

Workplace Bullying and Intention to Leave: The Mediating Role of Emotional Exhaustion

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Abstract

*Bullying at work and its impact on employees' intention to leave are the focus of this study. Specifically, this research aims to determine the link between workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion and the intention to leave. Data were gathered from 234 employees working in the Saif group of Pakistan through questionnaires. The study sample was drawn using the convenience sampling technique. The non-probability sampling technique was used because of the Covid 19 situation; as per government notification, only 50% of the staff was present in the offices. This study used SPSS V. 25 for direct relationships, Hayes model 4 for mediation analysis, and for model fitness, we used CFA (Amos 22). The results show that workplace bullying has a statistically significant and positive impact on the intention to quit and emotional exhaustion plays a significant role in mediating this connection ($\beta=0.38^{***}$, $SE=0.074$, $LLCI=0.3077$ and $ULCI=0.6176$). Based on these results, we conclude that workplace bullying is a mayor cause of employees' exhaustion and compels them to depart from an organisation at some point. In light of these results, supervisors or line managers play a vital role in organisational sustainability by retaining skilful employees by making the workplace environment friendly and cooperative in the long run.*

Keywords: Workplace bullying, intention to leave, emotional exhaustion, SPSS, AMOS, COR

1. Introduction

Businesses are trying to be competitive and evolving very rapidly with time. Companies have started reducing employees after the Covid 19 situation, and thousands of layoffs occur in the industry, causing confusion and frustration among employees across the globe (Huang et al., 2020). In addition, economic developments and fast-moving technologies have mutated the ways in which corporations perform and manage employees. This development brings companies to a position to sustain their presence in a competitive market and retain their employees. Turnover of skilled

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employees is always challenging for organisations after investing resources and time by making them capable of performing their jobs professionally. Considerable research has already been conducted to explain this issue, and presently, researchers are trying to study this phenomenon in detail (Srivastava & Agrawal, 2020). When an employee left the organisation, it has two adverse effects: the rising cost of recruiting suitable employees and losing a well-trained, skillful person. After losing talented resources, the organisation must fill the vacant position by utilising its resources and time again. It's tough for the organisation to encourage employees to say goodbye to the organisation, so retaining them is the ultimate solution for organisational growth (Peltokorpi, 2019). There are various causes or reasons that may have led to an employee's decision to leave the organisation, including cognitive, interpersonal, and monetary concerns (Dhanpat, 2018).

Companies compete globally in today's business world to hire and retain skilled workers, and retaining valuable employees is seen as the most challenging task (Shkoler & Tziner, 2017). Previous research indicates that constant bullying in the workplace can reduce employees' morale, trigger mental stress, and ultimately increase their intention to leave (Georgakopoulos & Kelly, 2017). Misbehavior in the workplace, such as bullying, is often associated with higher job-related stress, depression, low job satisfaction, organisational alienation, and willingness to leave (Ber Bergbom, Vaananen, & Kinnunen, 2015). The respectful care of workers, supportive dealings, and trustworthy relationships between supervisor and subordinates can lead to a sustainable working environment. This friendly environment is essential for maintaining good social links between employees and managers (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and reduces leaving (Flint, Haley, & McNally, 2013). Bullying is frequently detected as a severe issue in the workplace. In almost every organisation, bullying is reported to occur frequently. The incidence of bullying among the workforce, for example, is estimated to be 5 to 10 per cent in Europe (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011), while researchers in the US estimate that the incidence of bullying is close to (28.7–63.0%) per cent (León, 2021). According to Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007), bullying is a serious issue that employees encounter in most organisations, indicating a significant cause of stress. The percentage of bullying exists between 3% and 4% globally, which leads to the employee's decision to leave (León, 2021). According to Thoresen et al. (2003), bullying is a worldwide issue that requires attention from management. It is an ongoing negative attitude that produces a severe social stress situation that has been positively related to the employees' serious health problems and intention to leave (Spagnoli & Balducci, 2017). The conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 2001) states that a link exists between employees' work attitudes and emotions, affecting their actions and behaviors toward jobs and organisations. Workplace bullying properly defines the role of emotions and feelings that an employee shows after facing deviant behavior.

The authors defined these emotions/feelings and linked to negative organisational behaviors (Miner, Glomb, & Hulin, 2005). Organisational factors may also predict emotional responses reflected in actions and attitudes (Einarsen et al., 2011).

To fill a void in the existing literature, the current study was conducted to investigate workplace bullying and the intention to leave linkage in the presence of emotional exhaustion. This research aims to better understand the dynamics of workplace bullying within the Saif Group of Companies in Pakistan to resolve a gap in the literature regarding workplace bullying and its effect on employees during the Covid 19 situation in the Pakistani scenario. Furthermore, this study also provides policymakers with a detailed view of how bullying in the workplace instigates employees to quit the organisation. Following the Covid 19 breakthrough, this study has become very important in Pakistani working culture. Clearly, this is a widespread issue that must be addressed.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Workplace bullying (WPB)

Bullying is often described as repeated negative actions (behaviors) that the receiver does not accept to occur over a relatively long time, developing and often worsening attitudes. A single event can also be very harmful to a person (Woodrow & Guest, 2017). Bullying in the workplace is described as interpersonal abuse involving repetitive rude or offensive acts toward other company members (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). Bullying in the workplace is supposed to be the major social tension that profoundly affects employees and the institutions in which these events occur. Workplace bullying is an increasingly growing type of bullying with a potentially uncontrollable global scope. In different ways, bullying occurs in the workplace, such as allegations, verbal harassment, public embarrassment, and indirect misconduct, such as rumors, gossip, and social isolation (Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland, & Einarsen, 2014). Victims often feel helpless because of a power imbalance to defend themselves in a situation (Woodrow & Guest, 2017). Bullying in the workplace is an intolerable but everyday activity that constantly and systematically harasses, offends, or socially avoids other workers (Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, Lande, & Nielsen, 2018; Srivastava & Dey, 2020).

It affects employees in different ways by spreading gossip, intimidating co-workers, making unauthorised adjustments to tasks, unachievable deadlines, by establishing an unsafe working environment for targeted employees (Nielsen, Glasø, & Einarsen, 2017). Samnani and Singh (2016) underlined the outcomes of bullying in terms of stress, irritability, low confidence level, and job-related outcomes. The occurrence of abusive remarks has drawn significant interest from scholars and professionals over the

last few years (Naseer & Khan, 2015). This type of incidence occurs in the repetitive, continuous, and systematic display of violent or unreasonable conduct or negative behavior against one or more people in the workplace (Yeun & Han, 2016). Bullying negatively affects employees' behavior and job roles, bringing an employee to a position to not protect themselves (Rai & Agarwal, 2017). Bullying in the workplace can be exhibited through impractical deadlines, undue assignments, ongoing job monitoring, rumors, and offensive remarks, and in some cases, threats (Rai & Agarwal, 2017).

In the Pakistani scenario, workplace bullying affects employees differently. Workplace bullying has lasting consequences, which may lead to physical and mental health issues. Bullied employees cannot perform their jobs well. They spend time protecting themselves and avoiding the bully, which reduces their drive and productivity (Raz-zaghian & Ghani, 2014; Fatima et al., 2021).

2.2. Intention to leave

According to Sager, Griffeth, and Hom, (1998), the intention to leave is defined as an employee's intentions to quit and starts looking for a new position or employment someplace else. Empirical research shows that the desire of employees to leave a job is a crucial factor in recognising the actual turnover of employees. Furthermore, the worker's motive to quit the job depends solely on the employees' decisions (Yu, Xu, Li, & Kong, 2020). Researchers believe that sometimes new hiring brings new skills, knowledge, and creativity to the organisation, linked this change with organisational luck, and considered this turnover beneficial in the long run. However, a very high degree of workers attrition creates a fragmented workforce that increases costs and operational inefficiency (Qadeer, Shafique, Ahmad, & Rehman, 2011). It is generally accepted that high employee turnover indicates poor leadership that cannot manage employees and their satisfaction levels (Gozukara, Mercanlı, Capuk, & Yıldırım, 2017). Earlier research has shown that work dissatisfaction is the most significant and main reason for leaving an organisation (Feng & Angeline, 2010). Job frustration affects the desire to leave the organisation openly (Nadi & Shojaee, 2019). Previous research stated that this happens in rare cases, and before leaving a job, an employee thinks twice about their unemployment. After deciding to leave an organisation, some employees start searching for new jobs while maintaining their current jobs for the safer side (Qadeer et al., 2011). The intention to leave has been widely researched, and it indicates an employee's desire to leave their present employer (Thoresen et al., 2003). Price (2001) stated that there are different reasons for leaving jobs: environmental, individual, and systemic factors. Previous studies have explained that employee turnover can be controlled through general training, job satisfaction, and new opportunities at work (Yu et al., 2020).

2.3. Emotional exhaustion

In the workplace, emotional exhaustion is defined as a chronic condition of severe fatigue driven on by excessive workloads, poor workplace behaviour from co-workers, and ongoing stress (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). In certain cases, overwork contributes to a condition of emotional and psychological unease and physical fatigue, leading to exhaustion (Arens & Morin, 2016). Klusmann, Richter, & Lüdtke, (2016) stated emotional exhaustion happens when an employee is mentally exhausted due to their unethical workplace behaviors of co-workers. Emotional exhaustion also comes as a consequence of various deadlines, pressure from the department head, and unprofessional behaviours of colleagues, all of which contribute to an employee's emotional exhaustion (Chen, Richard, Boncoeur, & Ford, 2020).

In a specific situation, employees get exhausted from their jobs due to misbehaving and an unfriendly environment. They think it violates the office decorum, working conditions, and psychological contract violation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; O'Brennan, Pas, & Bradshaw, 2017). Such violations decrease employee commitment and belongings toward the organisation, making an organisation unsafe for employee health and job (Epitropaki, 2013). Emotional exhaustion now becomes a practice in an organisational environment because an employee responds to misbehaving and does some deviant action to use it against them (Reb, Narayanan, Chaturvedi, & Ekkirala, 2017). Such behavior affects an employee's career in the long run and their current job (Judge, Scott, & Ilies, 2006).

Those who frequently experience emotional exhaustion believe that they are unable to manage life events. It encompasses the sensation of being "stuck" or "imprisoned" in a circumstance. Emotional exhaustion may lead to other physical deficiencies such as fatigue, sleep deprivation, and reduced excitement. This overstressed state of mind may ultimately result in a long-term worsening of the health of the person who has gone through this phase of their existence. Employees suffer from mental exhaustion in several ways, including lack of inspired motivation, sleeping issues, moodiness, body fatigue, carelessness, discomfort, migraine, nervousness, lack of focus, and many more (Reb et al., 2017). Many research investigations have also shown that exhausted employees have poor work-related tasks, exhibit nonprofessional behaviors and have a greater intention to search for a new job at a different location (Grandey, Dickter, & Sin, 2004).

2.4. Hypothesis Testing

2.4.1 *Workplace bullying and intention to leave*

Bullying in the workplace is a continual pattern of taunting and bantering an employee in different ways (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2005). Such attitudes affect employees' behaviors toward jobs and organisations, as Leymann (1990) discussed in his study. When a supervisor uses harsh language and ignores a worker socially, it is more stressful and destructive for employees than all other types of employment pressure placed collectively (Einarsen et al., 2011). Bullying in the workplace is a subject that researchers believe is essential to investigate because it dramatically affects employees in the workplace. Researchers have highlighted the connections between different outcomes due to workplace bullying. Workplace bullying has not appropriately researched in the early times of 2000; that's why COR theory stated that it should be adequately addressed to reduce employee's intention to leave (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). Bullying in the workplace has a detrimental effect on the overall working atmosphere and productivity., employees' organisational commitment, and team efficiency, contributing to the increasing intentions of workers to leave (Frick, Fletcher, Ramsay, & Bedwell, 2018); Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). Workplace bullying affects employees differently; it increases employee intention to leave, increases frustration among employees, and affects their entire professional career (Glambek et al., 2014). Another important aspect of bullying negatively affects workers' satisfaction and loyalty to their employer (Hoel & Cooper, 2000; Vartia, 2001). It increases their intention to move away from the organisation (Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2005). Leaving an organisation is the most significant answer to bullying (Bohle et al., 2017). A research performed in the United Kingdom found that one-fifth of the victims left their organisations because of rough and harsh language used by their supervisors (Rayner & Cooper, 1997).

H1: There is a positive connection between bullying and intention to leave

2.4.2. Workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion

Bullying at the workplace, where an employee faces negative remarks and actions by their supervisor or co-workers in the working environment daily, such type of activity is pursued due to power imbalance in the organisation (Rossiter & Sochos, 2018; Einarsen et al., 2011). Emotional exhaustion includes tiredness, exhaustion, irritability, frustration, and demotivation (Spagnoli & Balducci, 2017). In other words, the emotional energies of the staff are drained, and they no longer feel that they are actively present in the office. According to Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, (2011), workplace bullying is a term that encompasses both work-related and personal verbal abuse. According to Fida, Laschinger, & Leiter, (2018) confronting bullying is more unpleasant for workers than coping with other types of work-related pressure. Bullying has many impacts on the employee's professional life, manifesting in their behavior and various health conditions (Tuckey & Neall, 2014).

Emotional exhaustion has been linked with the sense that one's job is being swamped by emotion, resulting in personal and social weariness (Giorgi et al., 2016). According to Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, (2001), the most frequent consequence of workplace bullying is emotional exhaustion and that it affects both the physical and emotional wellbeing of individuals. Employees who are abused are less active and feel more stressed and anxious. Workplace bullying indirectly affects the wellbeing and success of workers (Giorgi et al., 2016) and raises the level of psychological distress. Conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 2001) states that emotional exhaustion results from bad work experiences due to workplace abuse. Employees' behaviors are influenced by their psychological stress (Miner et al., 2005). Using abusive language is a disruptive way that impacts workers' emotions poorly and induces internal tension and irritability, as explained by the conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 2001). This hectic scenario is reflected in the form of tension, fatigue, anxiety, and distress (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012).

H2: Bullying at the workplace is related to emotional exhaustion in a positive way

2.4.3. Emotional exhaustion and intention to leave

Employees who suffer from emotional exhaustion are not interested in developing sound and friendly relations with their co-workers, leading to dissatisfaction with their job and thinking of leaving the organisation, supported by the study of (Khan, Khan, Soomro, & Khan, 2020). Employees are exhausted from their jobs, get involved in unhealthy organisational activities, and do not properly obey their supervisor's instructions (Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008); Ogungbamila, Balogun, Ogungbamila, & Oladele, 2014). Employees are emotionally drained; they perceive that supervisor have violated a psychological agreement (Parzefall & Coyle-Shapiro, 2011). Workers will be less likely to be associated with their employer for a long because of this notion and will be more willing to leave the organisation (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). When employees are emotionally hurt, they are drained due to physical and psychological stress and become mentally exhausted (Marchand & Vandenberghe, 2016). Employees who intend to shield themselves from more stress have only one option to leave the organisation (Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003). Workers feel mental fatigue while facing misbehaviour, and they may want to avoid such an unpleasant work atmosphere with higher turnover (Avanzi et al., 2014). Emotional exhaustion results in negative feelings of uneasiness, low self-esteem, and powerlessness, encouraging employee absence and creating negative attitudes toward the organisation (Ogungbamila et al., 2014). COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001) explained that negative feelings affect employees' work roles, causing emotional exhaustion that leads to employees' intention to leave. When confronted with gross misconduct, the organisation will be unable to retain its employees (Marchand & Vandenberghe,

2016, Noh, Jang, & Choi, 2019).

H3: Emotional exhaustion and intention to leave are linked positively

2.4.4. *Emotional exhaustion as a mediator*

The COR method in the present research showed that bullying in the workplace resulted in many undesirable behaviors. This study pointed out that bullying in the workplace causes emotional exhaustion in the employees, which leads to the intention to leave. WPB may be a source of stress that results in the depletion of resources; due to the recurrent loss of self-respect, integrity, and prestige, workers may begin to consider changing their jobs. Employees will eventually quit the company if the scenario persists. The organisation's market reputation will be negatively affected and will give negative gestures in the long run (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001).

The COR theory establishes a link between organisational outcomes and workplace bullying to measure the reaction's efficiency. This study also supports the COR theory to explain the outputs generated from bullying at the workplace. The author describes workplace bullying that was presented and researched not so thoroughly until 2017. Workplace bullying exists in an organisational environment for a long time, which is the primary research area that should be appropriately investigated to establish a healthy working environment (Naseer & Raja, 2016). Bullying has a significant adverse effect on workers' attitudes, behaviors, and emotions. They also affect their actions and even create serious health concerns (Hoel, Sheehan, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2011). Workplace stress and workplace abuse may often increase mental fatigue and lead to a desire to leave. Hence, employees have to put extraordinary efforts to control their feelings to fulfil job expectations when dealing with these stressors (Zohar, Tzischinski, & Epstein, 2003). Employees use different relaxation techniques to minimise stress by putting extra effort into their jobs to meet job requirements and avoid leaving. Employees, after facing and failing to reduce emotional exhaustion, start thinking about leaving the job. The presence of job stresses, such as workplace bullying, may result in emotional exhaustion while dealing with such a hectic setting. When faced with these stresses, employees may find themselves wishing to unwind since they must take more effort to control their emotions in order to fulfil work expectations (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003). According to Laschinger, and Fida (2014) stated emotional exhaustion creates frustration among employees, resulting from different factors in the organisation that must be examined. Several studies have previously been conducted to assess the prevalence of workplace bullying and the possibility of employees quitting their jobs, as studied by Whitman, Halbesleben, and Holmes (2014) and Reb et al. (2017).

H4: Emotional exhaustion plays a mediating role in the relationship between workplace bullying and the intention to leave.

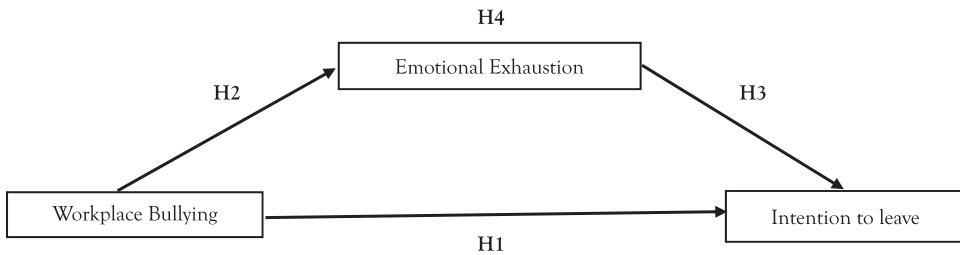


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Study population

The Saif Group of companies is one of Pakistan’s largest industrial and service corporations, with a wide range of companies. Some of the group’s main activities are oil and gas exploration, power production, textile sectors, real estate investment, healthcare services, technology services, software engineering, and environmental conservation.

3.2. Data collection

Through a questionnaire, the information was gathered from employees who worked at the corporate headquarters and regional offices of the Saif Group of Companies, Pakistan. This study used a convenience sampling technique to obtain data from the respondents. First, the data were gathered for demographic and independent variables to reduce the possibility of frequent method biases proposed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff, (2003). After 15 days, data were collected for the dependent variable (intention to leave) and mediating variable (emotional exhaustion). Finally, we linked data of both stages. The total number of questionnaires distributed was 316; out of the total questionnaires, 234 questionnaires were collected (74%).

3.3. Instruments

Bullying in the workplace was assessed on a scale of seven items produced by Hershcovis (2011). The Likert scale was utilised in this research, with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree. The sample item of this scale is “The manager teases and ridicules me at work”. The same five-Likert scale was used to measure the intention to leave. The sample item of this scale is ‘I think a lot about quitting my job,’ developed by Kumar and Govindarajo (2014). A nine-item scale devel-

oped by Maslach and Jackson (1981) was utilised to assess the participants' emotional exhaustion. The sample item for this scale is "I feel emotionally drained by my work."

3.4. Demographic statistics

Male employees filled the maximum number of questionnaires (91% of total employees). Due to the Covid 19 situation, most female employees worked from home (50% staff as per Govt Notification). Most questionnaires were filled by employees who were experienced with a service of 6-10 years. Master-qualified employees accounted for 76% of the total.

Table 1: Demographic Details

Gender	Age (n)	Service (n)	Education
Male (212)	25-29 (16)	1-5 (43)	FA/FSC (9)
Female (22)	30-34 (137)	6-10 (153)	Bachelors (38)
	35-39 (45)	11-15 (27)	Master (178)
	40 and Above (36)	16 and above (11)	MS/PHIL (9)

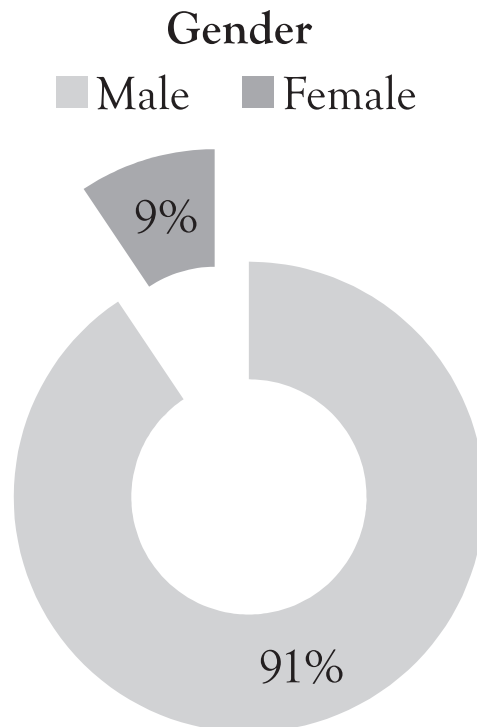


Figure: 2

Age

■ 25-29 ■ 30-34 ■ 35-39 ■ 40 and Above

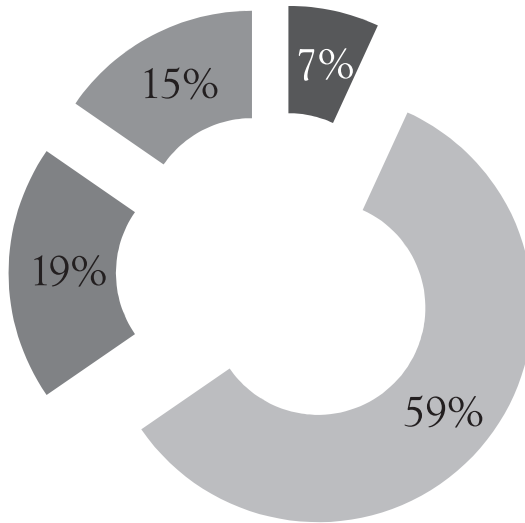


Figure: 3

Service

■ 1-5. ■ 6-10. ■ 11-15. ■ 16 and above

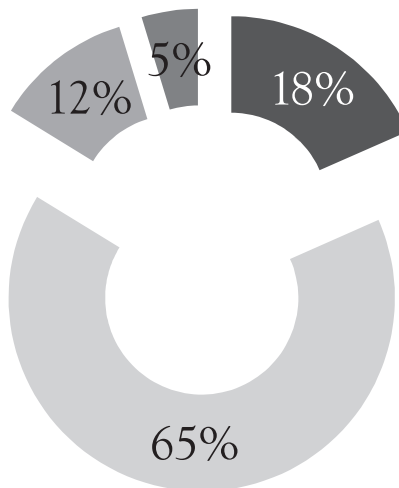


Figure: 4

Qualification

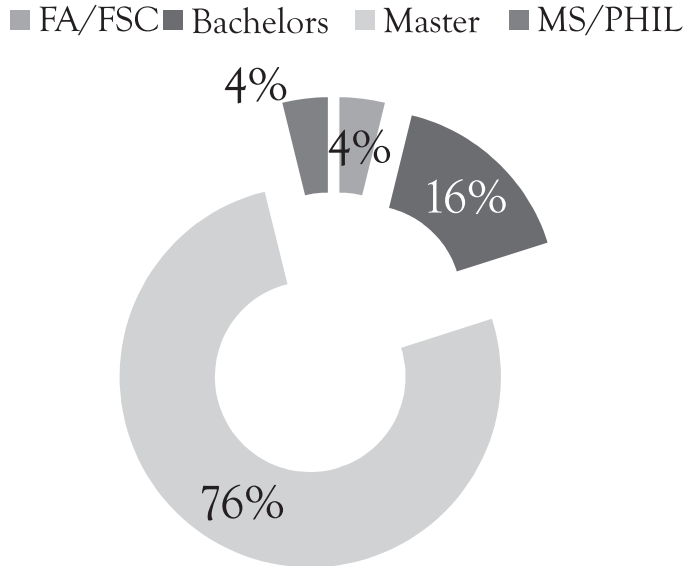


Figure: 5

Note: Graphical Representation of Demographic Variables

3.5. Data Analysis

3.5.1 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

To check model fitness, we run CFA for model 1, and the findings indicated an appropriate fit of the data model (see Table 2). Figure 6 shows fit indices of workplace bullying, emotional exhaustion and, intention to leave, the result illustrates that one factor confirmatory fit indices was good for overall model, CMIN/DF= 2.374, CFI= .962, TLI= .940, NFI= .937, GFI= .90, AGFI= .92, RMR= .006 and RMSEA= .07, (See Figure 6). No items were extracted, all values loading were greater than 0.5 (Russell, 1978; Hulland, 1999).

Table: 2 Fit Indices of a Research Model

Model	Fit Indices					
	CMIN/DF ≤3 (Kline, 2005)	GFI ≥0.95 (Miles & Shevlin, 1998)	CFI ≥ 0.90 (Hu & Bentler, 1999)	RMR ≤0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999)	AGFI ≥0.90 (Miles & Shevlin, 1998)	RMSEA ≤0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999)
Study Model 1	2.37	0.90	0.96	0.006	0.92	0.07

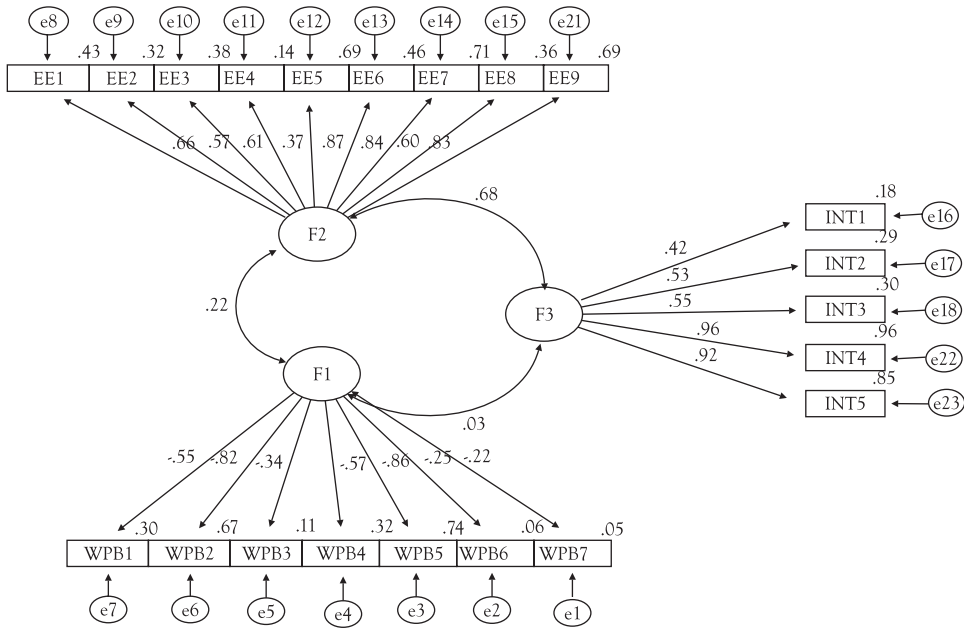


Figure 6: Model Fitness Diagram

3.5.2 Reliability and validity analysis

Cronbach’s alpha was calculated since all variables had values higher than 0.70 (see table 3) to determine the reliability. To examine the validity of the data, we measured convergent reliability and discriminant validity, thereby fulfilling the proposed criteria by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The discriminatory validity recommendation of Fornell and Larcker (1981) was appropriate when the square root of each variable’s AVE value was greater than the correlation value (see Table 3). The AVE measures indicate the amount of variation recorded by a construct versus the measurement error. Cutoff scores for CR ≥ 0.7 or greater (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013) and AVE ≥ 0.5 or greater are recommended by (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). According to Cohen (1988), the correlation analysis method was utilised to determine the connection between the variables under consideration with correlation values ranging from .10 to .30 for low correlation and .30 to .50 for high correlation (see Table 4).

3.5.3 Regression model and results

3.5.3.1 Direct relationship’s

To find out effects, we used SPSS V. 25 for regression analysis. As shown in Table 5, workplace bullying positively correlated with intention to leave ($R^2 = 62\%$, $\beta = .84$, $t = 19.81$, $p < 0.000$), the study’s first hypothesis is significant. Workplace bullying positively correlated with emotional exhaustion ($R^2 = 74\%$, $\beta = 0.81$, $t = 25.75$, $p <$

Table 3: Measurement Scale Reliability and Validity

Variables	CR	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	DV
Workplace Bullying	0.92	0.66	0.74	0.81
Emotional Exhaustion	0.97	0.80	0.70	0.89
Intention to Leave	0.89	0.70	0.73	0.83

0.000), thereby endorsing the second hypothesis. Likewise, the study's third hypothesis was confirmed by a positive correlation between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention ($R^2 = 62\%$, $\beta = 0.89$, $t = 19.64$, $p < 0.000$).

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlation, and Reliability

Variables	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	1.3	.51	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Education	2.7	.56	-.037	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Age	2.4	.83	-.017	-.016	-	-	-	-	-
4. Service	2.0	.69	.207**	.046	.047	-	-	-	-
5. WPB	3.5	.68	.002	.019	.129*	.080	(.74)	-	-
6. EE	3.6	.64	-.061	.082	.189**	.098	.861**	(.70)	-
7. INTL	3.7	.72	-.015	.036	.133*	.006	.793**	.790**	(.73)

Note(s): N= 234; **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) and *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). WPB=Workplace Bullying, EE=Emotional, Exhaustion, INTL=Intention to leave.

3.5.3.2 Mediation analysis

We used PROCESS macro by Hayes (2013) (Model 4) to evaluate the mediation effect between the dependent and independent variables. This technique likewise adheres to Baron and Kenny's guidelines (1986). Workplace bullying is indirectly correlated with intentions to leave by emotional exhaustion (effect=0.38, SE=0.074, LLCI=0.3077 and ULCI=0.6176), showing partial mediation, enabling the testing of the fourth hypothesis of the research that workplace bullying and intention to leave are mediated by emotional exhaustion (see Table 5).

4. Conclusion and Discussion

This research seeks to examine the impact of bullying at work on the various organisational components, which leads to intention to leave. The current study

Table 5: Path Analysis (Direct & Indirect Effects)

Hypothesis	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Total Effects	The ratio of indirect effect to the total effect	t	Decision
Effect of IV on DV	.84***	-	-	-	19.81	Supported
Effect of IV on MV	.81***	-	-	-	25.75	Supported
Effect of MV on DV	.89***	-	-	-	19.64	Supported
IV → MV → DV	.46***	.38	0.84***	45%	5.88	Partial Mediation

Note(s): *** $p < 0.001$; (IV: Workplace Bullying, MV: Emotional Exhaustion, DV: turnover intentions)

examines workplace bullying effects in the Saif group of companies, Pakistan, to understand how bullying a role in employees' exhaustion and intention to leave plays. Workplace bullying has been given less importance in many organisations, which is many valuable employees leave their organisations, which in turn, an organisation pays a high cost (Einarsen et al., 2018). This research also makes use of the COR theory to explain the relationship between workplace bullying and the intention to leave as a result of emotional exhaustion (Hobfoll, 2001). When employees are bullied in the workplace, which leads to emotional exhaustion, stress, and anxiety, emotional exhaustion converts employees' mentality to either bear or leave the organisation without stress. According to COR theory, organisations face two types of problems while facing such a situation: first, employees face emotional exhaustion that directly affects their work; second, the organisation losses resources, knowledge and skills that employees have when deciding to quit. Our first hypothesis describes how workplace bullying affects employees' intent to leave, consistent with prior research by Naseer and Khan (2015) and Najam et al. (2018). The study's findings revealed a significant link between workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion, in line with a previous study (Jalali, Hidzir, Jaafar, and Dahalan, (2019). The study results also suggest that emotional exhaustion leads to the intention to leave; therefore, our third hypothesis is consistent with the results (Srivastava & Agarwal, 2020, Arici, 2018). These findings demonstrate that workers bullied at work will get emotionally tired and eventually quit the organisation. Such results are similar to Srivastava and Agarwal (2020), Srivastava and Dey (2020).

This conclusion is essential for every organisation to understand the intimidation process in the workplace and the purpose of quitting the organisation. The study's outcome also confirms Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) study results, claiming that bad happenings in the workplace affect employees' feelings and emotions. As a result, employees say goodbye to the company.

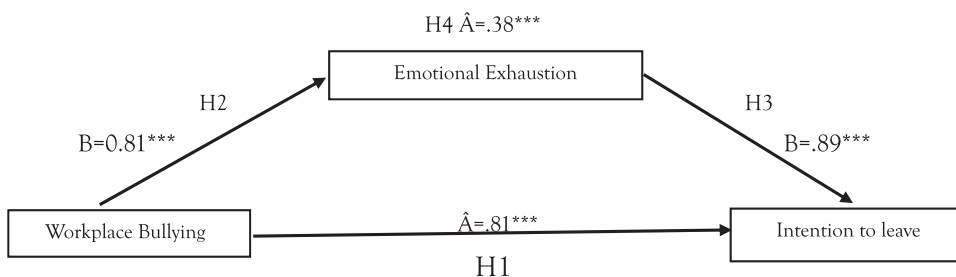


Figure 7: Model Results

5. Managerial Implication

Workplace bullying leads to employees' emotional exhaustion that ultimately leads to employees' intention to leave, directly influencing organisation performance and productivity as studied in this study. Employees are vital assets of an organisation; managers should care while communicating/dealing with their employees. Managers should maintain a friendly environment for organisational effectiveness and productivity. One of the main reasons for employees' emotional exhaustion is the manager's or supervisor's workplace behavior, which directly creates employee intentions to leave the organisation. Here, we suggest establishing a working environment that better suits employees to relieve their job stress and equitable and fair allocations of rewards.

6. Limitations and Future Avenues

This study has few limitations; employees were given a fixed amount of time to complete the questionnaire. Second, on data collection time, the organisation's annual closing was in progress, which affected their concentration. The researcher recommends studying other factors as mediators to check their influence, that is, work pressure. Workplace bullying effects should be checked with other dependent variables, such as organisational performance, organisational commitment, and job satisfaction, to understand better the consequences of workplace bullying in the long run. The generalizability of the results is limited due to the small sample size used in the research, future study should include a larger sample of the population to ensure generalizability. Longitudinal research may help in the future to investigate how workplace bullying affects organisational results. Lastly, using other data collection techniques may be helpful for a better understanding of bullying in the workplace.

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