



Article

The Impact of Workplace Bullying on Organizational Affiliation through The Mediating Role of Emotional Exhaustion

An Analytical Study of The Opinions of A Sample of Medical and Health Staff at Al-Kafeel Specialized Hospital

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Abstract: This research aims to determine the impact of workplace bullying on organizational commitment through the mediating role of emotional burnout among employees. The relationship was tested on a sample of nursing and health staff at Al-Kafeel Specialized Hospital in Karbala Governorate. For the purpose of analyzing and statistically processing the data, the research adopted a suitable set of descriptive statistical measures (arithmetic mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, relative importance), Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, structural equation modeling to measure impact relationships, and path analysis. These methods were used through the statistical programs (SPSS V.25; Amos V.23). The importance of the research stems from the scarcity of research that has attempted to identify and understand the nature of the relationship between the three research variables (bullying in the workplace, emotional exhaustion, and organizational affiliation), as well as the research's attempt to address a real problem that directly affects the Iraqi health sector. The research concluded that the prevalence of bullying behaviors among medical and health staff at Al-Kafeel Hospital will lead to an increase in cases of anxiety, depression, exhaustion, and resentment among the working individuals, and as a result, reduce their sense of belonging to the organization. The research recommends reducing bullying behaviors among employees because of their impact on employee emotional exhaustion and consequently achieving higher organizational loyalty.

Keywords: Workplace bullying; Emotional exhaustion; Organizational affiliation; Healthcare employees; Mediating effect

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1. Introduction

Workplace bullying has become one of the most serious issues in modern organizational and healthcare environments because of its high-impact psychological, behavioral, and organizational effects. Repeated exposure to negative acts, intimidation, or interpersonal hostility can fray employee wellbeing and this is exacerbated in the transformational pressure cooker of hospitals which may, in turn, sever employees sense of organizational affiliation. Various research consistently proved that bullying behaviors create stress, anxiety and low performance which threatens the quality of the services and

organizational stability. Concurrently, emotional exhaustion has long been considered a component of burnout, especially among medical and other healthcare professionals working under constant emotional and workload pressure.

While there is an increasing global evidence base on workplace bullying and burnout, to our knowledge, little is known about how emotional exhaustion acts as a linking mechanism between workplace bullying and organizational attachment, especially in the healthcare settings of developing countries. There is a general lack of empirical studies in this area coming from Arab and Iraqi healthcare institutions, leaving an apparent dearth of insight into the mediating mechanisms on how bullying behaviors produce a weakened employee loyalty and sense of belonging in the enterprise. Organizational affiliation is one of the most important factors influencing retention, job motivation, and the sustainable performance of the health workforce, hence it is crucial to fill this gap.

In order to fill such gap, the current research uses a quantitative, descriptive-analytical study type based on survey data from medical and health individuals, and then analyzes the data using correlation, regression, and mediation methods. Results show that workplace bullying affects organizational affiliation negatively and such an effect is direct and indirect, in the form of emotional exhaustion. Findings show that emotional exhaustion partially mediates this relationship, offering additional evidence to the pivotal role of emotional exhaustion in explaining how bullying depletes employees of their sense of belonging. This highlights crucial implications for the management of healthcare that along with anti-bullying policies, congenial environment and considerable reduction in emotional exhaustion should aim at increasing organizational affiliation and thereby enhance the effectiveness of healthcare institutions.

2. Materials and Methods

The research problem

Contemporary trends among researchers and organizational behaviorists point to the importance and role of employee and management behaviors within an organization, given their impact on employee belonging and loyalty. Employee and management behaviors are among the most important factors that encourage employee creativity. Therefore, this research aims to highlight this crucial aspect of organizational behavior by examining the role of workplace bullying on employee belonging. It also introduces another cognitive variable: emotional burnout. This burnout acts as a mediator in the relationship between workplace bullying and organizational belonging, as it is a psychological issue for employees characterized by the depletion of their emotional energy and feelings towards work. This provides an answer to the question of why there is a relationship between workplace bullying and organizational belonging, a topic certainly worthy of investigation through the development of a hypothetical model for the current research. The research problem can be summarized in the following questions:

1. Does bullying behavior in the workplace lead to a decrease in employee loyalty to the organization?
2. Does employee emotional exhaustion and burnout lead to a decrease in their loyalty to the workplace?
3. Does emotional exhaustion act as a mediator influencing the relationship between workplace bullying and employee loyalty?

The importance of the research

The importance of the current research lies in the following:

1. Organizational bullying, emotional burnout, and organizational commitment are modern and important topics in organizational literature, particularly in the field of organizational behavior, due to their crucial role in the life of organizations.
2. Despite the growing body of scholarly contributions from foreign research and studies that have highlighted these concepts, their treatment is very rare, if not nonexistent, in Arabic and local studies. This gives the current research intellectual

significance by presenting these three concepts and making a modest contribution to the development of these topics and enriching Arabic and local libraries.

3. This research applies its ideas to an important organizational sector, namely the healthcare sector, which this research and others like it can help to improve, even if only in a small way.

Research Objectives

The current research seeks to achieve a set of objectives, as follows:

1. To diagnose the level of bullying behaviors among the individuals in the research sample.

2. To diagnose the level of emotional exhaustion among the individuals in the research sample and identify which behaviors contribute to their emotional exhaustion.

3. To determine the level of organizational commitment among the individuals in the research sample and identify the most important factors that contribute to increasing this level.

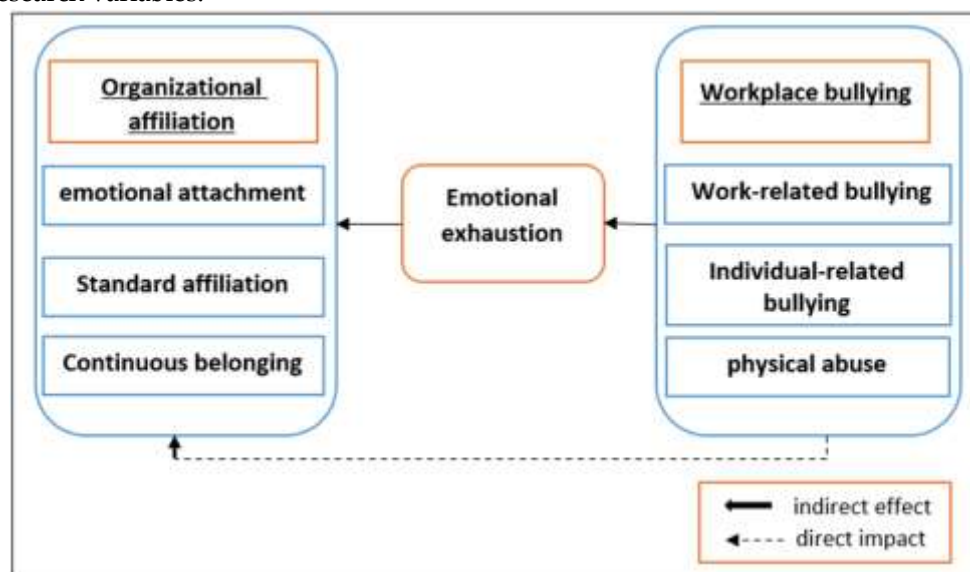
4. To raise awareness among the Al-Kafeel Hospital sample regarding the importance of the research variables and the potential for addressing them.

5. To determine the direct correlation and influence between workplace bullying and organizational commitment.

6. To test the indirect correlation and influence mediated by the variable emotional exhaustion in the relationship between workplace bullying and organizational commitment.

The hypothetical research model

The hypothetical research plan illustrates a combination of the relationships between the research variables.



Source: Prepared by the researcher

Research hypotheses

To address the research problem, a set of hypotheses were proposed, which are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Workplace bullying, in its various forms (work-related bullying, interpersonal bullying, and physical abuse), has a statistically significant effect on emotional burnout.

Hypothesis 2: Emotional burnout has a statistically significant effect on organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 3: Workplace bullying, in its various forms (work-related bullying, interpersonal bullying, and physical abuse), has a statistically significant effect on organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 4: Workplace bullying has a statistically significant effect on organizational commitment through the mediating effect of emotional burnout.

Second axis: The theoretical framework of the research

1- Bullying in the workplace

1.1. The historical background of the concept of bullying in the workplace

The term bullying began to appear in 1978 when Olweus, a Scandinavian researcher, used this term in his research on student bullying in schools, focusing on how to prevent such bullying behaviors [1]. In the early 1980s, interest in bullying increased significantly when German physician Heinz Leymann, working in Sweden, studied bullying behavior in 1980. He is considered a pioneer in the field of bullying and one of the founders of the anti-bullying movement due to his keen interest in bullying behaviors and their impact on the health of working individuals [2]. In the United Kingdom, the concept of bullying emerged in 1990 when Andrea Adams studied bullying in the workplace, becoming the first researcher to address the topic. Subsequently, Ruth Namie introduced the term "bullying in the workplace" to the popular press in the United States in 1998 in an article titled "Bullying in the Workplace and the Need to Protect the Vulnerable in the Workplace." Thus, the concept of bullying began to find its way into organizational studies and the need to study mechanisms for preventing this negative behavior in organizations. In 2011, a survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management found that 51% of Employees have experienced workplace bullying, and in a 2014 survey, the Workplace Bullying Institute reported that 50% of employees had experienced workplace harassment [3].

1.2. The concept and definition of bullying in the workplace

Workplace bullying involves a persistent personal attack on a colleague by another colleague using behaviors that punish them emotionally and psychologically. Workplace bullying behaviors include actions or verbal comments intended to intimidate, abuse, humiliate, insult, or isolate someone [4]. According to the American Psychological Association, bullying behavior is characterized by "aggressive behavior" intended to cause harm or distress, occurring repeatedly over time, and taking place in a relationship where there is a power imbalance. Perceived bullying refers to a situation where one or more individuals feel they are subjected to persistent and repeated negative actions intended to cause harm [5]. The Workplace Bullying Institute (2015) defines workplace bullying as "repeated mistreatment of one or more persons (targets) by one or more other individuals, including verbal abuse and aggressive behavior that threatens, insults, intimidates, interferes with work, or sabotages—preventing work from being done." A key aspect of this definition is the description of abusive behavior that insults or intimidates the target. Workplace bullying consists of persistent, unwanted, abusive, or degrading behaviors toward an individual or group of employees. Heather indicates that workplace bullying is fundamentally an act of aggression, usually involving psychological violence but sometimes minor physical aggression. It is important to note that bullying can be extremely dangerous and may even threaten his life [5].

One reason bullying persists is that it can be difficult to define, and each individual may perceive different behaviors as negative or positive based on their culture, experiences, goals, and personal needs. Another reason for the persistence of bullying is the lack of a formal organizational action plan to combat it. For these reasons, many managers choose the path of ignoring bullying, hoping that the problems will resolve or disappear. This path of ignoring behaviors is not always chosen out of weakness but rather out of uncertainty about how to address the harassment [6].

1.3. The negative effects of bullying behaviors in the workplace

It is identified a range of general effects or consequences resulting from bullying behavior in the workplace, including [7][8]:

a) Decreased employee performance, leading to decreased organizational productivity.

b) Early retirement, grievances, excessive complaints, and litigation, which distract the organization from its primary goal of productivity and profitability, as individuals become preoccupied with resolving conflicts.

c) Frequent employee absenteeism.

d) Depression, which can lead to suicide.

e) Impact on employee efficiency and effectiveness in performing their jobs.

f) Employees' perception of unfair treatment, leading to job dissatisfaction and a lack of commitment to their duties.

g) Employee turnover, resulting in increased organizational costs.

1.4. Measures of bullying in the workplace and its dimensions

There are a number of scales used to measure bullying behavior in the workplace, some of which differ in terms of dimensions and the number of measurement items. After a thorough review and statistical analysis of these scales, the researcher found that the scale developed by Einarsen et al. is the most widely used in previous research and studies [4]. This scale also aligns with the current research direction and is compatible with the other research variables. Therefore, the researcher chose to use this scale in his current research. This scale consists of three dimensions, which are explained below:

1.4.a. Work-related bullying: The negative effects and pressures that employees face in the workplace. Burnout is considered a form of bullying behavior, and stress results from burnout. Work-related bullying is defined as a process that facilitates and increases the prevalence of bullying against employees in the workplace [9]. Workplace bullying behaviors can include withholding necessary information from the intended individual (the target) and assigning them meaningless tasks. In some cases, bullying behaviors are described in very vague ways. Trepanier explained that workplace bullying depends on the social aspects of the workplace, which play a crucial role in satisfying basic psychological needs [10]. Supportive social contexts increase happiness and satisfaction, while coercive contexts dampen morale and reduce employee satisfaction, leading to dysfunction.

1.4.b. Individual-related bullying: There are individual actions that are perceived as minor or at least tolerable attacks, but when they accumulate, they can be detrimental, destabilizing the individual and ultimately leading to submission. Bullying occurs when the bully perceives the target (the vulnerable individual) as a threat. Physiological needs such as belonging, a sense of worthiness and control, predictability in the workplace, and pain avoidance also play a role [11]. Bullying behaviors in the workplace can include actions that threaten the individual, their job, or their personal standing, as well as actions intended to isolate them, assign them excessive workloads, destabilize them, and socially exclude them [12].

1.4.c. Physical Abuse: Physical bullying involves physically harming the victim (the vulnerable individual) through pushing, hitting, and destroying their belongings [3]. Physical abuse is also described as attacking, assaulting, or threatening the vulnerable individual at work, whether directly or indirectly, causing physical harm and stress, which can sometimes lead to a nervous breakdown [13]. The European Commission summarized two main aspects of physical violence [14]:

a- Physical violence and assault need not be... In the workplace, it can sometimes occur elsewhere, outside the organization.

B. Physical violence does not necessarily involve hitting or assault; it can also take the form of mistreatment or placing an individual in an environment unsuitable for their abilities, leading to physical breakdown or illness.

2- Emotional exhaustion

2.1. The concept of emotional exhaustion

The theory of psychological burnout provides a foundation for the concept of emotional burnout in its intellectual aspects. Emotional burnout is a deep-seated tendency in how an individual responds to relevant environmental demands and constraints. When

an individual is emotionally burnout, they will suffer significantly in their work-related performance [15]. Emotional burnout is the most rapid manifestation of burnout, therefore it requires careful attention from both researchers and managers. Emotional burnout leads to both tangible and intangible costs [16]. According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, emotional burnout occurs when individuals perceive a threat to something they value [17]. This threat can stem from the depletion of emotional resources or when an investment of personal effort does not yield the expected results [18]. Emotional resource burnout can occur when an employee faces excessive work demands and constant work pressures. Emotional burnout also occurs when an employee spends too much time helping another employee or client without any compensation from the coworker or client [18].

In the same context, Knudsen et al. consider emotional exhaustion to be an important issue in itself, as many researchers argue that emotional exhaustion is the most important dimension of the larger phenomenon of employee burnout, in addition to the association of emotional exhaustion with negative health outcomes and a decrease in job performance [19]. There is also evidence that exhaustion at the individual level may become a phenomenon at the organizational level in terms of its potential to spread to other employees.

Emotional exhaustion is defined as a chronic state of emotional depletion or psychological stress resulting from repeated exposure to work-related stress. Emotional exhaustion is associated with symptoms resulting from anxiety and fatigue, psychological and physical complaints, and work-related depression [20]. It is also defined as a stressful and unpleasant condition that causes various problems and affects both the individual and the organization in terms of organizational commitment [21]. Emotional burnout is the result of an imbalance in the provision of workload, rewards, control, values, community, and equity, or some of these [22]. Emotional burnout is also described as an exploratory factor of burnout; it is the most important dimension of burnout and is widely reported and analyzed [23]. Demerouti et al. defines emotional burnout as the result of severe physical, emotional, and cognitive stress, such as the long-term result of prolonged exposure to certain job demands. Emotional burnout also refers to the depletion of psychological energy or emotional resources [24]. Emotional burnout is also defined as the feeling of excessive emotional exposure to work [25].

2.2. Causes and effects of emotional exhaustion

Emotional burnout occurs when an individual faces continuous work-related stress due to interpersonal interactions and working conditions [26]. It also results from depression, emotional deprivation, and environmental stressors. There are two main causes of emotional burnout: first, increased job disorganization leading to emotional dissonance, and second, the depletion of mental resources resulting from the process of emotional regulation. Kanten & Yesiltas suggest that certain demographic, personal, and social support factors contribute to emotional burnout [27]. The workplace and its characteristics also have a strong impact on burnout; when workplace conditions fail to meet employees' needs, it leads to employee turnover due to emotional exhaustion. Similarly, authoritarian leadership contributes to employee burnout, increased emotional exhaustion, and decreased job satisfaction [28]. Bullying behaviors in the workplace also play a role in creating anxiety, stress symptoms, fear, and depression, which in turn leads to emotional exhaustion for the targeted individual as a result of the negative actions taken against that individual [29].

As for the effects of emotional exhaustion, there are many negative impacts on both the individual and the organization. When individuals feel tired and exhausted, both physiologically and emotionally, this negatively affects both their quality of life and the performance of their organizations [30]. The negative effects in the workplace include a decrease in service quality, an increase in employee turnover and absenteeism, and a decrease in morale [31]. Ashill et al. believe that high levels of emotional exhaustion lead

to negative outcomes for both employees and the organization, including a decrease in employee performance, reduced job satisfaction and organizational commitment. It can also be an indicator of chronic stress and is associated with feelings of frustration and anxiety. Emotional exhaustion can lead to deviant behavior in the workplace [31]. Emotional exhaustion has multiple harmful effects. The first harm relates to individuals (such as headaches, insomnia, feelings of depression, and nervousness), while the other harm is related to the organization, such as employees being unable to cope with their jobs and experiencing a decrease or reduction in the level of job engagement.

2.3. Emotional exhaustion scale

The dimensions of emotional exhaustion are determined within the researcher's endeavor to clarify the nature of emotional exhaustion and how it can be measured. This endeavor has centered on a fundamental question: Is emotional exhaustion a one-dimensional variable or a two-dimensional variable? This question arises in line with the fact that emotional exhaustion is still in the stage of cognitive formation and intellectual framing, in which there are multiple visions, proposals, and tests seeking to unify the view towards the issue of emotional exhaustion, especially since emotional exhaustion is a negative phenomenon for the organization and employees. The matter has generated much intellectual debate among researchers, who have presented a number of scales for emotional exhaustion, all of which agreed that it is a one-dimensional variable. Due to the few differences between these scales, the scale of Demerouti et al. was adopted in our research, as it is considered one of the modern scales and can be applied in different work environments and to different jobs that require physical or cognitive effort to perform [15]. This scale consists of (8) questions.

3- Organizational affiliation

3.1. The concept of organizational affiliation

Belonging is defined linguistically as affiliation with something. In its technical sense, it is a genuine connection and direct link with a specific entity, the nature of which varies depending on how the individual interacts with it. It is also defined as holding fast to and trusting an element of one's surrounding environment, maintaining an emotional, intellectual, moral, and practical connection with it. This indicates the strength of the bond between the individual and the thing to which they belong, whether it be their homeland, family, work, or something else. In English, both Al-Mawrid Dictionary and Webster's Dictionary agree that the word "belongingness" is derived from the verb "belong," meaning to belong, to have a close relationship, and to possess a social connection necessary for integration into a group.

Organizational affiliation is a mutual investment between the individual and the organization, with the continuity of the interactive relationship between them resulting in behavior that exceeds the formal behavior expected of him by the organization, and the individual's desire to give part of his time in order to contribute to the success and continuity of the organization, and the readiness to exert more effort, carry out voluntary work, and bear additional responsibilities. Organizational affiliation is defined as an effective connection between the individual and a specific organization. This connection is based on the loyalty of individuals to the organization and the alignment of their goals with the goals of this organization. Organizational affiliation is also defined as the feeling of loyalty and the individual's desire to belong to a group and the readiness to participate, trust, and conform with his group according to the organizational guidelines. Parks & Langford explains that individuals with high levels of belonging are able to bear the burdens and pressures of work and balance between work and life. They also have a sense of enthusiasm, pride, and motivation at work, and they strive to achieve the organization's vision, values, goals, and strategies. They also exert their best voluntary and participatory efforts emotionally and intellectually with their work outside of work to achieve organizational goals.

3.2. The importance of organizational affiliation

Management expert Peter Drucker pointed out that an organization that does not create organizational belonging only has promises and wishes, not plans. In addition, the effect of belonging on the lives of employees may extend to their private lives outside of work. It has become clear that employees with high organizational belonging are characterized by a high degree of satisfaction, happiness, and family ties. The interest in organizational affiliation as an administrative phenomenon stems from the importance of the individual's role in the organization, and from the fact that the importance of the individual cannot equal the importance of any other means of production. Furthermore, the success of the organization and its achievement of its goals are directly linked to the extent to which employees believe in those goals and strive to achieve them. An employee's organizational affiliation forms the basis for their attitudes and behaviors within the organization. The greater an individual's affiliation with the organization, the more they adopt its goals and act in ways that serve its interests more effectively, exert greater effort, and improve the foundations of decision-making, ultimately benefiting the organization and exercising self-monitoring. Baroon indicates that the importance of organizational affiliation lies in the fact that the behavior of individuals with genuine affiliation differs from that of individuals without this level of affiliation in the following ways:

1. Reduced likelihood of employee turnover.
2. Innovation driven by profitability.
3. Less workload for managers in directing subordinates.
4. High levels of trust among and between subordinates.
5. Embracing change and development for organizational growth.
6. Job satisfaction and a drive for further contribution.

3.3. Dimensions of organizational affiliation

The preceding pages highlighted the differing perspectives of researchers on defining the concept of organizational commitment and identifying its characteristics and structures. The concept of organizational commitment has evolved through several stages to reach its current form. Researchers have identified various dimensions of organizational commitment. Tarter and Hoy identified four dimensions that contribute to building and retaining an individual's loyalty within an organization: supportive behavior, directive and empowering behavior, respectful behavior, and supportive but not controlling behavior. Naasani presented a model for measuring organizational commitment consisting of four dimensions: performance, experience, workload, and distributive fairness. The dimensions of organizational commitment have been defined as three (affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuous commitment), as mentioned and agreed upon by some pioneering researchers in this field such as Sheldon, Mowday & Steed, as well as Dubin and Porter. In our current study, we will rely on these three dimensions to determine the extent of organizational commitment using (15) questions prepared for this purpose. We will explain the meaning of each of these dimensions as follows:

3.3.a. Emotional Commitment: This refers to the psychological connection, identity formation, and integration of the individual with the organization. Naturally, an individual's belief in the organization's goals and values is high if their emotional commitment increases. Emotional commitment expresses the degree to which an individual is influenced by the organization's values and goals. It stems from a psychological connection to the organization, a strong belief in its values and goals, and a desire to remain within it. An individual's emotional commitment is affected by their awareness of the characteristics that distinguish their work, such as autonomy and required skills. This dimension of commitment is also influenced by the degree to which the individual feels that the organizational environment allows them to participate effectively in decision-making. In the same vein, emotional commitment is linked to psychological attachment to the organization.

3.3.b. Normative affiliation: It is the feeling of employees of a moral obligation to remain in the organization. This type of affiliation is often derived from the values that the individual embraces in the organization or those that he acquires before joining the organization, such as family and socialization. Normative affiliation is also described as the strong desire of the affiliated individual to remain in the organization. This feeling is usually reinforced by the organization's support for its employees and allowing them to participate and interact positively not only in work implementation procedures but also to contribute to setting the goals, plans and general policies of the organization. It represents the sum of the internal moral pressures placed on the individual to work towards achieving the goals of the organization, to which he feels indebted.

3.3.c. Continued Commitment: This type of commitment refers to the individual's tendency to continue in his current job as a result of his awareness of the costs that may result from his decision to leave the organization. The decision to leave the organization for the employee is linked to the high costs that accompany such a decision. Continued commitment is also described as the individual's desire to continue working in the organization not only because of belief in the organization's goals and values, but also because of the investment value that he can achieve if he continues working in the organization compared to what he will lose if he decides to move to another entity. This indicates the interest-based connection based on the benefit that the individual obtains from the organization. In the same sense, another researcher defines it as the strong desire to continue working in the organization due to the inability to sacrifice it because of the increased costs involved, in addition to his doubts about finding a similar job elsewhere.

The logical relationship between the research variables

There are numerous indications in the administrative literature pertaining to the research topics, which the researcher reviewed. These indications pointed to common links between the research variables. Bullying behaviors in the workplace play a role in creating anxiety, stress symptoms, fear, and depression, which in turn lead to emotional exhaustion for the targeted individual as a result of the negative actions perpetrated against them. Organizations undoubtedly prioritize improving the organizational climate, as organizations that demoralize employees encourage employee turnover and reduce their sense of belonging. A lack of security and stability in the workplace certainly leads to decreased employee loyalty. Furthermore, organizations should assist in fulfilling the human needs of their employees. An organization that fails to meet these needs drives individuals to leave their jobs in search of fulfillment elsewhere. Disregarding the social status of workers leads to a decrease in belonging.

Methodology

The current study used a quantitative, descriptive–analytical research design to examine the effect of workplace bullying on organizational affiliation with the mediating role of emotional exhaustion among medical and health staff at Al-Kafeel Specialized Hospital. The research population consisted of doctors, nurses, and allied health personnel working in the hospital, and a representative sample was obtained with the help of a simple random sampling method to minimize judgment and sampling bias. Tobacco-free policy survey structureData were collected through a survey using a structured questionnaire and measurement scales which have been well-validated and widely used in organizational behavior research. Workplace bullying was measured using the Negative Acts Questionnaire, comprising work-related bullying, individual-related bullying, and physical abuse; emotional exhaustion was assessed using unidimensional items reflecting emotional depletion and fatigue. Organizational affiliation was measured using three dimensions, affective, normative, and continuance affiliation. All items from the questionnaire were on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Data were screened for missing values and outliers (using SPSS) preceding analysis, and confirmatory reliability analysis with Cronbach's alpha coefficients (above acceptable levels) confirmed their internal consistency.

Descriptive statistics were performed to assess the levels of the study variables, and inferential analyses were performed to test the research hypotheses. Spearman correlation coefficients were used to explore associations between variables, and multiple and simple regression analyses were used to test direct effects. Method: Stepwise regression and path analysis was used through SPSS and AMOS software to examine the mediating role of emotional exhaustion. Such an integrated methodological approach provided a solid foundation for simultaneously testing direct and indirect relationships between the variables, within the embedded context of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

Third aspect: The practical framework of the research

This aspect includes the statistical analysis of the responses of the research sample:

1- Examining the research data and verifying the validity and reliability of the measures:

There are a number of methods and statistics that the researcher adopted to ensure the validity of the data obtained from the distributed questionnaire, and then to know the validity of the measures adopted in the research in a clear and useful way and to verify their consistency during the research period, as follows:

1.a. Identifying Missing Data: It is possible that some data may be lost during the collection phase due to incomplete questionnaire items or errors during data entry for analysis. The greater the percentage of missing data, the more it impacts the accuracy and nature of the extracted results, thus compromising their reliability and accuracy, unlike the phenomena under study. To avoid this, the researcher used the SPSS version 25 statistical package to determine the percentage of missing data through frequency extraction. This step is sufficient to identify the number of missing data points relative to the valid data. This procedure helped the researcher uncover the missing data, allowing for its retrieval by referring back to the original questionnaire.

1.b. Identifying Outliers and Deviations: Some data may exhibit outliers or extreme values, such as data points that fall below or exceed the general level of most data. The research obtained through the questionnaire, and the existence of such data certainly negatively affects the nature of the relationship. Therefore, it is necessary to identify and process this data if it exists. To achieve this purpose, the researcher used the Boxplot method to determine whether such values exist or not. The results showed the existence of some outliers and extremes, which prompted the researcher to refer back to the initial data and it became clear that there was an error during the data entry process in the statistical program matrix (Spss.v.25). The incorrect data was corrected, and therefore the data became free of outliers and extremes.

1.c. Description, reliability, and consistency of the measurement instrument:

The research measurement instrument consists of three parts: the Workplace Bullying Scale, which comprises three first-order dimensions (work-related bullying, interpersonal bullying, and physical abuse) and consists of 21 items, with 7 items for each dimension; the Organizational Commitment Scale, which also comprises three first-order dimensions (emotional commitment, normative commitment, and continuous commitment) and consists of 15 items, with 5 items for each dimension; and the Emotional Burnout Scale, a one-dimensional, first-order scale consisting of 8 items. Table 1 shows the code for each variable and dimension, the number of items for each subdimension, and the calculation of Cronbach's alpha for each variable to ensure the reliability and consistency of the scale. The scale was designed using a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree), and Cronbach's alpha values ranged between (0.83-0.75) is acceptable in management research because its value exceeds (70%), which indicates that the measures are characterized by internal consistency.

Table 1. Coding of research measures and their reliability

scale	Distance	Number of paragraphs	The symbol	Cronbach's Alpha
	Work-related bullying	7	BRW	0.750

Workplace bullying (BW)	Individual-related bullying	7	BRI	
	physical abuse	7	HP	
Organizational affiliation (OA)	emotional attachment	5	AE	0.806
	Standard affiliation	5	AS	
	Continuous belonging	5	AC	
Emotional exhaustion (EA)	One-dimensional	8	EA	0.830

Source: Prepared by the researcher using SPSS v25

2- Descriptive statistics and correlations between variables

In this section, we will examine the reality of the research variables in the hospital under study. The arithmetic means of the sample's responses to the items will be determined by their belonging to any category. Since the adopted scale is a five-point Likert scale, there are five categories to which the arithmetic means belong. The category is determined by finding the range length ($5 - 1 = 4$), then dividing the range by the number of categories (5) ($4/5 = 0.80$). After that, (0.80) is added to the lower limit (1) or subtracted from the upper limit (5). The categories are as follows: (Dewberry, 2004:15): (1-1.80) Very low, (2.60-1.81) Low, (3.40-2.61) Moderate, (4.20-3.41) High, (5.0-4.21) Very high, as shown below:

a- Workplace bullying: Table (4) shows that the work-related bullying dimension had a low arithmetic mean of (2.547), and the arithmetic mean of the individual-related bullying dimension was (3.419), which is a moderate arithmetic mean. As for the physical abuse dimension, its arithmetic mean was (2.693), which is considered a low average. As for the standard deviations, they were (BRW = 1.338, BRI = 1.326, HP = 1.635). This confirms the slight dispersion of the opinions of the sample members and the degree of homogeneity in their answers, which indicates the availability of an almost moderate level of bullying behaviors in the hospital under investigation, which is embodied in the daily behavior of some individuals and is reflected in all their various actions and dealings.

Table 2. Statistical description of the workplace bullying variable

Distance	arithmetic mean	standard deviation	Answer level	relative importance
Work-related bullying BRW	2.547	1.338	moderate	3
Individual-related bullying BRI	3.419	1.326	moderate	1
physical abuse HP	2.693	1.635	high	2
the total	2.886	1.433	high	

Source: Prepared by the researcher using SPSS v25

B- Emotional exhaustion: It is clear from Table (2) that the emotional exhaustion variable obtained a moderate arithmetic mean of (3.251), which is greater than the hypothetical arithmetic mean (3), and it obtained a standard deviation of (1.482). This result indicates the availability of a fairly good level of agreement among the sample members regarding the items of emotional exhaustion stemming from their emotional and realistic feeling of exhaustion and depletion of their emotions towards work at a moderate level.

Table 3. Statistical description of the emotional exhaustion variable

Distance	arithmetic mean	standard deviation	Answer level	relative importance
One-dimensional	3.251	1.482	moderate	

Source: Prepared by the researcher using SPSS v25

T- Organizational affiliation: Table (3) shows that the dimensions of the organizational affiliation variable obtained relatively high arithmetic means (AE = 3.248, AS = 3.317, AC = 3.446), thus exceeding the hypothetical arithmetic mean (3). As for the standard deviations, they amounted to (AE = 1.480, AS = 1.420, AC = 1.237). This confirms the slight dispersion of the opinions of the sample members and the degree of homogeneity in their responses, which indicates the provision of a certain level of the dimensions of organizational affiliation and the improvement of its importance by the medical and health staff in the hospital under investigation.

Table 4. Statistical description of the organizational affiliation variable

Distance	arithmetic mean	standard deviation	Answer level	relative importance
emotional attachment AE	3.248	1.480	high	1
Standard affiliation AS	3.317	1.420	high	2
Continuous belonging AC	3.446	1.237	high	3
the total	3.003	1.379	high	

Source: Prepared by the researcher using SPSS v25

3- Testing the research hypotheses

This section includes testing the research hypotheses, and for this purpose, multiple regression analysis and simple regression analysis were used with their statistical parameters, which include the (f) test, the partial regression coefficient (beta coefficient (B)), the (t) test, and the coefficient of determination (R^2), in order to determine the relationship of influence between the dimensions of bullying behavior, emotional exhaustion, and organizational affiliation, as follows:

First hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship of influence of the dimensions of workplace bullying (work-related bullying, individual-related bullying, physical abuse) on the emotional burnout variable.

Table (5) shows the multiple regression to test the extent to which workplace bullying dimensions affect emotional burnout at the level of Al-Kafeel Hospital, the research sample.

Table 5. The relationship of influence between workplace bullying and its dimensions and emotional exhaustion

mediating variable independent variable	Emotional exhaustion				R2	F	Sig.
	constant	B	T	Sig.			
Work-related bullying BRW	1.760	.158	2.158	.000	.255	16.656	.000
Individual-related bullying BRI		.270	3.694	.000			
physical abuse HP		.347	4.842	.000			

Source: Prepared by the researcher using SPSS v25

Table (7) shows the following:

- The calculated F-value for the multiple linear regression model was 16.656, a significant value. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.255, indicating that workplace bullying explains 25.5% of the changes in emotional burnout. The remaining 74.5% is attributed to other variables not included in the research model.
- The marginal slope of the deviation angle (beta coefficient) was 0.158 (BRW), 0.270 (BRI), and 0.347 (HP), significant values based on the calculated t-value. This indicates that a change of 1 in bullying affects organizational commitment by 0.258, either increasing or decreasing it. Therefore, we accept the first hypothesis.

The second hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship of influence between emotional exhaustion and organizational affiliation.

Table (8) shows the results of the simple regression test to determine the extent of the impact of emotional exhaustion on organizational affiliation at the level of Al-Kafeel Hospital, the research sample.

Table 6. The relationship of influence between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment

mediating variable independent variable	Organizational affiliation				R2	F	Sig.
	constant	B	T	Sig.			
Emotional exhaustion	5.029	.477-	6.607	.000	.228	43.658	.000

Table (6) shows the following:

- The calculated F-value for the simple linear regression model was 43.658, a significant value. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.228, indicating that emotional exhaustion explains 22.8% of the changes in organizational commitment. The remaining 77.2% is attributed to other variables not included in the research model.
- The marginal slope of the deviation angle (beta coefficient) was -0.477, a significant value based on the calculated t-value. This indicates that a change of 1 in emotional exhaustion leads to a decrease of 0.477 in organizational commitment. Therefore, we accept the second hypothesis.

The third hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship between workplace bullying (work-related bullying, interpersonal bullying, and physical abuse) and organizational commitment.

Table 7. The relationship of influence between workplace bullying and its dimensions on organizational affiliation

mediating variable independent variable	Organizational affiliation				R2	F	Sig.
	constant	B	T	Sig.			
Work-related bullying BRW	4.786	.246-	3.108	15.0	0.032	7.185	.000
Individual-related bullying BRI		.163-	2.055	32.0			
physical abuse HP		.135-	1.741	9.00			

Source: Prepared by the researcher using SPSS v25.

Table (7) shows the following:

- The calculated F-value for the multiple linear regression model was (7.185), which is a significant value. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was (0.359), meaning that workplace power dynamics explain (35.9%) of the changes in organizational affiliation. The remaining (64.1%) is attributed to the influence of other variables not included in the research model.
- The marginal slope coefficient for the angle of deviation (BRW = -0.246, Beta BRI = -0.163, HP = -0.135) were significant according to the calculated t-value. This indicates that a change of (1) in bullying leads to a decrease of (0.181) in organizational commitment. Therefore, we accept the third hypothesis.

The fourth hypothesis: The emotional exhaustion variable mediates the causal relationship between workplace bullying (work-related bullying, interpersonal bullying, physical abuse) and organizational commitment. Testing the fourth hypothesis requires identifying the mediating role of the emotional exhaustion variable between workplace

bullying (work-related bullying, interpersonal bullying, physical abuse) and organizational commitment. This requires relying on the mediation model test, which necessitates estimating three regression equations as follows (Baron & Kenny, 1986: 1176-1177):

- a. The effect of the independent variable on the mediating variable: that is, differences in the levels of the independent variable largely explain differences in the assumed mediator.
- b. The effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable: that is, differences in the levels of the independent variable largely explain differences in the dependent variable.
- c. The effect of the independent and mediating variables on the dependent variable. This point includes two conditions:
 - a) If the value of the effect coefficient in the third equation is lower than its value in the second equation, this indicates the presence of a partial mediating role played by the mediating variable between the independent and dependent variables.
 - b) If the value of the effect coefficient (Beta) is lower than its value in the second equation, this indicates the presence of a perfect mediating role played by the mediating variable between the independent and dependent variables. In other words, it implies the presence of a single mediating variable, which is often contrary to reality, as the humanities, social sciences, and psychology involve multiple mediating variables representing a causal chain between the independent and dependent variables.

Thus, Table (6) has achieved the first regression equation test, which includes the effect of the independent variable, the dimensions of bullying in the workplace, on the mediating variable (emotional burnout).

Table (7) also achieved the second regression equation test, which includes the effect of the mediating variable (emotional exhaustion) on the dependent variable, organizational affiliation.

Table (8) refers to testing the third regression equation with its two conditions by using stepwise multiple regression analysis. The first model includes a regression analysis of the effect of the independent variable, the dimensions of bullying behavior in the workplace (work-related bullying, individual-related bullying, physical abuse) on the dependent variable, organizational affiliation. The second model includes a regression analysis of the effect of the independent variable, the dimensions of bullying in the workplace, in addition to the mediating variable, emotional exhaustion, on the dependent variable, organizational affiliation.

Table 8. Parameters of the stepwise multiple regression model for testing the fourth hypothesis

The model	dependent variable independent variable	Organizational affiliation				R ²	Chang R ²	F
		Con.	B	t	Sig.			
the first	Work-related bullying BRW	4.786	.246	3.108	.000	.359		7.185
	Individual-related bullying BRI		.163	2.055	.000			
	physical abuse HP		.135	1.741	.000			
the second	Work-related bullying BRW	4.390	.179	2.412	.000	.513	.154	12.915
	Individual-related bullying BRI		.048	.628	.000			
	physical abuse HP		.012	.159	.000			
	Emotional exhaustion EA		.424	5.134	.000			

Source: Prepared by the researcher using SPSS v25.

Table (10) shows that the first model includes the following:

- a. The calculated F-value (7.185) is significant, while the coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.359. This indicates that workplace power dynamics

explain 35.9% of the changes in organizational affiliation that were overlooked. The remaining 64.1% is attributed to other variables not included in the research model.

- b. The marginal slope of the regression angle (partial regression coefficient B) is significant, with values of BRW = 0.246, BRI = 0.163, and HP = 0.135, based on the calculated t-value in the table.

Accordingly, it is clear from the table that there is a significant impact of workplace bullying dimensions on organizational affiliation.

As can be seen from Table (10) in the second regression model, the following:

1. The calculated F-value was 12.915, which is significant. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.513. Comparing the coefficients of determination in the two regression models reveals that the second regression model achieved a positive difference in its explanatory power of 0.154. This difference is attributed to the inclusion of emotional exhaustion as the mediating variable, a fourth variable, in the second regression model.

2. Based on the effect coefficient (Beta) obtained in the second model, the following can be concluded:

- a. Emotional exhaustion partially mediates the relationship between work-related bullying and organizational affiliation, as the effect coefficient (Beta) decreased for the work-related bullying dimension from 0.246 in the first model to 0.179 in the second model.
- b. Emotional exhaustion partially mediates the relationship between individual-related bullying and organizational affiliation, as the value of (Beta) decreased for the individual-related bullying dimension. (0.163) in the first model to (0.048).
- c. The emotional exhaustion variable partially mediates the causal relationship between physical abuse and organizational affiliation, as the Beta value for the physical abuse dimension decreased from (0.135) in the first model to (0.012) in the second model.

Therefore, accept the fourth hypothesis.

4. Conclusion

1. The responses of the research sample indicate a low level of bullying behavior in the hospital under study, manifested in verbal and physical abuse by some individuals against others.
2. Statistical analysis also revealed a moderate level of emotional exhaustion in the hospital under study. This suggests that the research sample feels an imbalance in the provision of workload, rewards, control, values, community, and fairness, among other things.
3. Despite the presence of bullying and emotional exhaustion in the hospital under study, this did not significantly affect organizational commitment. The research sample's responses indicated a strong sense of belonging among employees to their workplace.
4. The research findings showed that actions or verbal comments intended to intimidate, abuse, humiliate, insult, or isolate someone—which constitute bullying behaviors in the workplace—lead to emotional exhaustion for that employee.
5. The responses of the research sample indicated that when an individual feels their psychological energy or emotional resources are depleted, it leads to a decrease in loyalty and belonging to the work group, as well as a decline in willingness to participate, trust, and conformity with the group according to organizational guidelines.
6. This study also established an important relationship between the individual and the organization and demonstrated a reduction in the phenomenon of emotional burnout. This phenomenon showed a strong mediating effect on the relationship between bullying behaviors in the workplace and organizational

belonging. Organizations should identify, address, and mitigate these deviant phenomena.

Recommendations:

1. The necessity of identifying levels of negative behaviors, including bullying, and seeking the necessary means and procedures to reduce these behaviors by enacting laws and procedures to deter them, given their harmful consequences for both the individual and the organization.
2. Emphasizing the strengthening of the bonds between the individual and the organization to achieve a genuine and continuous emotional connection between the individual and their workplace.
3. Creating an organizational environment with an attractive climate for individuals to increase their organizational belonging and their sense of loyalty and commitment to their work.
4. Focusing on methods and procedures that include creating a collaborative work environment characterized by a team spirit, free from behaviors that drain employees' energy and that preserve the feelings and emotions of employees, thus avoiding the resulting negative outcomes.
5. Instilling the principles of organizational happiness among employees at all levels to eliminate the feelings resulting from negative situations such as bullying and other negative behaviors that drain the feelings and emotions of employees.

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