypothesis H2a emerges:

H2a: Power negatively moderate the relationship between multiple capable guardianship and workplace cyberbullying

2.4. Emotional intelligence and workplace cyberbullying

Emotional intelligence and training can decrease workplace cyberbullying and increase employee productivity[52]. Besides, good-mental-health employees will get high productivity and efficiency[53,54], happier[55], benefiting and bringing about better outcomes for the organizations.

Most studies focus on the impacts of emotional intelligence on performance[56,57]. Thus, it can be assumed that better team performance can negatively affect workplace bullying. If individuals achieve better emotional intelligence, or prime it to actuate reply of emotions[19,20], they will overcome cyberbullying, which is considered a negative incident[20]. The effects of primed emotional intelligence were tested on conquering the cyberbullying incident[21]. Emotional intelligence supports labor to be healthier, more efficient, and more productive[21].

Previous researches focus on individual factors influencing bullying experiences[58,46]. However, some previous authors don't agree on impacts of personality factors on workplace bullying[59,60]. Institutional factors were confirmed in the universities[37]. Therefore, in this study multiple capable guardianship is considered to belong to institutional factor impacting personality factor that is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence only negatively affects workplace cyberbullying in case of being positively influenced by guardianship. Stressful academic staffs can result into bullying[61]. Lacking supportive norms and relationship structure leads to violence that are to bring about physical and emotional well-beings for both lecturers and students[62,63]. The role of leaders was proved in reduction of workplace bullying[64]. University managers and lecturers must solve problems of bullying[49]. These are the reasons why emotional intelligence becomes a mediating variable in the relationship between capable guardianship and workplace cyberbullying. Based on the literature review of the relationship between EI and cyberbullying in the workplace, the last hypothesis of this research is proposed as follows:

H3: Emotional intelligence has a significant negative influence on workplace cyberbullying

From the above literature review, the research model is proposed as **Figure 1** below:
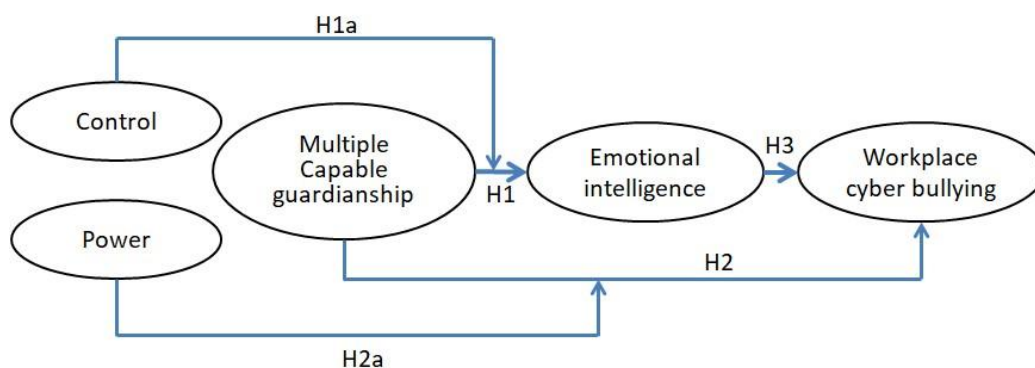

Figure 1. Research model.

3. Data and methods

3.1. Sample and procedure

To ensure scale validity, the questionnaire was pretested by two academic experts and then distributed to 32 employees from different organizations. As a result, all scales were reliable because the Cronbach's

alpha of all constructs was more than 0.7[65]. After modification, the online survey link was sent to all people through social networks and email. In total, 406 completed data points were collected. The respondents included 208 women (51.2%) and 198 men (48.8%). Other information about the workplace, age, and industry is presented in the **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Demographics information.

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Gender		
Female	208	51.2
Male	198	48.8
Work place		
Public universities	284	70
Private-owned universities	122	30
Age		
From 26 to 36	126	31.3
From 37 to 50	139	34.2
Over 50	140	34.5
Teaching major		
Education	37	9.1
Banking – finance	21	5.2
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries	27	6.7
Mining, processing, electricity, gas, water	34	8.4
Construction	30	7.4
Wholesale and retail	38	9.4
Hotels, restaurants	32	7.9
Transportation, warehousing	25	6.2
Information and communication	23	5.7
Personal and community services	37	9.1
Medical, health care	27	6.7
Manufacturing	23	5.7
Business services: brokerage, consulting	30	7.4
Others	22	5.4

3.2. Measures

The original Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ)[66], NAQ-R (the revised NAQ)[67], and S-NAQ (shortened NAQ)[68] are mostly used in research on workplace bullying. Moreover, there are some more questionnaires such as Escala de Abuso Psicológico Aplicado en el Lugar de Trabajo (EAPA-T 12)[69] or the Cuestionario de Acoso Psicológico en el Trabajo (CAPT)[70]. All the questionnaires were divided into definitional self-report questions and without-definition self-report questions.

However, this research proposes a measurement scale for the relationship between multiple capable guardianships and workplace cyberbullying. More specifically, the combination of power and control are applied to build measurements for multiple capable guardianships. In addition, more questions for CREW

(Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace intervention) were added to measure and address bullying[50]. Surprisingly, few papers published evidence of implementing CREW to conduct civilian attitudes, esteem, collaboration, and conflict solution.

The CVEI Scale was suggested to measure the relationship between EI and workplace cyberbullying through three types of emotional responses: depressed (nine items), active (six items), and annoyed (three items)[71]. However, this scale does not reflect the impact of multiple capable guardianships on emotional intelligence.

4. Results

PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling) instead of CB-SEM (Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling) was selected because it is suitable to develop theory based on small samples and flexible assumption of normal distribution[17]. Therefore, the Smart PLS software was used to process the data. The structural model was measured by using the assessment procedure[72].

4.1. Reliability evaluation

First, to evaluate reliability, factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) are used. All factor loadings are more than 0.7 (>0.5), Cronbach's alpha of constructs is from 0.861 (>0.7), composite reliability numbers are more than 0.6, and all AVE indicators are more than 0.5.

Second, the discriminant validity of the model was assessed using indicators such as the Fornell-Larcker and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT).

The SQRT (AVE) of each variable, CB, CO, EI, MG, and PO, is greater than the absolute value of the correlation coefficient of each variable with other variables. Thus, scale discrimination of the variables is guaranteed.

A new assessment method was introduced for scale discrimination called the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlation index (HTMT)[73]. The reason for this alternative method suggestion is that they provided convincing explanations to prove Fornell and Larcker's work to become an untruly assessment method for the discrimination of a scale.

$HTMT_{ij}$ should be less than or equal to 0.85, leading to the achieved discriminant value between the two latent variables, i and j. The HTMT outcome shows that the HTMT values of the indicator sets achieve discriminant values because all the HTMT coefficients range from 0.061 to 0.628, which is less than 0.85. The independent variables of CB and the independent variables of EI do not have collinearity because all VIFs are less than 3.

4.2. Measurement model

4.2.1. Assessing the convergent validity of the causal measurement model

Indicator reliability: If using a 5% significance level, the p-value of the t-test proving the impact of the observed cause variable should be less than 0.05, indicating that the observed variable is significant. If the p-value is greater than 0.05, their outer loading will be next considered. When the outer weight of the observed variable has a p-value greater than 0.05, but the outer loading coefficient is above 0.5, the observed variable is meaningful[74]. The observed variable is not meaningful if the external loading factor is less than 0.5, and the observed variable should be removed. All observed variables in the research model of this study have p-values of outer weights greater than 0.05 but an outer loading greater than 0.5; therefore, the independent variables are all meaningful in the model.

4.3. Evaluating the causal measurement model for collinearity

To evaluate the collinearity problem in the causal model, the Outer VIF Values were relied on   from the results of the PLS   Algorithm analysis on the SMART PLS. If the VIF is at level 5 or higher, it is a sign that a collinearity problem exists in the model[74]. To handle collinearity, the variable with the highest VIF was eliminated and then re-evaluated the model results. This process was repeated until there was no longer any collinearity. From the processing results, the types of observed variables with VIF greater than five included EI60, EI56, EI54, CO17, CO15, CO13, CO12, CB38, CB36, and CB35, which should be excluded from the model.

4.4. Evaluating the meaning and relevance of observed causal variables

R squared of the dependent variables for workplace cyberbullying and emotional intelligence should be in the range of 0-1. If R^2 approaches 1, then the explanation level for the dependent variable is high. If R^2 approaches zero, the explanation level for the dependent variable is low. The R^2 values were acceptable.

4.5. Structural model

From the specific indirect effects result, the p-value was less than 0.05, and the interval within the 95% confidence did not contain 0. It can be concluded that the independent variable affects the dependent variable.

From the total indirect effects result, the p-value is less than 0.05, and the confidence interval within 95% does not contain 0, leading to the conclusion that the independent variable influences the dependent variable. All the hypotheses of the research model were accepted.

The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is the difference between the actual data and prediction model. Ranging from 0 to 1, the smaller the better, and the SRMR equal to 0 means that the prediction model completely matches the data. The SRMR of the model is less than 0.082. Furthermore, the NFI of the model is very close to 0.9. Therefore, the structural model is good.

The original sample coefficient had a negative sign. When multiple capable guardianships and emotional intelligence increase, workplace cyberbullying decreases. The p-value was less than 0.05, and a confidence interval within 95% did not contain 0. The indirect effect is significant at the 95% confidence level.

5. Discussion

5.1. General discussion

First, it can be hypothesized that multiple capable guardianships would positively impact emotional intelligence (H1). The results indicate that the p-value was less than 0.05, the 95% confidence interval did not contain zero from 0.272 to 0.421, and the original sample was 0.348. Therefore, multiple capable guardianships have a positive influence on emotional intelligence as proved in Mahipalan's research[75] on the role of the institutionalization perspectives or Hoel's results[76] – leadership styles like autocratic, tyrannical, and laissez-faire leadership. However, these styles don't make bullying worse[67,76]. Stronger implications were suggested including denial and avoidance, instead of the only bullying culture[64]. Therefore, it calls for commitment to identify legitimacy factors in terms of guardianship through changing behaviors from improved emotional intelligence.

Furthermore, control is considered a positive moderation variable that enhances the relationship between multiple capable guardianships and emotional intelligence (H1a). The coefficient of regression was 0.149 (>0), the p-value was less than 0.05, and the 95% confidence interval did not contain zero from 0.083 to 0.207. Therefore, control should be an important component of guardianship to improve employee

emotions in the cyberbullying context of the workplace, similar to Zhang et al. 's findings regarding employees' self-control[5], Wolf et al.'s[77] – high EI of employees, Landau et al.'s[78] – new comers' EI. So, high-EI employees contribute to create engaging corporate environment. Using RAT to explain the relationship between capable guardianship and EI teachers is due to considering RAT as the legitimate theory in which the best strategies are situational prevention[79].

In addition, the rationale underpinning H2 assumes that multiple capable guardianships will negatively affect workplace cyberbullying. The original sample was -0.285 (less than 0), the p-value was 0.00, and the 95% confidence interval did not contain zero from -0.280 to -0.042. The results confirmed a negative relationship between multiple capable guardianships and cyberbullying in the workplace. Surprisingly, this relationship could be pushed by implementing power policies (H2a), as proved by results such as the original sample (-0.116), p-value (0.005), and the 95% confidence interval that does not contain zero (from -0.200 to -0.043). Employees should have an in-depth understanding about anti-bullying process and regulations[50]. Effective guardianship is one of three elements to prevent criminal opportunities[80,41]. Almost previous studies focus on guardianship groups such as social guardianship, digital and personal guardianship. The H2 hypothesis conclude the theoretical gap that is cyberbullying in the workplace with the presence of leaders in developing social guardianship as a third type of guardianship measures in preventing cybercrime called cyber-bullying of cyber-interpersonal victimization in RAT theory. Before that, RAT theory hasn't been applied guardianship measures in the context of working environment for academic staffs.

The last hypothesis about the negative impact of emotional intelligence on workplace cyberbullying was accepted. The reasons for this acceptance are that the p-value is 0.000 (<0.05), the original sample (-0.348), and the 95% confidence interval does not contain zero (from -0.448 to -0.246). This result emphasizes the role of emotional intelligence in influencing workplace cyberbullying[21]. In the context of considering students as customers and universities as service providers, emotional intelligence is an increasingly important in higher education, especially high-EI lecturers through class interactions[81]. So, changed perceptions of high-EI employees decrease opportunities for workplace cyberbullying and improve public images of universities. The role of EI was described in reducing workplace cyberbullying through physical health damage and emotional health damage[82].

Mediation role of emotions was proved between organizational politics and cyberbullying perpetration in Islamabad public universities[83]. All accepted hypotheses of this study reflect the mediating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between multiple capable guardianships and cyberbullying in the workplace, as well as the moderating roles of control and power in order to increase the emotional intelligence of employees and workplace cyberbullying. This is the theoretical gap explored and proved in this study to develop personal responsibility of leaders and legitimacy dimensions of RAT in the context of working environment for academic staffs.

5.2. Theoretical and managerial implications

5.2.1. Theoretical implications

This study is relevant to workplace cyberbullying in the work of Cohen and Felson[80], Hollis-Peel et al.[84], and Hollis et al.[48]. It builds on the more nuanced work of Oguz et al.[16], exploring the negative relationship between multiple capable guardianships and workplace cyberbullying mediated by emotional intelligence.

The primary theoretical implication that can be derived from this study stems from the investigation of the relationship between multiple capable guardianship and workplace cyberbullying,

enriching the opinions of previous authors about understanding reasons for the occurrence of workplace cyberbullying and potential implications for managers in decreasing the incidence of workplace cyberbullying in their organization[5]. More specifically, in the context of university working environment, almost all academic staffs work remotely and use Internet-based communication channels to work with their colleagues, so leaders in higher education organizations should pay attention to their leadership practices and subordinates' work control[1] in order to strengthen their emotional intelligence and reduce workplace cyberbullying.

The results provide evidence and support for the trend of using empirical studies[16,48] based on applying power, control, and EI to develop routine activities theory to investigate this relationship. Therefore, they supported the development of measurement scales for variables of the relationship between capable guardianship and cyberbullying in the workplace, leading to the recommendation of a questionnaire (GECB: Guardianship-Emotion-Cyber-Bullying) for this topic. The questionnaire reflected that the mediating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between multiple capable guardianships and workplace cyberbullying is moderated by control and power. The purpose of the measurement scale meets the need for analysis of the empirical study to clarify bullying and cyberbullying; and cyberbullying constructs in the workplace[44].

Through integration of the existing workplace cyberbullying research and routine activity theory, the current study addresses three gaps that are readily apparent.

First, this study provides an exploration into the guardianship element of routine activity theory for workplace cyberbullying. Although guardianship measures have been included in prior workplace cyberbullying research, ethical leadership findings and management mechanism issues suggest that both additional efforts at conceptualization and testing are warranted. Ethical leadership is a component of power and management mechanism. Also, it is an important content of control. The socially responsible use of power and control is a key element of ethical leadership. Therefore, Power and Control can make higher levels of personal responsibility of the leaders and managers for guardianship, decrease opportunities for cyberbullying in the workplace, and raise prevention of victimization.

Second, this paper contributes to enrich Felson (1995)'s[47] explanations in routine activity theory by examining the effects of emotional intelligence on workplace cyberbullying risk. As implied by the theory, one's emotional intelligence should be accreted by guardianship levels that haven't been explored in studies of workplace cyberbullying or workplace bullying more generally.

Third, this approach also measure guardianship responsibility for reduction of workplace cyberbullying risks. More responsible guardians will serve more effectively to protect victims who are employees. For example, top managers who have the highest position in the organization should have the most capable and the highest level of effective guardianship at strategic level, whereas middle and frontline managers who have responsibilities at functional level may both guard and be guarded. However, such hypotheses weren't tested in the previous cyberbullying literature.

So, the current study addresses these above three issues using survey data collected in 2024 from a random sample of academic staffs in universities of Vietnam.

5.3. Extent and nature of cyberbullying in the workplace

The guardianship concept was reappraised by highlighting the important role of *guardians* in preventing crime occurrence as well as decreasing opportunities for victimization[85]. They emphasized that guardianship is viewed as anything but person-based. Forms of online victimization are online routine activities, human

elements[48] that are virtual behaviors of individuals. Felson's[47] opinions on responsibility order from lowest to highest were applied to guardianship of online bullied employees in the present study, we argue that power and control are indicators of guardianship degree against cyberbullying in the workplace. For example, top management and managers will provide employees with the greater protection against cyberbullying rather than subordinates or peer colleagues. Ethical leadership findings and management mechanism have operationalized guardians as something other than "human".

5.4. Managerial implications

This study found a negative association between capable guardianship measures and cybercrime victimization (cyberbullying). In the Internet and artificial intelligence era, online behaviours that might place individuals at risk of becoming a victim of a cyberbullying[86]. Improving the emotional intelligence of employees and avoiding cyberbullying in the workplace by controlling online routine activities are attracting managers and leaders in higher education. More specifically, they should focus on solutions to enhance psychological characteristics of from perspectives of ethical leadership through policies and mechanisms in the universities.

First, at present, managerial implications should be appropriate to an increasingly dominant digital culture in improving social capital among academic employees by making them to become self-esteem for the prevention of distress[14] and avoidances of conflicts. Other solutions were suggested, for example more organizational efforts, well-understanding regulations against workplace cyberbullying and codes of conduct[3]. Ethical leaders will motivate employees to be optimistic and positive.

Second, to become better emotional intelligence employees, they need to comply with workplace cyberbullying reduction mechanisms and learn these skills. Human education through training programs results into getting high-EI employees. EI education starts from orientation stage for new comers in the workplace. Besides, leaders and managers should be trained in – depth about emotional intelligence and bullying prevention solutions in order to offer management mechanisms consistent with the current situation of the company.

Third, they require more managerial tools such as questionnaires. A workplace cyberbullying questionnaire was validated for Vietnamese employees using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. This measurement scale will support managers in changing universities' working environment[1]. This study attempted to develop a GECB using the concepts and theories of routine activities, control, and power for employees in various businesses. The survey method for GECB data collection was self-assessment. The main benefits of this proposed research are that it defines and assesses various concepts of multiple guardianship and cyberbullying in the workplace distinguished in the literature, investigates organizations to evaluate the GECB concept, and provides guidelines and support for employees. This suggestion is appropriate about applying a holistic approach to prevent workplace cyberbullying[44], considering that online human behaviors can lead to individuals' bad outcomes. Efforts of reducing cyberbullying in the workplace from managers, leaders of the organizations will result into improving cyber working environment as well as enhancing mental health of employees, increasing their productivity and loyalty to the organizations.

5.5. Limitations and future studies

Although the mediation variable - Emotional Intelligence and the moderating variables including Power and Control have a statistically significant impact on the relationship between multiple capable guardianships and workplace cyberbullying, the independent variable tends to reduce the impact on the dependent variable

when adding these intermediate variables to the research model. Therefore, future studies should test this research model in contexts of higher education, particularly in developing countries.

Future research should be able to clarify the term "multiple" in "capable guardianship" by not only moderating factors of power and control affecting the relationship between guardianship and EI as well as guardianship and workplace cyberbullying, but also proving them become important components of multiple capable guardianship. Power should be divided into specific sub-components, such as individual power and organizational power; and Control can consist of behavior control, outcome control, and clan control. These sub-components specify clearly the effects of these varied degrees of personal responsibility through power and control for guardianship. Higher specific levels of responsibility are more effective at preventing cyberbullying as implied by routine activity theory. Also, it is necessary to validate this workplace cyberbullying questionnaire for employees in other countries and continents or in higher education using PLS-SEM.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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