

**Workplace Bullying, Psychological Distress,  
Resilience, Mindfulness, and Emotional Exhaustion:  
A Moderated Mediation**

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Submitted to the  
Institute of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Tourism Management

Eastern Mediterranean University  
June 2019  
Gazimağusa, North Cyprus

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## ABSTRACT

The present study proposes and tests a moderated mediation model investigating the direct and mediated effect of workplace bullying on employee emotional exhaustion via psychological distress and resilience with mindfulness as a moderating variable, under the lens of COR and JD-R theory.

Structural equation modeling has been applied to analyze data from 252 4- and 5-star hotels' full-time employees in North Cyprus. The results show that workplace bullying significantly predicted emotional exhaustion, and resilience and psychological distress partially mediated this relationship. However, employee mindfulness did not significantly moderate the effect of workplace bullying on emotional exhaustion, nor its indirect effect via resilience. Implications are discussed further.

**Keywords:** emotional exhaustion; workplace bullying; resilience; mindfulness; psychological distress; moderated mediation.

## ÖZ

Çalışma işyerinde zorbalığın çalışan duygusal tükenmişliğine doğrudan ve psikolojik stres ile dayanıklılık değişkenleri vasıtası ile dolaylı etkilerini incelemektedir. Bunun yanında bu ilişkinin farkındalık (mindfulness) tarafından nasıl dönüştürüldüğü Kaynakların Korunması Teorisi (COR) ve İş Talep Kaynak (JD-R) Teorisi kullanılarak değerlendirilmiştir. Yapısal Eşitlik Modeli (SEM) kullanılarak 252 tam zamanlı 4 ve 5 yıldızlı otel çalışanından KKTC’de toplanan veriler analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlarımız işyeri zorbalığının duygusal tükenmişliği istatistiksel olarak anlamlı düzeyde etkilediğini göstermiştir. Bu ilişkiye psikolojik stres ve dayanıklılık değişkenleri aracılık etkisi yapmaktadır. Ancak çalışanların farkındalık (mindfulness) düzeyinin işyeri zorbalığının duygusal tükenmişliğe etkisini dönüştürücü bir rolünün olduğu hipotezi destek bulmamıştır. Bulgular ile ilgili değerlendirme ve öneriler de tartışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** duygusal tükenmişlik, işyeri zorbalığı, dayanıklılık, farkındalık, psikolojik stres

# **DEDICATION**

To My Family

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

First I would like to express my gratitude from my advisor Prof. Dr. Cem Tanova for his support and guidance during my PhD thesis. I would like to thank him for his constant support, enthusiasm and motivation during writing of this thesis.

I also would like to thank my committee members: Prof.Dr. Hasan Kiliç, Prof.Dr.Himmet Karadal, Prof.Dr. Azmi Yalçın for their insightful comments.

I would like to thank my family for their constant support in my whole life, my mother Irandokht Eshghi and my father Ali Anasori. I will not forget their spiritual support and guidance. I would also thank my brother Hamidreza Anasori for his support and encouragement.

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry has always been associated with vulnerable, stressful employment, with insecure salaries which result in employees becoming dependent on their managers and supervisors (Ram, 2018). These features of the hospitality setting and the power imbalance might increase the incidence of physical and hidden violence such as bullying in the workplace (Ariza-Montes Ariza-Montes, Arjona-Fuentes, Law, & Han, 2017) which in time may create mental distress and emotional exhaustion (EEX) (Allen, Holland, & Reynolds, 2015). EEX is viewed as a kind of psychological and physical fatigue which is a chronic consequence of excessive job or personal demands (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003). It is also regarded as one of the important components of burnout (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Emotional exhaustion is not only a personal problem due to its resultant physical and mental wellbeing but it is a problem for organizations since it has destructive effects for institutions as well (Cropanzano et al., 2003; Kenworthy, Fay, Frame, & Petree, 2014) such as reduced organizational commitment (Bozionelos & Kiamou, 2008; Seery & Corrigan, 2009), job performance (Devonish, 2013; Treadway et al., 2013) and increased turnover intentions (Blackstock, Harlos, Macleod, & Hardy, 2015; Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland, & Einarsen, 2014).

Emotional exhaustion, however, will manifest differently in employees who have to face interactions that are emotionally demanding. Thus, different employees will

experience emotional exhaustion differently. The extent to which an individual will experience emotional exhaustion or stress will depend on individual differences such as personality (Alarcon, Eschleman, & Bowling, 2009; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010), which will also influence the consequences such as burnout. Moreover, Power imbalance is one of the factors which create tension and stress in the environment and is the obvious attribute of the hospitality industry and it is a critical issue which gives permission to some individuals in this industry to be dominant on others and sometimes impose their power. This issue creates in time some phenomenon's such as violence and bullying. Workplace bullying (WPB) has significant effects in organizational life. The alarming consequences of bullying on individuals and organizations have been identified by many studies (Duffy & Sperry, 2012; Salin & Hoel, 2011; Agervold, 2007; Khalib & Ngan, 2006; Leymann, 1996; Zapf et al., 1996). The adverse effects of WPB on health have been addressed by many scholars. The consequences of WPB including psychological objections, burnout, nervousness, violence also psychosomatic illnesses have been stated by different studies (e.g. Attell, Brown, & Treiber, 2017; Lahelma et al., 2012).

Due to this detrimental effect of WPB this study tries to test the effect of this critical phenomenon on employee's emotional exhaustion (a component of burnout syndrome) and its effect through psychological and mental distress. However, there are some moderators to have an effect on the relationship between workplace bullying and employees exhaustion. Rushton, Batcheller, Schroeder, & Donohue (2015) have shown that greater resilience protects employees from emotional exhaustion and contributes to personal accomplishment among health care employees. Dispositional mindfulness also has been shown to moderate the

association between psychological risk factors and mental health outcomes (Chaskalson, 2011; Daubenmier, Hayden, Chang, & Epel, 2014).

This study contributes to present knowledge in the following ways. First, our study proposes and tests a model of workplace bullying as a direct antecedent of emotional exhaustion in the hotel sector. Although, burnout has been studied in the hospitality literature, it has not been studied as one of bullying's potential consequence (Allen et al., 2015). The limited existing studies have been mostly conducted in the healthcare settings (Allen et al., 2015), or sports industry (Yildiz, 2015). Although hospitality industry has high prevalence of workplace bullying due to the work culture (Samnani & Singh, 2012), with personnel turnover and low performance explained by their level of emotional exhaustion (Shih-Tse Wang, 2014), the association between workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion has been widely overlooked. Furthermore, in the existing studies the focus was mostly on job attitudes and behaviors as results of workplace bullying (Bentley et al., 2012; Bohle et al., 2017; Jung & Yoon, 2018a).

Secondly, our study investigates the role of resilience and psychological distress as potential mediators of the aforementioned relationship. Leiter & Maslach (1988) and Lu & Gursoy (2016) contend that within burnout, emotional exhaustion is the response to job related stressors and is the premise of depersonalization which further diminishes personal accomplishment. Hotel employees will first experience exhaustion under a stressful environment before the symptoms begin to show and thus this provides the rationale for our focus on emotional exhaustion rather than burnout. Nielsen & Einarsen (2012) pointed that limited studies investigated the intrinsic mechanisms explaining the 'how' and 'when' bullying and its outcomes are

related, and subsequently urged for theoretical explanations and empirical assessment of mediating and moderating variables that may explain the effect of bullying.

Third, the potential for mindfulness as a personality trait to alleviate the negative effect of bullying on emotional exhaustion remains unexplored. Mindfulness was found to decrease turnover intentions and to have a positive impact on employee performance (Dane & Brummel, 2014) and resilience (Chavers, 2013). Therefore, it is critically important to evaluate the mitigating effect it may have on the effect of workplace bullying on emotional exhaustion. In this vein, our study will consider the moderating effect of mindfulness in the proposed model. The conservation of resources (COR) theory and Job demands-resource (JD-R) model was used as our theoretical framework to draw the research hypotheses.

## **1.1 Tourism and hospitality in North Cyprus**

Tourism industry growth has become the fastest among other industries and is the essential element for service industry also is extremely relying on human work to produce a qualified service for customers. People have a critical role to bring success for the industry (Baum 2007). Therefore, the communication abilities, teamwork abilities and comprehension of various cultures for employees and students who want to continue in this industry should be highlighted to obtain competitive advantage in the dynamic and global world (Ozgit and caglar, 2015).

Tourism industry also in North Cyprus has dramatic contribution to the economic and social development of the country. Cyprus is the third island regarding the size in the Mediterranean region after Sardinia and Sicily. Cyprus area is 9,251 square

kilometer and It experienced dominancy by many civilizations such as “Assyrians, Egyptians,Romans,Persians,Byzantines,Ottomans,Venetians and British”. Cyprus was under dominancy of Britain till 1960 and then divided by Greek and Turkish Cypriot based on the London and Zurich agreement in 1959 (Stephen, 2000).

In 1963 civil war occurred between Greek and Turkish Cypriot. In 1983, the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC) has announced its independence and this announcement just known by Turkey. Nicosia is the capital city for Northern and South Cyprus. TRNC has two airports naming as Ercan and Gecitkale airport which are not known politically and are not open to international flights. All the international flights enter from Turkey. TRNC is allocated 3,355 square kilometers of the island and located almost 75 kilometers the south part of Turkey, 105 kilometers the west part of Syria, and 380 kilometers the north part of Egypt.

Northern Cyprus spreads from Karpaz Peninsula located in north east, to Morphou Bay and Cape Kormakitis in southwest. There is a buffer area which is controlling by United Nations to divide Nicosia the largest city of island between North and South. North Cyprus is rainy and the weather is cool during the winter, mostly during December also February. The spring is short with heavy storms followed by the hot summer.

The North Cyprus has 5 cities including Nicosia, Kyrenia, Morphou, Famagusta and Iskele. According to Kiessel et al. (2011) Tourism segment is a dominant and prominent element of North Cyprus and it is possible to support and enrich the financial condition through implementing a maintainable tourism growth that is built

on the customer value. Despite the remarkable role that tourism industry has in North Cyprus, tourism growth is still in its infancy stage.

Based on the statistics by Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTES) (2016), North Cyprus has 133 lodging with a 21,425 bed capacity. Occupancy rates of lodging places were the highest in August 2015 and lowest in December of that year.



Figure 1: Map of North Cyprus

## 1.2 Problem Statement

The hospitality segment as a part of tourism industry plays a remarkable role in speedy route of economical state of the countries to bring revenue and income. The employees in the hospitality industry undeniably affect this process. However, mental well-being and mental health of the employees and their cause and effects on the employees have been ignored specifically in hotel industry since violence and stress consider as normal issues in the hotel industry (Ram,2018) where employees under the pressure to provide excellent service for the customers and bring competitive advantage for the hotel. Violent behaviours such as bullying and psychological harassments as are common in the hotel industry and bring about



distress, exhaustion and finally lead to absenteeism and turnover intentions or actual turnover for some employees and harm the hotel productivity at the end since retaining and losing experienced employees is costly and time taking for the organizations. In the hospitality and service industry bullying has negative significant effect on the employees' satisfaction and lead to burnout (Mathisen et al., 2008; Bohle, 2017; Ariza-Montes, 2017).

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

As the main purpose of the current study is to evaluate the direct effect of workplace bullying on emotional exhaustion and indirect effect of this relationship through mediators to see how workplace bullying leads to exhaustion in the hospitality industry in the island of north Cyprus its implication for hospitality sector for hotel managers specifically, it would help both governmental and managers to better understand the concept of workplace bullying and its deteriorating effect in hotels. Consequently, they may be able to apply sustainable strategies for enhance productivity in hotels.

The purpose of the thesis is to evaluate of the effect of bullying on emotional exhaustion directly and through mediators among the hotel sectors in north Cyprus. In this regard, mindfulness is a moderator which buffers the effect of bullying phenomenon on emotional exhaustion. The sample of the study consists of employees who work in four and five star hotels. This study has remarkable contribution to the hospitality industry since hospitality industry is suffering from stressful work environment with constant pressure on employees since the violent behavior is considered as normal in this industry (Ram, 2108). Also, bullying itself has a remarkable negative effect on employees organizationally and individually.

Through the organizational perspective, bullying increase the incidence of physical and emotional exhaustion among employees which this in turn lead to absenteeism, turnover intentions and the real turnover among employees (Blackstock, Harlos, Macleod, & Hardy, 2015 ). Also the effect of bullying on individuals mental health and mental well-being is undeniable, since the study by Nielsen et al (2015) claimed, created suicidal ideation among 1854 employees in the organization.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Thesis**

The objectives of this thesis is as follow: 1. To examine the direct effect of workplace bullying on emotional exhaustion, 2. To examine the process which WPB effect employees emotional fatigue (resilience and psychological distress), 3. To examine if mindfulness mitigate the effect of bullying on employees emotional states 4. To examine if mindfulness changes resilience this has an effect on emotional well-being of employees and emotional exhaustion 5. To extend the practical and theoretical implications of this phenomenon in the hotel industry and recommend suggestions for policy makers and future studies.

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Workplace Bullying (WPB)**

Oxford Dictionary defined bully as an individual who force others to do things by using power and creating fear in them. Bullying is a multilayered and complicated phenomenon which simple explanation may keep us from further examination of this problem. Bullying has gradually come to be a crucial debate topic in the last 20 years, primarily amongst scholars who look at the psychological part of organizational works (Einarsen et al., 2003).

Workplace violence has turned into a significant subject since Heinz Leymann first mentioned about this problem during the 1980s (Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996). He implied to it as mobbing (Leymann, 1990); however, this term is currently more held for circumstances which a group aims uncivil behaviors to a target, while bullying has turned into the more broadly utilized general term.

Bullying is different from other kinds of violent behavior in terms of duration and frequency.

For the behavior to be recognized as bullying we need at least 6 weeks in the time period also this behavior should occur at least two times a week, the most prominent characteristic of bullying is power imbalance (Ram, 2018).

WPB implies to bugging, insulting, socially barring somebody or adversely influencing somebody's work duties and it needs to happen more than once and routinely (e.g. once a week) and over a period of time (e.g. about 6 month) (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, and Cooper, 2003 ). Bullying is an increasing procedure over the span of time which the individual face with exhaustion and turns into the objective of regular negative societal acts. A quarrel cannot be labeled as bullying if both sides are almost equally involved (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, and Cooper, 2003).

Similar to Leymann, Zapf and Gross (2001) have portrayed WPB as a sort of heightening conflict. Different factors like hostility in the workplace, formal or casual power distance between groups, social components like culture and customs and absence of organizational responsiveness may add to the acceleration of WPB while organizational prosperity and effective organizational reaction add to the de-heightening of WPB (Branch et al., 2013). Zapf (1999) distinguished five fundamental sorts of behaviors that can be thought as bullying behaviors at the workplace:

- (1) Alter the target work assignments in some undesirable way or make them hard to perform.
- (2) Social separation and exclude them by not to speak with someone or isolate someone from social events.
- (3) Offensive comments, personal assaults (also about the target personal life).
- (4) Verbal intimidations in which the target is degraded in public.
- (5) Spreading gossips about the target.

WPB comprises mistreatment that may happen: 1) between supervisor to subordinate, 2) between colleagues, and 3) from clients to employees (Fox &

Stallworth, 2005). WPB also can be subtle or overt; which subtle bullying is more prevalent (Samnani and Singh, 2012).

Bullying is interpreted differently. What an apprentice may consider as harassing and bullying acts, a manager may consider as mandatory and meticulous training. The critical point is that one can be the target of bullying and bully at the same time. Scholars have tried to comprehend and inhibit WPB, and several studies have emphasized undesirable outcomes of WPB on both people and associations (Duffy and Sperry, 2012; Salin and Hoel, 2011). Einarsen, (1999) characterized WPB as regular and destructive behaviors, including pressure, degradation, humiliation or isolation. The motivation behind these practices is to push a target into a powerless and unprotected position. As indicated by this approach, WPB is a problem that is activated by work stressors also causing more stress at work (Leymann, 1996).

Regarding the victims personality attributes some of the personality shortcomings anticipate bullying (Vartia, 1996). In this line, some of the personality traits such as shyness (Einarsen et al., 1994), nervousness and depression (Zapf, 1999), weak communication skills (Zapf, 1999) and neuroticism (Vartia, 1996) are amongst the individuals traits which they can anticipate this phenomenon. In addition, victims tend to be passive and avoid confliction (2) cognizant, old-fashioned and trustworthy, (3) calm, cautious and (4) restless, delicate and experiencing issues in adapting successfully to unpleasant circumstances (Coyne, Seigne, and Randall, 2000). Bullies seem to be more inflexible to accept other's opinions and high tendency to be socially dominant (Parkins, Fishbein, and Ritchey, 2006).

A lot of research over the previous decade has discovered that targets of bullying are probably going to face with more medical issues, for example, anxiety and physical pains (Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2001) and reduced emotional wellness (Hoel and Cooper, 2000).

Being an objective of bullying has been related with sadness and a discouraged mind-set (Camodeca and Gooseens, 2005). As Lazarus stated (1991, p. 247), sadness leads to employees job turnover rather than staying and struggling. Sadness indicates that personal objectives are blocked and the person is not performing well. It leads to inactivity, prevents one from allocates efficient time and energy to job duties (i.e. avoidance), also exhaustion and weariness. As the frequency of bullying acts increase, victim ability to get a long will be decreased, consequently turnover intention will be heightened. This “low energy” point can act as a mean of saving one’s resources (Roseman and Smith, 2001).

Based on COR (conservation of resources theory) (Hobfoll, 1989), individuals are interested in obtaining, retaining, and protecting resources (such as self-esteem, interesting work, or caring coworkers). When individuals are endangered with a losing their resources; or cannot obtain resources after investing them, they suffer from stress. As losing resources have more negative affect than gaining the resources, individuals are mostly more sensitive to destructive actions that damage their resources. As individuals with less resource are more susceptible to lose them, they lose their enthusiasm to take required actions to obtain resources consequently; they will be more defensive to keep their limited resources which they possess. Though subordinates who supported by their leader tend to add more to the group meetings (and possibly they will be perceived to grow more by their supervisor,

those employees who are intimidated by their supervisor or leader are doubtful to do any act that may appeal their attention. To conclude according to Lee and Brotheridge (2006), once victims have spent resources (mental, societal, etc.) to attempt to handle demands (bullying), yet they suffer from resources drain, exhaustion and tension (Salin, 2003).

Awareness regarding the pervasive prevalence of bullying and its destructive effects on institutions and people is increasing. Results concerning to occurrence of bullying are different, however it seems that 10% to 20% of employees in Europe, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand are involving with the modest level of bullying each year (Beale & Hoel, 2010; Roscigno, Lopez, & Hodson, 2009).

Di Rosa et al. (2009) proposed that mental mistreatments in the bullying form, hostile acts, or mobbing bring about detrimental health concerns in the work contexts nowadays. They recognized as destructive physical wellbeing concerns, containing immune deficiencies, gastric and musculoskeletal harms. Mental harms on victims comprised major depression and anxiety disorders, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Duffy & Sperry, 2007). Bullying influences health through a strain path. Researchers have discovered that biological signs of strain that are associated with health issues are raised in targets of long-standing WPB (Di Rosa et al., 2009). However, not each person exposed to bullying suffer from health issues; there are some factors that moderates the impact of bullying on individuals (e.g. mindfulness) (Zhou et al., 2017).

Concerning work-related consequences, scholars indicated that WPB is related with intention to leave (Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2008) less career satisfaction

(Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007) mental and physical health issues (Hogh et al., 2011) also significant adverse financial and organizational consequences for the company (Hoel et al., 2011). Also, environment plays a crucial role in creating and facilitating bullying (Hoel et al., 1999). WPB is more dominant in certain businesses (e.g. manufacturing; hospitality) (Einarsen et al., 1994). Scholar requires differentiating WPB from general confliction in workplace; dissimilar with common confliction, WPB pushes victims to lower positions of their feelings and life (Einarsen et al., 1994) and in this case the committer or committers do not have the intention to stop their act (Hubert et al., 2001). Bullying might have long-term effect on those who get exposed to it during the last 5 years. By reporting poorer health conditions, the target appears to be more in danger than those individuals without experiencing it (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002).



## **2.2 Bullying in the Hospitality Industry**

The incidence of WPB in the tourism sector is shocking (Milczarek, 2010). Tourism sector allocated the major incidence of this phenomenon. Overall, the tourism industry including hospitality and restaurants has allocated the second rank amongst 11 sectors. Thirty percent of the employees reported one type of violence, such as bullying or sexual harassment at least once in the last 12 months, Tourism industry also suffers from job and income insecurity with vulnerable employees including women and minorities also power imbalance which facilitates irritating behaviors to employees with lower levels (Hoel& Einarsen, 2003; Ram, 2018). Mathisen et al. (2008) found that new employees face with bullying more frequently than other workers. Alexander et al., (2012) and Ram (2018) claim that since aggressive behaviors and sexual harassment are considered to be normal subsequently it is more accepted by employees and managers. Violence and aggression considered to be normal in tourism and hospitality settings. Specifically, in deal with customers norm is that employees should obey the customers (“customer is always right”), and therefore offensive behaviors of clientele will be accepted and allowed (Harris & Reynolds, 2004). In the back spaces such as kitchens violence and bullying is more justified and they consider it as a job component (Alexander et al., 2012; Ram 2018). Undesirable outcomes of bullying are not just limited to victims; also witnesses are suffering from this issue. Tension and strain, weak performance, absenteeism and intention to quit the job affect both targets and bystanders (Bentley et al., 2012). Bullying creates strain and pressure in time (Alexander et al., 2012).

### **2.3 Mindfulness**

Mindfulness originates from Eastern culture, particularly Buddhist civilizations. Ingrained in Buddhist way of life, Mindfulness is a translation from Buddhist defined as “intentness of mind,” “wakefulness of mind,” and “lucidity of mind” (Davids & Stede, 1959, p. 672) – including intention, awareness, and attention. It has been described as condition which people bring their “attention to the experiences occurring in the present moment, in a nonjudgmental or accepting way” (Baer et al., 2006, p. 27). The mindfulness is a principal notion is in Buddhist traditions regarding the significance of consciousness (Hayes, 2003). It enhances daily life experiences by practicing meditation, and it helps individuals to be vigilant of all psychological and mental subjects—insights, feelings, perceptions and affects (Zivnuska K et al., 2016). The advantages of mindfulness have been declared by sages for centuries in different cultures as a state of mind which a person concentrates on present events (Brown and Ryan, 2003; Dane, 2011). Although mindfulness is more traditional and philosophical rather than to be scientific, in current years the concept is experiencing a considerable number of research through different fields, containing clinical and social psychology (e.g. Bishop et al., 2004), and neuroscience (e.g. Brown, K et al., 2007; Davidson et al., 2003). A remarkable number of researches in this field focus on connections between mindfulness and psychological and physiological health and well-being. Also, research shows that mindfulness is associated with liveliness, gratification, and relationship quality positively and associated with depression, nervousness, and stress negatively (Glomb et al., 2011). Scholars have claimed that mindfulness allows individuals to adjust their feelings and thoughts, mental and physical reactions much more efficiently (Papies et al., 2012). These results are in the same line with other studies which indicate that mindfulness boosts cognitive

flexibility (Moore and Malinowski, 2009) and enhances executive functions (Zeidan et al., 2010). It is claimed by social and clinical psychology that mindfulness is related with physiological and psychological health and might increase with training (Brown and Ryan, 2003; Carmody et al., 2008; Dekeyser et al., 2008). As Kabat-Zinn (2005) declared; mindfulness is not a feature that some people might possess and not existed in others, however, it is a human capacity that most individuals experience it at least once or more. As there are different conceptualizations of mindfulness Dane (2011) described mindfulness as “a state of consciousness in which attention is focused on present-moment phenomena occurring both externally and internally.” Also Brown and Ryan (2003) defined that mindfulness involves ‘an open, undivided observation of what is occurring both internally and externally.’ A current agreement explanation of mindfulness defines it as follow:

We see mindfulness as a process of regulating attention in order to bring a quality of non-elaborative awareness to current experience and a quality of relating to one’s experience within an orientation of curiosity, experiential openness, and acceptance. We further see mindfulness as a process of gaining insight into the nature of one’s mind and the adoption of a de-centered perspective on thoughts and feelings so that they can be experienced in terms of their subjectivity (versus their necessary validity) and transient nature (versus their permanence). (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 234).

These definitions consider mindfulness a special state of consciousness concentrating on present moment and attentional breadth (Dane, 2011). Studies by Baer et al., (2006) and Lau et al., (2006) also illustrate that in an equal condition some people are more mindful than others. According to these findings, it has been expected that people also are different in their mindfulness level in work contexts. Accordingly, some people might be more mindful in the workplace because of their particular experiences. Moreover, contextual features in the workplace may influence the way one acts at work particularly how individuals focus on their task in the work setting

(Zhong and House, 2012). Studies show that mindfulness enhances people abilities to cope with stress or struggles actively (e.g. Shapiro et al., 2007; Weinstein et al., 2009). During past decades, psychologists and medical practitioners have tried to apply mindfulness trainings to assist individuals to adapt with mental issues such as distress, anxiety, and long-lasting pains (Baer, 2003). However, recent researches began to explore the advantages of mindfulness at work, arguing that mindfulness might positively influence social communications, task performance and well-being (Glomb et al., 2012). According to these results, it seems that mindfulness is advantageous in the workplace. However, there is not enough evidence related to mindfulness in organizational settings (Dane & Brummel, 2014).

Mindfulness might prevent from emotional exhaustion in the workplace (Hülshleger et al., 2013). Based on these theories, mindfulness ought to develop one's aptitude to deal with the strains and tensions of a vibrant work context. Researchers have a persuasive argument regarding mindfulness and consider it as a normal individual aptitude (Brown, Ryan, et al., 2011; Dane, 2011; Glomb et al., 2011). Normal differences in mindfulness might be related to differences in inherent disposition and environmental effects (Davidson, 2010). The emphasis of most of the studies in this regard is on mindfulness as trait (Glomb et al., 2011). Those with an elevated capacity to be mindful (mindfulness as trait) or people who engage in meditation regularly tend to be more strongly and more frequently mindful. However, even for these people there are days and states when they are doing their tasks without being attentive to the current moment (e.g., Siegel, 2010, p. 28). When someone is attentive and mindful also non-judgmental in the moment he/she tends to be reactive to events more gently and avoids attributing an evaluation of them. This inhibits biases and negative judgments which might cause negative evaluation of the situation. In

organizations and work settings as there are lots of demands and challenges, mindfulness might help individuals to cope with tensions and stressful conditions (Reb, Narayanan, & Ho, 2015), also mindfulness might have a negative effect on emotional exhaustion. Adapting with demands and struggles in the workplace may lead to depletion of emotional and cognitive resources (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998), and bring about emotional exhaustion in a long time. However, mindfulness enhances self-regulation (Brown & Ryan, 2003), and conserves strength and vigor (Ryan & Deci, 2008; Allen & Kiburz, 2012).

## **2.4 Mindfulness in the organizational contexts**

The studies regarding on mindfulness in psychology area and medical sciences has been established well. However, mindfulness has not been studied well in organizational settings and it's in infancy status among scholars in this area of research. Though, there are reasons to change this. Firstly, empirical study in support of mindfulness programs are flourishing (e.g., Brown & Ryan, 2003; Shapiro, Brown, & Biegel, 2007). these studies are gradually entering to organizational research. Secondly, attention has been identified as a critical element in organizations; also mindfulness suggests a novel outlook on the attention aspect (Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2012 cited by Reb and Choi, 2014). Mindfulness impacts anxiety through decreasing ruminative thoughts and mental amplification of negative feelings (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006). In spite of the few research regarding mindfulness Shapiro et al (2004) directed a study divided in three parts on MBSR's (mindfulness based stress reduction techniques to lessening burnout, mental distress, and rise mindfulness and attention in nurses. mindfulness in the work context as a cognitive state of alertness and awareness, which can promote employees growth in organizational research arena.

Current studies are extending the evaluation of mindfulness effect in the workplace and refer to its importance. Taylor & Millier (2016) have claimed about the mitigating effect of mindfulness on burnout. Reb et al (2015) also found the same result on the effect of mindfulness on EEX.

A higher level of mindfulness may alleviate how much individuals absorb the negative feelings and thoughts Bajaj et al (2016) and Daubenmier et al. (2014) also argued how mindfulness moderates the effect of undesirable feelings on psychological health.

## **2.5 Resilience**

Psychological resilience is a component of positive psychological capital. Psychological capital is a positive and developing state of a person which is categorized in four subtypes as; “self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resiliency” (Luthans and Youssef, 2004). Resilience originated from the “Latin verb resilire”, or “to leap back”, and in the English Oxford Dictionary is defined as “being able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions” (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006, p. 1498). There are several definitions of resilience. As an example Kong et al (2015) and Masten et al (2009), have defined resilience as the capability to cope with the risk and difficulties. Resilience is a coping process with long-lasting changes which exist among individuals in order not to lose balance in case of adversity and follow personal aims (Pipe et al, 2012). Everyone reacts to the environmental stressors and utilizes the personal assets in a different way; resilience is one of the resources which help individuals in this manner (Sauer, 2013). Resilience is strengthened by neural systems and neurobiological functions and is recognized as dynamically changes over different life stages (Russo et al., 2012; Herrman et al., 2011). Thus, although

resilience helps individuals adapt to the environment, mental resilience is also adapting itself over time (Donnon & Hammond, 2007). Wagnild, (2009) defined five types of resilience, comprising: meaningful life, persistence, calmness, self-reliance (autonomy), and existential loneliness. Based on Wagnild's (2009) model, Meaningful life is the awareness of a personal contribution to the life, and persistence implied to a person perseverance and persistency when they experience adversity in life, Calmness is a stable viewpoint of life. One has resilience once she/he has an aim in life and welcome challenges to achieve the goal and keep balance in life. Furthermore, self-reliance is the individuals' capacity to lean on her to achieve goals and awareness about her strength and weaknesses and use strengths to reach to success (Wagnild, 2011). Existential loneliness is the one ability to be content needless to others conformation (Wagnild, 2011). This aptitude is established through neuroplasticity which impacted by environmental factors (Kandel, Schwartz, Jessell, Siegelbaum, & Hudspeth, 2013). Masten and Reed (2002, p. 75) have defined resilience as "a class of phenomena characterized by patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity or risk." Avolio & Luthans, (2007) defined resilience as the ability to not just bouncing back from stressful events but also being positive to challenges to go beyond the balance points. Ryff and Singer (2003) claimed those who possess resilience are normally more competent to retain their somatic and mental health and are more able to improve faster from demanding events. During the previous decades, resilience concept developed through different field of researches in psychology, neurosciences, sociology and psychopathology (Hu et al., 2015). There are two perspectives regarding resilience definition. In one perspective resilience has been characterized as a trait which is stable and unchangeable. However, this point of view ignores the effect of environment which

surrounded individuals including family and society (Hu et al., 2015). Therefore, the second perspective considers resilience as a dynamic concept (Luthar et al., 2000). This viewpoint explains that resilience is a dynamic and unstable phenomenon which will change with intervention programs (Luthar et al., 2000).

## **2.6 Psychological distress and emotional exhaustion**

Psychological distress (PD) is broadly applied as a mental health index of public health for people; however, PD concept is still ambiguous to some. Looking more meticulously to the literature indicates that PD frequently have been applied to the identical mixtures of symptoms including depression and general anxiety to personality characters and communicative problems (Drapeau et al., 2012). Life conditions including strain, sleeping issues, alcohol abuse, physical attack, might affect psychological distress (PD). In the literature emotional distress and psychological distress have been used interchangeably (McKenzie and Harris, 2013).

Studies have shown that facing with distress in the work settings is intensely linked with adverse outcomes including life disasters, intention to quit the job, and low physiological health (Grandey and Cropanzano, 1999). In this negative condition some individuals may show negative and strong emotional reaction includes stress and distress (Taylor, 1991). A considerable number of staff is suffering from mental distress, a psychological health consequence characterized by psychophysiological such as depression, anxiety and stress also behavioural issues including tantrum and anger which are not detailed to improvise psychological pathology for them (Dohrenwend et al. 1980). In the longitudinal study by Marchand and Blanc (2011) including 5,500 staff in different institutions in Canada findings show that 46.4 % of the workers faced psychological distress through their work period at least one time,



23.5 % experienced it more than one time, and 10.6 % three times or more. Therefore, as conservation of resources (COR) theory proposes individuals struggle to maintain, defend, and create resources. However, resources are inadequate (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). Thus they may find it threatening when they realise a possible or significant loss of their resources. Undeniably, resource loss procedures might lead to depression and distress (Hobfoll, 1989).

Mental distress might lead to emotional exhaustion which is a main component of burnout (Giorgi et al., 2016). Burnout syndrome includes emotional exhaustion (EE), cynicism and a reduced feeling of accomplishment among individuals (Lee and Ashforth 1996). EE is a long-lasting state of somatic and emotive depletion that induced from extreme job or individual demands and constant stress (Wright and Cropanzano, 1998). It defines ones condition in a work that is mentally strained and exhausted. This condition has shown itself as somatic exhaustion and feeling of mentally and emotionally "drained" (Zohar, 1997). Majority of work in the emotional exhaustion field has been done by Maslach's and Jackson's Burnout model. They consider three interconnected parts for burnout including: "emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment" (Maslach and Leiter, 1997) in which Emotional exhaustion is the core of burnout dimension" (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Burnout concept including emotional exhaustion as a core component rooted from work by Maslach (1981). There are number of studies since then which tried to define the antecedents and consequences of employees' emotional exhaustion in the workplace (e.g. Rathi and Lee 2016; Rushton, 2015). Job stressors such as bullying and harassment are among the main factors which bring about emotional exhaustion (Sa and Fleming, 2008). The outcomes of EE can be devastating and counterproductive for the organization and

deteriorate employees' performance, intention to leave and subsequently damage hotel productivity.

## Chapter 3

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Two theories have been employed in this study to propose the theoretical background of the study variables and their interrelations. These theories are conservation of resources (COR) theory and Job demands-resource (JD-R) theory.

#### **3.1 Conservation of resources (COR) theory**

Conservation of resources theory which is proposed by Hobfoll, (1989) as a motivation theory is one of the most cited theory in the organizational behavior researches. The basic principle of COR is that human beings are enthused to keep their existing resources and attain new resources. Hobfoll (2001a) re-evaluated the theory over the years and concentrated on works out of organizations and fixated on evolving the basic psychological recommendations for the theory. Westman, Hobfoll, Chen, Davidson, and Lasky (2004) emphasized more on the utilization of COR to the literature. Moreover, there are quite a lot of meta-analytic evaluations of particular expectations built on COR (e.g., Halbesleben, 2006; Luchman & Gonzáles-Morales, 2013; Ng & Feldman, 2012). As mentioned earlier, COR theory is built upon principle which people are encouraged to keep their existing resources (conservation) and gain new ones (acquisition). Resources characterized as stuffs, conditions, and other valuable things for individuals (Hobfoll, 1988). Resources demonstrate different values among individuals and are related to the personal involvements and experiences. Some principles develop from COR (conservation of resources) theory. The first one is the importance of losing resources. This refers to

this fact that it is more hurtful for someone to lose resources (Cacioppo & Gardner, 1999; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). This principle recommends that losses might have more adverse impacts than gains. As an example, losing a salary might be more destructive than gaining the same payment (Vinokur & Schul, 2002; Wells, Hobfoll, & Lavin, 1997). In organizational behavior literature, resource loss applied to comprehend distress and strain (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Hobfoll, 2001a). Several studies have indicated losing resources at work for employees create strain and subsequently burnout (e.g. Shirom, 1989). The second principle of COR is resource savings. People save their resources to prevent from losing resources and to obtain resources (Hobfoll, 2001a). There is a difference between resource loss and resource threat. Hobfoll (1989) proposed that “threat and loss can both lead to strain and have motivating potential; however, the relative impact of those experiences is less well known” (Chen, Westman, & Eden, 2009; Halbesleben, Wheeler, & Paustian-Underdahl, 2013).

Another theory which has been utilized to define the relationship among variables is Job-demands resources theory.

### **3.2 Job demands-resources (JD-R) theory**

Job demands-resources (JD-R) theory (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007) has been also used as a part of the proposed model theoretical underpinning. A premise of JD-R model suggests that chronic job demands such as emotional demand or work overload drains employees’ physical and mental resources and may subsequently result in state of exhaustion (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Job demands resource model posits that stress is a response to an inequality between work-related demands and work resources (Broeck, Baillien, & Witte, 2011). Demands are social, physical

or institutional characteristics of the work context imposing unrelenting psychological and/or physical (cognitive and emotional) effort or skills and are therefore associated with certain psychological and/or physiological costs. On the other hand, job resources are the physiological, social, individual and organizational patterns that help employees to diminish job demands and their relevant outcomes. Greater rates of exhaustion indicate that employees have insufficient resources to effectively handle their job burdens, which leads to reduced job performance (Taris, 2006).

Our model shows the relationship between workplace bullying (WPB) and emotional exhaustion (EEX) mediated by psychological distress (PD) and resilience. We propose that mindfulness will moderate the WPB and EEX relationship and the WPB resilience relationship as shown in Figure 2. Those with high level of mindfulness may experience less exhaustion under bullying and also these individuals' resilience would drop less under bullying. According to the COR theory, individuals strive to keep their existing resources (conservation) and obtain new resources (acquisition). Resources are objects, conditions or other things which are valuable for people (Hobfoll, 1988). We posit based on this theory that, bullying as a stressor would result in psychological stress, which is an individual's response where one perceives threats to resources in a certain setting (Hobfoll, 2001). Under the framework of the COR theory (Hobfoll 1989), we refer to bullying as a mechanism draining staffs' psychological assets and influencing employees' feelings of higher levels of PD and EEX. In addition, we explore whether a personality characteristic (mindfulness) might moderate the relationship between bullying and EEX. Thus, we expect to generate an understanding of the role of bullying on individuals' EEX, and to further

extend the body of knowledge by assessing the role of other potential interplaying factors.

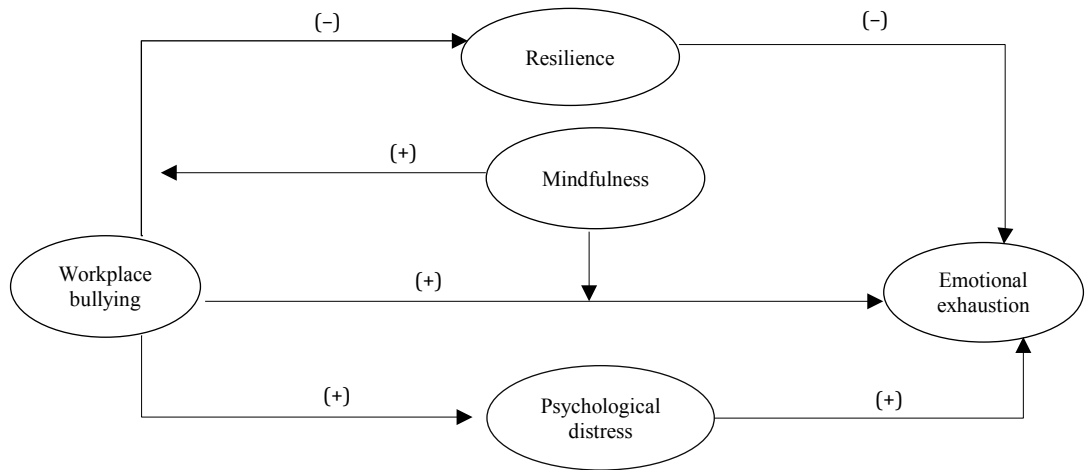


Figure 2: Conceptual model

## Chapter 4

### HYPOTHESES

This segment discusses the study hypotheses, in which ways the study variables linked and interrelate with respectively, and the process of hypotheses development.

#### **4.1 Workplace bullying, psychological distress, and emotional exhaustion**

Research is increasingly addressing exposure to WPB as a main basis of distress at work, related to subsequent health issues and well-being reduction for short and long periods (Attell, Brown, & Treiber, 2017; Lahelma et al., 2012; Finne, Knardahl, & Lau, 2011). WPB may be defined as an array of unremitting negative behaviors aimed at an individual or group, such as for instance making demeaning remarks, excluding or disregarding, undermining an employee's integrity, undervaluing his/her contribution, and diffusing spiteful rumors (Rossiter & Sochos 2018). High job demands are considered as risk factors for uncivil behaviors in the work context (Koon & Pun, 2018). Incivility and harassment have negative consequences in the workplace which subsequently yields to burnout, poor mental health and turnover intentions (Fida, Laschinger, & Leiter, 2018). Workplace harassment, which has analogous forms of hostile behaviors like bullying, exerts a positive influence on employee burnout (Jung & Yoon, 2018b). More specifically, the literature reveals the effect of WPB on negative psychological and emotional outcomes such as EEX, considered as a core component of burnout syndrome which also includes cynicism and personal efficacy (Giorgi et al., 2016; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

Several studies in healthcare organizations have linked WPB exposure to burnout (e.g. Livne & Goussinsky, 2018; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). In their meta-analysis, Nielsen & Einarsen (2012) argued that bullying impacts negative work-related health results (such as burnout) by triggering cognitive performances which in a long run deplete existing coping resources. Moreover, according to Berthelsen, Skogstad, Lau, & Einarsen (2011), bullying experience in a 1- year time was meaningfully linked to employment change and increased sick time after 1 year. Also, a study among 1179 nurses in Quebec demonstrated that WPB positively anticipated burnout, because of damage caused to staff autonomy (Trépanier, Fernet, & Austin, 2013). Also, another study among 107 Portuguese nurses indicated that bullied nurses reported remarkably elevated levels of burnout comprising of EEX and depersonalization (Sá & Fleming, 2008). Mathisen, Einarsen, & Mykletun's (2008) study shows that the incidence and possible outcomes of bullying in the restaurant sector were employee exhaustion and lack of efficacy at work. Tuckey & Neall's (2014) findings also revealed that bullying affected negatively all three components of burnout including accomplishment, emotional/physical exhaustion, and devaluation, mainly the emotional and physical exhaustion have been reported.

Recently, Samsudin, Isahak, & Rampal (2018) conducted a systematic review which revealed that bullying behaviors were related to individual outcome such as burnout, mental strain, and undesirable psychosomatic effects. Rossiter & Sochos (2018) found support for the effect of different forms of workplace bullying and burnout (and its individual three components emotional exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy). A study by Finne et al. (2011) with Norwegian employees shows a reversed connection between WPB and psychological health; i.e. WPB was a significant antecedent of PD. WPB has been identified as a critical stressor with



harmful long-standing health outcomes for those who experienced it (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Lahelma et al., 2012; Høgh et al., 2011; Kompier & Taris, 2011). To specify the association between WPB and PD, Einarsen & Nielsen (2015) conducted a longitudinal study among Norwegian employees. Their results revealed that being exposed to bullying predicted high levels of distress even after five years. This detrimental effect of bullying on mental health is also consistent with the studies by Giorgi et al. (2016), Giorgi, Leon-Perez, & Arenas (2015), Verkuil, Atasayi, & Molendijk (2015), and Asfaw, Chang, & Ray (2014). Samnani (2013) defined the relationship between WPB and mental health based on stress process theory to show how individuals influenced by WPB experience emotional and health damages. Bardakçı & Günüşen (2016) reported that employees who experienced bullying reported more emotional fatigue and PD. Furthermore, they have subsequently shown more psychosomatic signs. Also, a study by Dehue, Bolman, Vollink, & Pouwelse (2012) in the Netherlands found that employees who report bullying weekly have been struggling with more health issues, and report less well-being.

Arnsten, Raskind, Taylor, & Connor (2015) provided a neurobiological interpretation of the impairing effect of stress exposure on emotional responses. They stated that elevated release of catecholamine occurring during stressful situations harm the top-down prefrontal cortex cognitive functions – which include regulation of behaviour, thought and emotion, generation of the mental representations needed for flexible and goal-directed behaviour, including the ability to inhibit inappropriate impulses, regulation of attention, and insight about one's own and others' actions – and reinforce the amygdala's basic emotional reactions – which include the consolidation of traumatic memories and conditioned emotional responses (Arnsten et al., 2015).

Subsequently, employees who experience more WPB would show greater levels of PD (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012).

Research has also found that the relationship between bullying and psychological strain can also be retroactive and initiate a vicious circle. Specifically while most of empirical findings support that bullying is an antecedent of work-driven and psychological stress, Baillien, Griep, Vander Elst, & De Witte (2018), Spagnoli, Balducci, & Fraccaroli (2017), and Nielsen, Hetland, Matthiesen, & Einarsen (2012) found that stress-triggering factors such as organizational changes and work overload will likely diminish an employee's resources to cope with in such an environment, and therefore produce more strain and distress, which will subsequently initiate bullying behaviors and more exposure from the target. In other words, both WPB and strain reinforce the negative effect on each other. The longitudinal design of these studies made it possible to effectively ascertain the causal and retroactive effect of strain on WPB, especially like in Baillien et al.'s (2018). However due to the cross-sectional design of the current study, the authors considered the first stream of research mentioned earlier, i.e. WPB as an antecedent of PD. Accordingly, several empirical findings have supported the effect of WPB on both PD and EEX, the overwhelming majority of them in the healthcare sector. However its application to the hospitality sector has been neglected. Moreover, the effect of PD on EEX has been overlooked. Thus from the proposed theoretical underpinning and the extant literature, we propose that exposure to WPB as a job demand will result in higher EEX. More precisely, such exposure will have a psychological toll on the employee, which in turn will further predict even more emotional resources depletion.

**H1:** Workplace bullying positively influences emotional exhaustion.

**H2:** Psychological distress mediates the influence of workplace bullying on emotional exhaustion.

## **4.2 Workplace bullying, resilience and emotional exhaustion**

Resilience defines a person's resources, abilities and skills to adapt to stressful situations and adversity, and to overcome demanding situations (Chi et al., 2016; Maidaniuc-Chirila, 2015a). Two schools of thought emerge from the literature regarding the conceptualization of resilience (Atkinson, Martin, & Rankin, 2009; Jacelon, 1997), which they see either as a trait that is quite stable or as an ability which can be changed overtime depending on the context (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012, p. 675; 2013, p. 16). The first regards it as a personality trait advocating that resilience represents a constellation of characteristics that enable individuals to adapt to the circumstances they encounter (Connor & Davidson, 2003; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2007). The second school argues that resilience is the product of a dynamic process and changes over time in the context of adversity and person–environment interactions (Egeland, Carlson, & Sroufe, 1993; Rutter, 1985; Wright, Masten, & Narayan, 2013). A noxious occupational environment, characterized among others by high workload, nepotism, bullying for instance, has the potential to deplete an employee personal resources when the exposure is consistent and permanent. In this case, stressors such as workplace bullying would deplete one's coping abilities and resources, providing hence the present study's rationale of the consideration of resilience as a dynamic state of being which would be influenced by situational factors (Zhou et al., 2017).

Research has found that negative emotions were related to less resilience, while positive emotions were associated to greater resilience (Fredrickson, Tugade,

Waugh, & Larkin, 2003; Hu, Zhang, & Wang, 2015). Other studies have documented the negative association between negative life events and resilience (Liu et al., 2015) and positive influence of positive life events on resilience (Sarubin et al., 2015). Longitudinal studies corroborated that resilience was negatively predicted by afflictive circumstances such as bullying victimization (Lee, 2017) and perceived stigmatization (Chi et al., 2016). Further, empirical findings also indicated that resilience negatively predicts undesirable outcomes (Hu et al., 2015). For instance, Manzano García and Ayala Calvo (2012) reported in their study of 200 nurses that those with greater resilience demonstrated lower risk of EEX. Similar findings was found by Taku (2014) who reported that Midwestern U.S.-based physicians' resilience was negatively associated with EEX ( $r = -.24, p < .01$ ) and negatively predicted it accordingly ( $\beta = -.20, p < .01$ ) when controlled for age and marital status. These empirical evidences suggest that resilience works as a protective component against adversity, difficult time and stressors, and these deleterious factors contribute in depleting concurrent and later resilience resources with a considerable stability over time (Chi et al., 2016). In turn, resilience inhibits the likelihoods of developing symptoms of negative psychological state of being.

From the above literature, we postulate that stress arousing situations such as workplace bullying would undermine a hospitality employee resilience level, and a low level of resilience would consequently contribute to EEX. We draw on Schaufeli's (2017) extension of JD-R model to articulate that resilience as a personal resource will serve as a fundamental component of the "stress resistance armamentarium" that one will turn to in order to preserve the psychological or physical wellbeing (Hobfoll, 2002; van Woerkom, Bakker, & Nishii, 2016) in the event of WPB. In other words, we propose that WPB would exacerbate employee

EEX through the impairment of resilience. In this stream, the literature has indicated the mediating role of resilience in the relationship between stressful factors and undesirable outcomes. For instance, Loh, Schutte, & Thorsteinsson (2014) provided evidence of the partial mediating role of resilience in the relation between independent variables (such as positive affect and negative affect) and symptoms of depression. Zhou et al. (2017) found that the influence of bullying victimization on depression was partially mediated by resilience, while Maidaniuc-Chirila studies (2015a, b, c) disclosed that resilience mediated the effect of WPB on depressive symptoms and mental strain, and Hao et al. (2015) revealed that work stress prompted civil servant burnout through the effect of resilience. Sauer (2013) proposed but could not find support that hospital nurses' resilience would mediate the effect of bullying on their physical health. With the existence of such research streams and empirical findings elsewhere but in the hospitality industry, and the consequence that WPB and EEX can yield on staff and the organization performance, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**H3:** Resilience mediates the relationship between WPB and employee emotional exhaustion.

### **4.3 Moderating effect of mindfulness**

Although bullying as a stressor may affect individuals' resilience, mental and emotional health, its effects differ across people. Specifically, personality and idiosyncratic traits which are exclusively inherent to each person play a critical role in reaction to threats; this hence explains why and how people react differently to a given situation or adapt to a new one (Zhou et al., 2017). Thus, it is essential to discover some personality traits that may buffer the negative effect of bullying (Zhou et al., 2017). Mindfulness as one's conscious attention on the environment and present moment (Brown & Ryan, 2003) is an individual attribute that can influence the way in which individuals are affected by the negative environment.

Contemporary studies have explained the importance of mindfulness at the workplace. For instance, Taylor & Millear (2016) evidenced that mindfulness (a particular concentration to the present moment/situation with an acceptance attitude) is a novel individual attribute that mitigates burnout. Reb, Narayanan, & Ho (2015) found that mindfulness significantly decreases employees' EEX. Brown & Ryan (2003) and Lau et al (2006) emphasized that in the equal condition, some individuals are more mindful than others. Therefore, although WPB may cause distress and exhaustion, this may influence different individuals in different ways (Taylor & Millear, 2016).

A higher level of mindfulness may alleviate how much individuals absorb the negative feelings and thoughts (Bajaj, Gupta, & Pande, 2016). Furthermore, Daubenmier et al. (2014) argued that mindfulness moderates the undesirable consequence of negative issues on psychosomatic health. We believe that as a

positive individual trait, mindfulness has the potential to buffer the effect of WPB and subsequently inhibit the relevant negative consequences. On one hand and reinforce other existing positive traits like resilience on the other. In light of scanty empirical research regarding mindfulness within the workplace perspective (Dane & Brummel, 2014), this study examines mindfulness as regulating the effect of WPB on employee EEX. In addition, if mindfulness can increase other positive individual traits, we posit that it can moderate the indirect effect of resilience on the effect of WPB on EEX. That is, this indirect effect will differ across low and high level of mindfulness. Therefore, we hypothesize that;

**H4:** Mindfulness moderates the effect of WPB on emotional exhaustion.

**H5:** Mindfulness moderates the mediating effect of resilience in the relationship between WPB and employee emotional exhaustion.

## **Chapter 5**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This section defines the methodology, the sample and sampling method also measurements for each variable and explains the analysis procedure and result of the study.

#### **5.1 Sample and Procedure**

The present study consisted of full-time 4-and 5-star hotel employees including, security, housekeeping staff, bartenders, waiters and kitchen employees in North Cyprus. In this study judgmental sampling has been used to distribute 326 questionnaires. A total of 317 were collected and 252 of these were usable after discarding those with missing data. A descriptive analysis of the final sample shows that 50.4 % were female. Most of the respondents were aged 28 to 37 years old (46.4 %), and the majority was single (69 %). 44 and 43.3 % respectively completed at least secondary school or a bachelor degree, and 48 % had an organizational tenure of 3 to 6 years. Accordingly, table 1 indicates demographic variables and their frequency. Also, correlations, means and standard deviation of each variable have been illustrated in table 2.

The management of the aforementioned hotels had been contacted via email and informed about the purpose of the study to ask permission for data collection. Permission was granted to the research team to personally conduct data collection under the condition that the process should not disrupt the work flow. Then,



employees were approached on a voluntary basis, were meticulously ensured about the anonymity and confidentiality of the use of gathered data orally and through the cover letter enclosed to the main questionnaire. All items were initially written in English, then were translated into Turkish and again back translated into English with two academicians fluent in both languages (McGorry, 2000). Additionally, a pilot study of 10 full-time employees was conducted to check the face validity of the data.

Table 1: Demographic variables and frequency

Demographic Variables	Frequency	%
Age(Years)		
18-27	80	31.7
28-37	117	46.4
38-47	51	20.2
48-57	2	0.8
58-67	2	0.8
Total	252	100.0
Gender		
Male	125	49.6
Female	127	50.4
Total	252	100.0
Education		
Secondary School	24	9.5
Above Secondary School	111	44.0
Bachelor Degree	109	43.3
Graduate School	8	3.2
Total	252	100.0
Organizational Tenure		
2 or less	37	14.7
3-6	121	48.0
7-10	36	14.3
10 or more	58	23.0
Total	252	100.0
Marital status		
Married	78	31.0
Single	174	69.0
Total	252	100.0

Table 2: Means, Standard deviations and correlations among variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1-Gender	-									
2-Marital status	-0.29	-								
3-Educational level	-.033	.028	-							
4-Age	.087	.056	-.096	-						
5-Organizational tenure	.056	-.021	.067	.150*	-					
6-Bullying	.003	-	-.014	-.039	-.158*	-				
7-Psychological distress	.033	.20**	-.051	.071	.097	-.18**	.39**	-		
8-Resilience	-.064	.10	-.03	.00	.14*	-.41**	-.44**	-		
9-Mindfulness	-.061	-.05	-.03	.00	.04	.16**	-.30**	-.39**	-	
10-Emotional exhaustion	.00	.01	-.02	-.02	-.16*	.46**	.53**	-.55**	-.65**	-
Mean	1.50	1.69	2.40	1.92	2.46	2.71	2.7	3.0	3.7	2.9
SD	.50	.46	.70	.78	1.0	.84	.79	.91	1.3	1.0

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

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2-tailed).

## **5.2 Measures**

The scales used to operationalize the constructs were all retrieved from existing literature. The 22-item Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R) (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009) was used to measure WPB. 10-item mental health scale of the Hopkins Symptoms from Finne et al. (2011) was used to measure employee PD. To measure employee resilience six items from Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio (2007) were utilized. Mindfulness was measured using 15 items adopted from Brown et al. (2003). Eight items adopted from Maslach & Jackson (1981) were used to operationalize emotional exhaustion. WPB, PD, and EEX measurements were anchored on 5-Point Likert-type scales, whereas resilience and mindfulness were anchored on 6-point scales.

## **5.3 Data analysis**

Prior to any analysis, Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk test significant results gave evidence of non-normality of our data (Pallant, 2013). Under this condition and for relatively small to medium sample size (ours is  $n = 252$ ), the use of non-parametric methods is recommended (Chin, 2010; Ho, 2014). Thus, we used partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) for the analyses. Henseler, Hubona, & Ray (2016) described PLS as a full-fledged SEM method that can handle both factor models and composite models for construct measurement, estimate recursive and non-recursive structural models, and conduct tests of model fit. Thus, it has gained popularity in management and behavioral research (Henseler et al., 2016; Nadiri & Tanova, 2016). SmartPLS 3 (Ringle, Wende & Becker, 2015) was used to assess the psychometric properties of the measurement model and to test the structural model using a two-step a

pproach (Chin, 2010). In the first step, we assess the measurement model reliability, convergent and discriminant validity to establish the appropriateness of the measures. In the second step, we evaluated the causal relationships proposed in the theoretical model in accordance with our data.

## 5.4 Results

### 5.4.1 Measurement model analysis

Consistent with previous literature recommendations on PLS analysis (Henseler et al., 2016; Lowry & Gaskin, 2014), we assessed the measurement model by evaluating the reliability and internal consistency, convergent and discriminant validity of the reflective constructs through a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). First, this study evaluated reliability and internal consistency with three elements: Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and  $\rho_A$ . These are all presented in Table 1, and descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations in Table 2. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were all consistently high, ranging from .90 to .97, and thus above the recommended threshold of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). In addition, the composite reliabilities above the minimum of .70 (Sarstedt et al., 2014) and ranged between .90 and .97. Moreover, recent advances consider the Dijkstra–Henseler's  $\rho_A$  ( $\rho_A$ ) coefficient as the most important reliability measure for PLS constructs because it is currently the most consistent form of reliability estimation (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015a). All the constructs'  $\rho_A$  scores were above the threshold of .70. In all, these coefficients met the minimum requirements and therefore provided sufficient evidence for the constructs reliability.

Table 3: Confirmatory analysis results

Construct	Item	Factor loading	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability	Cronbach's $\alpha$	rho_A
Workplace bullying	WPB1	-	.56	.95	.95	.95
	WPB2	0.850				
	WPB3	0.778				
	WPB4	0.613				
	WPB5	-				
	WPB6	0.959				
	WPB7	0.683				
	WPB8	-				
	WPB9	-				
	WPB10	1.002				
	WPB11	0.775				
	WPB12	0.680				
	WPB13	0.704				
	WPB14	0.773				

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	WPB15	0.794				
	WPB16	0.611				
	WPB17	0.640				
	WPB18	0.653				
	WPB19	0.735				
	WPB20	0.644				
	WPB21	-				
	WPB22	-				
Emotional exhaustion	EEX1	0.767	.66	.94	.94	.94
	EEX2	0.848				
	EEX3	0.834				
	EEX4	0.898				
	EEX5	0.854				
	EEX6	0.822				
	EEX7	0.756				
	EEX8	0.716				
Mindfulness	MFL1	0.905	.74	.98	.97	.98

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MFL2	0.912
MFL3	0.918
MFL4	0.796
MFL5	0.847
MFL6	0.752
MFL7	0.766
MFL8	0.850
MFL9	0.884
MFL10	0.855
MFL12	0.896
MFL12	0.825
MFL13	0.856
MFL14	0.942
MFL15	0.885

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Confirmatory analysis results (Cont'd)

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Construct	Item	Factor loading	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability	Cronbach's $\alpha$	rho_A
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Psychological						
distress	PDIS1	-	.52	.90	.90	.91
	PDIS2	0.808				
	PDIS3	0.615				
	PDIS4	0.781				
	PDIS5	0.654				
	PDIS6	0.766				
	PDIS7	0.657				
	PDIS8	0.688				
	PDIS9	0.796				
	PDIS10	0.677				
Resilience	RES1	-	.67	.91	.91	.91
	RES2	0.751				
	RES3	0.780				
	RES4	0.775				
	RES5	0.852				
	RES6	0.923				

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The convergent validity was assessed with the value of factor loadings (FLs) and average variance extracted (AVE). The outcome of the Consistent PLS algorithm (Dijkstra, 2014; Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015a, b) and bootstrapping runs disclosed that FLs ranged from .61 to 1.00. Items with loading less than .50 were dropped as recommended by previous literature (Hair et al., 2006; Bagozzi, Yi, & Philipps, 1991). All the AVEs were between .52 and .74 and hence, exceeded the threshold criterion of .50 (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016).

We checked discriminant validity using three criteria: the Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion, cross-loadings (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012), and the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). The Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion suggests that in statistical terms, discriminant validity is established if the square root of a construct's AVE is greater than its correlations with other constructs in the model. The results showed that the standard was met for this criterion (Table 2). Second, all items consistently loaded into their respective construct as suggested by Hair et al., 2012. Lastly, the HTMT ratio was proposed more suitable than the Fornell–Larcker criterion for testing discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). Latan, Jabbour, & de Souza Jabbour (2017) specified that the performance of this approach is reliable and overcome bias in the estimation of parameters of the structure model. All the values of HTMT were smaller than .90 (Henseler et al., 2015) as shown in table 2, suggesting that the requirements from this criterion were satisfied. In all, all these criteria provided sufficient evidence of discriminant validity.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics, correlations and HTMT ratio

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. WPB	2.80	.90	<b>0.752</b>	<i>0.437</i>	<i>0.477</i>	<i>0.332</i>	<i>0.518</i>
2. PDIS	2.79	.82	.448	<b>0.719</b>	<i>0.507</i>	<i>0.420</i>	<i>0.577</i>
3. RES	3.06	.92	-.486	-.511	<b>0.819</b>	<i>0.691</i>	<i>0.603</i>
4. MFL	3.79	1.37	-.341	-.428	.694	<b>0.861</b>	<i>0.685</i>
5. EEX	2.95	1.08	.526	.584	-.606	-.689	<b>0.814</b>

Note: diagonal values in bold are square root of the AVEs; above the diagonal in italics are the HTMT ratio; M – mean, SD = standard deviation, WPB = workplace bullying, PDIS = psychological distress; RES = resilience, MFL = mindfulness, EEX = emotional exhaustion. All correlations are significant at  $p < .01$

The study addressed potential response bias by not requesting any sensitive or personal information from participants that could make them feel identified. To address the issue of common method bias (CMB), we complemented a procedural and a statistical remedy as recommended by MacKenzie & Podsakoff (2012) and Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff (2003). First, participants were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality in the use of their responses. Some scholars (Fuller et al., 2016; Podsakoff et al., 2003) criticized the Harman’s test for being inconsistent in providing accurate conclusion and lacking sensitivity in detecting common method variance in data. In this respect Kock and colleague (Kock, 2015; Kock & Lynn, 2012) proposed a full collinearity test for PLS-SEM as a comprehensive procedure whereby, the variance inflation factors (VIFs) of all the model’s latent constructs are generated. Collinearity (or multicollinearity) is traditionally conceptualized as a (predictor-predictor) phenomenon wherein two or more predictors measure the same underlying – or a facet of such – construct, which Kock and colleague referred to ‘vertical’ collinearity (Kock, 2015; Kock & Lynn, 2012). Another and less assessed form of collinearity that could distort multivariate analyses

results generally and PLS-SEM's in particular, is the 'lateral' collinearity (Kock, 2015; Kock & Gaskins, 2014; Kock & Lynn, 2012) and rather refers to a predictor-criterion phenomenon involving at least one predictor and a criterion variable. The effect of lateral collinearity may stem from social desirability and/or consistency tendencies, and unwillingness to disclose sensitive information (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012) when predictor(s) and criterion variables are collected from the same source. In such case, a coefficient of association between predictor and criterion variables would likely be spuriously strong and statistically significant, and prompting misleading conclusions. Thus, Kock and colleague suggested assessing such collinearity by generating VIFs for all the model's latent variables; an occurrence of a VIF exceeding a 3.3 threshold would indicate a pathological collinearity and hence, that the model may be "*contaminated by common method bias*" (Kock, 2015, p.7). In this study, all VIFs were below the suggested edge, thus suggesting that CMB may not be threat to the proposed model. Previous empirical research (e.g. Jung & Yoon, 2018b) provided similar method of assessment of potential threat of common method bias.

## 5.5 Structural model

The assessment of the structural model and hypotheses testing was undertaken using the Consistent Partial Least Square (PLSc) algorithm to find the beta coefficients for direct paths, effect size of the exogenous constructs, and the coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ). To get the t-statistics and the related p-value, we performed a 95% confidence interval (CI) bias corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrap with 5,000 resamples (Nitzl, Roldan, & Cepeda, 2016). The predictive relevance was also estimated with the cross-validated redundancy index ( $Q^2$ ). As exhibited in Table 3, the  $R^2$  of RES, PDIS and EEX were respectively 0.240, .201 and 0.504. The effect size ( $f^2$ ) of WPB on EEX was small (0.069), medium on PDIS (0.252), and relatively strong on RES (0.316). PDIS and RES had medium size effect on EEX (0.139 and 0.15 respectively). Furthermore, the model had a predictive relevance since all  $Q$  values exceeded 0 (Chin, 2010).

Table 5: Structured model results

Constructs	$R^2$	Adj. $R^2$	$f^2$	$Q^2$	VIF
WPB	-	-	0.069-0.316	-	1.416
PDIS	0.201	0.198	0.139	0.093	1.450
RES	0.240	0.237	0.150	0.145	1.523
EEX	0.504	0.498	-	0.301	-

A recent advanced procedure for testing mediation effect has been outlined by Nitzl and colleagues (Nitzl et al., 2016; Cepeda, Nitzl & Roldán, 2018) in line with some scholars' (Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010) proposed alternatives and guidelines for testing a mediation effect in PLS, following growing challenges and criticism of the Baron and Kenny's (1986). Precisely, the procedure

consists of two steps: (1) determining the significance of the indirect effect and its magnitude, and (2) determining the type of effect and/or mediation. Since our model includes two mediators, a further step consists of (3) comparing the different mediating effects.

## **5.6 Direct and indirect effects**

Hypothesis 1 proposes that WPB positively affects EEX. Results show that WPB significantly predicts EEX ( $\beta = 0.219$ ,  $t = 3.56$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), thus providing sufficient evidence to support H1. Hypothesis 2 and 3 respectively propose that PDIS and RES mediate the relationship between WPB and EEX. The results exhibited in Table 4 show that the estimate of the indirect path WPB  $\rightarrow$  PDIS  $\rightarrow$  EEX (M1) is statistically significant since the values of the 95% CI do not contain zero (M1 = 0.142,  $t = 3.680$ ). Similarly, the indirect path WPB  $\rightarrow$  RES  $\rightarrow$  EEX (M2) was also found statistically significant (M2 = 0.165,  $t = 4.29$ ). Next, we assessed the type of mediation by checking the coefficient of the path WPB  $\rightarrow$  EEX when the two mediators are included in the model. Nitzl et al. (2016) posited that a non-significant direct path between the predictor and the criterion while the indirect path through the mediator(s) is significant suggests a full mediation; meanwhile a significant direct path under the same condition suggests a partial mediation. Since the path WPB  $\rightarrow$  EEX of our model is significant ( $\beta = 0.219$ ,  $t = 3.56$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), the results suggest that PDIS and RES partially mediate the relationship between WPB and EEX, thus provide support for Hypotheses 2 and 3.

Table 6: Direct and indirect effect summary

	<i>B</i>	T	Bootstrap 95% CI				
			Percentile		BCa		
<i>Direct Path</i>							
WPB → EEX	0.219***	3.569	0.097	0.339	0.100	0.340	
WPB → PDIS	0.449***	8.764	0.348	0.550	0.334	0.540	
WPB → RES	- 0.490***	9.203	- 0.593	- 0.386	- 0.582	- 0.374	
PDIS → EEX	0.316***	4.441	0.177	0.459	0.172	0.454	
RES → EEX	- 0.337***	5.266	- 0.458	- 0.207	- 0.461	- 0.212	
<i>Indirect effect</i>							
	Point estimate	T	Percentile		BCa		VAF
(M1) WPB → PDIS → EEX	0.142***	3.680	0.076	0.228	0.073	0.224	26.99%
(M2) WPB → RES → EEX	0.165***	4.298	0.098	0.245	0.099	0.246	31.37%
Total indirect effect	0.307***	7.688	0.238	0.394	0.232	0.387	58.36%

## **5.7 Type and magnitude of the mediation**

The direct path and the two indirect path estimates point at the same positive direction, meaning that we are in presence of two complementary partial mediations (Cepeda et al., 2018; Nitzl et al. 2016). The magnitude of each mediating effect was gauged through the variance accounted for (VAF) value. The VAF is the ratio of the indirect-to-total effect and determines the extent to which a mediator explains the variance in the criterion variable (Nitzl, 2016). The VAF of M1 and M2 were respectively 26.99 and 31.37% and their cumulative value amounted 58.36%, meaning that PDIS and RES within our model explained about more than 58 per cent of the variance in EEX. Hair et al. (2016) posited that a VAF between 20 and 80 per cent is determinant of a partial mediation, thus consolidating the consistency of the abovementioned results.

## **5.8 Comparison of the two mediation effects**

The proposed model includes two mediators. Therefore, to assess whether RES has a stronger mediating effect than PDIS, we tested for any statistical significant difference between the two mediating effects M1 and M2, consistent with the recommendations of Chin, Kim, & Lee (2013) and Rodríguez-Entrena, Schuberth, & Gelhard (2018). Table 5 shows that the CI contains the zero value. Thus, there was no sufficient evidence to posit that resilience has a stronger mediating effect than PD.



Table 7: Mediating effects difference

	<i>Diff.</i>	Bootstrap 95% CI			
		Percentile		BCa	
<i>Differential effect</i>					
M1 – M2	- 0.023	- 0.147	0.111	- 0.150	0.108

## 5.9 Moderation and moderated mediation

Hypotheses 4 and 5 respectively proposed that mindfulness moderates the effect of WPB on EEX, and the mediating effect of resilience on the relationship between WPB and EEX. To test moderation and moderated mediation hypotheses, Lowry & Gaskin (2014, Appendix 2, pp. 8-9) proposed an illustrative example using a between group comparison analysis, to overcome the existence of “not well designed” PLS analyses tools to handle modeling needs such as moderation or *moderated mediation* [emphasis added]. They provided the following steps: first rive the data into two datasets according to the values of the moderator (in this case ‘low’ and ‘high’ mindfulness). Second, after loading those into the program, run a bootstrap analysis for both datasets using the identical model. Third, calculate the *t*-statistic for the difference between the effects (direct effect for moderation and total effect of a mediation model for moderated mediation) using Chin’s (2000) formula (figure 3), which requires each group’s sample size, regression weights, and the tested path standard errors (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014, p. 8). A significant difference would indicate either a moderating or a moderated mediating effect of the moderator on the tested path.

$$t = \frac{Path_{sample\_1} - Path_{sample\_2}}{\left[ \sqrt{\frac{(m-1)^2}{(m+n-2)} * S.E.^2_{sample1} + \frac{(n-1)^2}{(m+n-2)} * S.E.^2_{sample2}} \right] * \left[ \sqrt{\frac{1}{m} + \frac{1}{n}} \right]}$$

Figure 3: Chin's (2000) formula for effects difference estimation

Table 8 shows results between low and high mindfulness groups' comparisons. First, the difference between low and high mindfulness groups was not statistically significant ( $t = 0.767, p = 0.444$ ), meaning that the effect of WPB on EEX for low mindfulness participants does not significantly differ from those with greater mindfulness. Therefore, H4 was not supported. Second, a similar lack of support was found for our expectation that the two groups differ with respect to the effect of WPB on EEX via resilience. The difference was not statistically significant ( $t = 1.607, p = 0.109$ ), thus H5 was not supported either.

Table 8: Moderation and moderated mediation summary

	Direct effects				Indirect effect	
	WPB → EEX		WPB → RES		WPB → RES → EEX	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Sample size	126	126	126	126	126	126
Regression weight	0.286	0.193	-0.295	-0.463	0.291	0.430
Standard error (S.E.)	0.083	0.089	0.09	0.082	.068	0.054
T	0.767		1.385		1.607	
<i>Sig.</i>	0.444		0.167		.109	

Sig. at  $p < .05$  (two-tailed)

## 5.10 Goodness of Fit (GoF)

In contrast to covariance-based SEM, PLS path modeling fails to naturally generate global Goodness of Fit (GoF) measures, and  $R^2$  value is usually deemed to be the essential factor in assessing the model explanatory power (Hair, Matthews, Matthews, & Sarstedt, 2017; Henseler et al., 2016; Tenenhaus Vinzi, Chatelin, & Lauro, 2005). Against this shortcoming, this study used the Tenenhaus et al.'s (2005) proposed diagnosis tool referred as the Goodness of Fit (GoF) index that evaluates model fit for PLS-SEM. It is measured by using the geometric mean of the average commonality (AVEs) and the average  $R^2$  (of endogenous constructs). Further, Wetzels, Odekerken-Schröder, & Van Oppen (2009) proposed the following cut off values for assessing the result of GoF:  $GoF_{small} = 0.1$ ,  $GoF_{medium} = 0.25$  and  $GoF_{large} = 0.36$ . Henseler et al. (2016) affirmed that a good model indicates a plausible and parsimonious model. In the light of these guidelines, and consistent with previous empirical studies applying this method of model fit evaluation for PLS-SEM (e.g. Farooq et al., 2018; Farooq & Radovic-Markovic, 2016; Hsu et al., 2015), we computed the GoF index of the current study model (Table 7) which yielded a value of 0.445, well beyond the  $GoF_{large} = 0.36$ ; this indicate hence that our model has a relatively good fit to the empirical data.

Table 9: Goodness of Fit (GoF) index calculation

Constructs	AVE	R <sup>2</sup>
Workplace bullying	0.56	
Mindfulness	0.74	
Psychological distress	0.52	0.201
Resilience	0.67	0.240
Emotional exhaustion	0.66	0.504
Average score	0.63	0.315
AVE*R2	0.128	
<b>GoF = <math>\sqrt{AVE + R^2}</math></b>	<b>0.445</b>	

### 5.11 Post Hoc analyses

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was conducted to assess the effect of low, medium and high level of WPB on EEX. The results suggested a significant difference among the three groups:  $F(2, 233) = 42.80, p < .001$ . Specifically, low WPB was associated with significantly lesser EEX ( $M = 2.42, SD = .97$ ) than other groups as we could expected. However, medium WPB was associated with greater level of EEX ( $M = 3.68, SD = .75$ ) than high WPB ( $M = 3.47, SD = .97$ ). Further, a scatterplot (Figure 4) confirmed the existence of a curvilinear relationship between WPB and EEX. The curve's vertex (turning point) coordinates were calculated at the point (3.80, 3.58). It portrayed that increasing WPB influenced greater EEX, with the latter reaching its highest value ( $y = 3.58$ ) when WPB equaled 3.80 on a 5-point scale. Beyond that point, any higher level of WPB would be associated with decreasing EEX.

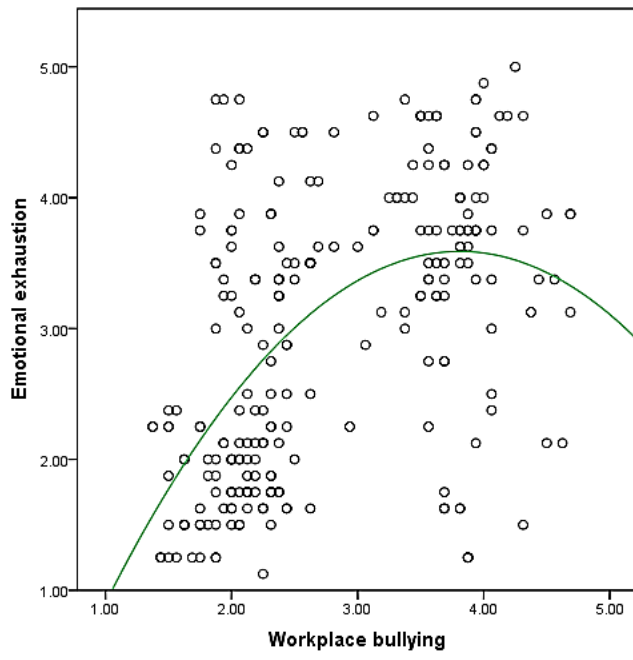


Figure 4: Scatterplot exhibiting a curvilinear relationship between WPB and EEX.

## **Chapter 6**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1 Discussion**

As hospitality industry is a highly competitive industry which hotel productivity and employee performance are totally concerns for administrators and managers. However, this competitive atmosphere in the hotel industry cause pressure and stress for managers and employees to deliver a highly qualified service and bring customer satisfaction to bring more revenues for the hotel. However, there seems that employee mental well-being has ignored by the superiors. The pressure in this industry causes violence and bullying in the workplace which directly and indirectly damages hotel productivity and performance through affecting employees emotional and physical well-being also causes distress and exhaustion.

This study proposed that workplace bullying positively affects employee emotional exhaustion, mediated by psychological distress and resilience. Further, the moderating effect of mindfulness on the direct effect of workplace bullying on emotional exhaustion and on its indirect effect via resilience was also investigated. The second corollary of the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001) suggests that those experiencing fewer resources are more vulnerable to resource loss and therefore makes it difficult for them to invest in future resources. In line with this corollary, we considered workplace bullying as a stressor that triggers one's gradual increase of

distress and found that it affects an employee emotional exhaustion which is a core element of burnout. This result is consistent with previous literature findings (e.g. Tuckey & Neall, 2014). Also, based on JD-R (job demands-resource theory) our study suggest that bullying as a demand and job stressor deplete one psychological resources and bring about psychological distress also affect negatively resilience which lead to emotional and physical exhaustion.

Furthermore, from this same perspective, we also found that psychological distress partially mediated the effect of workplace bullying on emotional exhaustion. Specifically, workplace bullying predicted psychological distress significantly, which in turn positively influenced emotional exhaustion. According to the conservation tenet of the COR theory, our findings suggest that an employee experiencing bullying at work will suffer from psychological integrity threats that will cause psychological distress. Subsequently, the loss or decline of psychological integrity predicts the erosion of more resources, in the present case the employee emotional exhaustion. Though our empirical findings suggesting workplace bullying as antecedent of psychological distress had found support in the extant literature (e.g. Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015 and Giorgi et al., 2016), a limited number of studies had considered psychological distress as a mediating variable between bullying and negative psychological outcomes. This paper proposed and tested the indirect effect of workplace bullying on emotional exhaustion via psychological distress, under the lenses the tenets and corollaries of the COR theory. From the empirical evidence, an individual that endures emotional exhaustion initially suffer a great deal of psychological distress when s/he is under a situation of bullying at work.



In addition, we proposed that individual resilience will mediate the workplace bullying–emotional exhaustion relationship. COR theory also suggests that as the loss of resources is more salient than the gain, one will engage in a defensive attempt to preserve the remaining resources by investing or using the available one(s) when experiencing lack of resource. As a component of psychological capital, resilience represents personal resource that enables someone to cope against situations of jeopardy. In a nutshell, this study examined and found that the level to which emotional exhaustion results from workplace bullying depends also on one’s coping ability. We found that workplace bullying had a negative impact on resilience which in turn contributed to deplete emotional exhaustion. The outcome of this paper is partly consistent with a recent empirical study by Zhou et al. (2017) which demonstrated that bullying in any form negatively predicts resilience that later affects depression. We further proposed in this extension, emotional exhaustion which is an antecedent (within burnout) to depressive symptoms (Bianchi, Schonfeld, & Laurent, 2015).

However, the hypothesized moderating effects of mindfulness on the relationship workplace bullying–emotional exhaustion and on the relevant indirect effect via resilience failed to get sufficient empirical support. Specifically, mindfulness did not significantly regulate the effect that bullying has on employees’ emotional exhaustion and resilience. Furthermore, there was no mediation found in both high and low mindfulness groups, which explain the empirical statistical insignificance of the moderating effect of mindfulness. These findings did not corroborate Zhou et al.’s (2017) study which found that mindfulness moderates the indirect effect of bullying victimization on depression via resilience. Their sample consisted of 3<sup>rd</sup> to

6<sup>th</sup> grade primary school students and we believe that mindfulness may play an even more salient role on children than on adults in this particular perspective. The neuroscience and developmental psychology literature provides a plausible explanation to these contrasting results. First, as opposed to adults, children brain networks fundamental to self-regulation undergo significant maturation (including neuronal myelination of longer range neural connections and synaptic trimming of impotent local neural connection), which subjects children to an imbalance between the early developed bottom-up self-regulatory processes – unconscious, non-volitional processes which are driven by the salient behaviourally relevant properties of stimuli – and the top-down self-regulatory processes occurring later due to the prefrontal cortex protracted development. Kaunhoven, & Dorjee, 2017; Qin et al., 2012). The “bottom-up” emotional reactivity in this case is more prominent than the “top-down” attention and cognitive control.

Arnsten, Raskind, Taylor, & Connor (2015) provided a neurobiological interpretation of the impairing effect of stress exposure on emotional responses. They stated that elevated release of catecholamine occurring during stressful situations harm the top-down prefrontal cortex cognitive functions – which include regulation of behavior, thought and emotion, generation of the mental representations needed for flexible and goal-directed behavior, including the ability to inhibit inappropriate impulses, regulation of attention, and insight about one's own and others' actions – and reinforce the amygdala's basic emotional reactions – which include the consolidation of traumatic memories and conditioned emotional responses (Arnsten et al., 2015). Subsequently, employees who experience more WPB would show greater levels of PD (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012).

In other words, although mindfulness is a personal trait that may contribute to inhibit the negative effects of stressors, it seems in our specific case that it does not play such a salient role.

## **6.2 Theoretical implications**

Within the hospitality industry, studies on the consequence of workplace bullying are scarce (e.g. Bentley et al., 2012; Bohle et al., 2017), and bullying as an antecedent of burnout has not received adequate research attention, with the vast majority of related research conducted in the healthcare, education or sports settings (e.g. Allen et al., 2015; Yildiz, 2015). In particular, the literature was limited to the effect of workplace bullying on psychological distress (Bardakçı & Günüşen, 2016) but overlooked other cognitive mechanisms occurring in presence of workplace bullying that lead to negative psychological outcomes.

The current study contributes to the body of knowledge in several ways. First it proposed and tested the effect of workplace bullying on 4- and 5-star hotels' full-time employees' emotional exhaustion, which to date has received little attention from tourism and hospitality management researchers, although this issue constitutes a serious problem in the service industry (Bohle et al., 2017). Specifically, the consequence of workplace bullying on psychological health factors such as emotional exhaustion has been extensively studied in the healthcare or social work settings, but disregarded in the hospitality industry, which has high prevalence of workplace bullying due to the high-paced and high-stress working environment/culture (Baillien, De Cuyper, & De Witte, 2011; Mathisen et al., 2008; Samnani & Singh, 2012). In the hospitality industry, focus was driven mostly on job attitudes and behaviors as outcomes of workplace bullying (e.g. Bentley et al., 2012;

Bohle et al., 2017; Jung & Yoon, 2018a). Thus drawing on JD-R model and consistent with the extant empirical findings, this study demonstrated that workplace bullying, a job demand such as intensive workload, emotional demands (van Woerkom et al., 2016), interpersonal conflicts, harassment, and work-family conflict (Bande, Jaramillo, Fernández-Ferrín, & Varela, 2019; Huang, Wang, & You, 2016; Schaufeli, 2017) represents a viable source of psychological impairment which causes emotional exhaustion. The outcome of the tested effect is equally in line with previous research conducted emphatically in healthcare industry (e.g. Giorgi et al., 2016; Rossiter & Sochos, 2018; Samsudin et al., 2018). Our study henceforth validates these findings in the hospitality industry, which shares analogous characteristics with the healthcare such as the demands of the work environment and the requirement of top quality service performance (Baillien et al., 2011; Samsudin et al., 2018).

Second, *post hoc* analyses' results suggested a curvilinear relationship between workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion, such that the first positively predicted the second to a certain point beyond which the relationship became negative. These results confirm that as the conditions of workplace bullying gradually escalate, they will proportionally numb the victim to the prolonged undergone emotional exhaustion (Maslach, 1982). This could perhaps highlight the transitional phase between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, following Leiter and Maslach's (1988) burnout model. Depersonalization arises when "*the armor of detachment is so thick that no feeling gets through*" (Maslach, 1982, p. 3), and symptoms such as detachment, indifference, hostility, and carelessness about other (Garden, 1987) become relatively manifest. Thus, the curvilinearity between workplace bullying and

emotional exhaustion suggest the effects of workplace bullying are not indefinite or linearly consistent. In other words, they will thrive well until a substantial coping strategy (avoidance or confrontation) is enacted. In this case, employee personality traits would likely play a salient role in the temporal effects of bullying, specifically how it is being coped with (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). Individual difference would then account for the ability to handle the strain, such that positive idiosyncratic and social resources would inhibit the impact of bullying. This falls within the framework of the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018) and corroborates with studies providing evidence of the effect of personality traits in relation with occupational source of stress, coping and subsequent emotional outcome (Alarcon et al., 2009; Segerstrom & Smith, 2018; van den Tooren & Rutte, 2016).

Third, this paper advances the JD-R model literature by addressing Nielsen & Einarsen's (2012) concerns. They noted that limited studies investigated the intrinsic mechanisms explaining the how and when bullying and its outcomes are related and urged for theoretical explanations and empirical assessment of mediating and moderating variables that may explain the effect of bullying. Thus, we tested a model examining the mediating roles of psychological distress and resilience in the relationship between workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion. An extension of the JD-R model includes personal resources (Schaufeli, 2017) which Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli (2009) defined as "*positive self-evaluations that are linked to resiliency and refer to individuals' sense of their ability to control and impact upon their environment successfully*" (p. 236). Our study in this sense extends Xanthopoulou and colleagues' array of personal resources (optimism, self-

efficacy and self-esteem) by modelling resilience as such, because it is an individual capacity that is malleable and develops over time in the context of person–environment interactions (Egeland et al., 1993; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Resilience will serve as a fundamental component of the “stress resistance armamentarium” that one will turn to in order to preserve the psychological or physical wellbeing (Hobfoll, 2002; van Woerkom et al., 2016). As a personal resource then, resilience can significantly frame coping abilities in presence of workplace stressors and consistently mitigate the negative resource loss spiral that workplace bullying initiates.

On the other hand, psychological distress constitutes a prominent pathway to one’s psychological health depletion in this sense that not only it represents a resource loss *per se* according to the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), it also provides substantial and theoretical explanation for further resource losses, should they be psychological or somatic. The magnitude of emotional exhaustion endured by an individual also accounts for a state of undergone distress. Thus, to effectively exhaust one emotionally, the effects of workplace bullying first instill a degradative psychological state as previous studies in healthcare and education argue (Bardakçı & Günüşen, 2016; Cénat et al., 2014; Nielsen et al., 2012; Quine, 2003; Schneider, O'donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2012). Psychological distress will enhance the deleterious effect on workplace bullying on the emotional balance of an employee.

This study also expected mindfulness to buffer the negative role of workplace bullying on emotional exhaustion so that those with a higher level of mindfulness would be less emotionally exhausted than those with lower mindfulness. Further, it

also expected mindfulness to moderate this effect via resilience. Neither the former nor the latter found sufficient ground from our empirical outcomes. The Leiter and Maslach's (1988) burnout model may provide a plausible explanation to this. In this model, emotional exhaustion is the premise and the first stage of a sequence of other symptoms. Specifically, emotional exhaustion is the response to job related stressors and thus predicts depersonalization which further diminishes personal accomplishment (Leiter & Maslach, 1988; Lu & Gursoy, 2016). In this respect, although emotional exhaustion constitutes a major and prime step of burnout, it is rather a starting point of the actual manifestations and may therefore not account for the effect of all the three symptoms combined. Perhaps the mitigating effect of mindfulness in this respect is minor or insignificant at the early stage of burnout as emotional exhaustion is concerned because the latter may still be appropriately handled. Mindfulness seems to be much effective in situation of intensely negative and precarious psychological or mental health. For example, it significantly moderated the effect of bullying victimization on depression via resilience in Zhou et al.'s (2017) study with pupils. Depression, like burnout, is a second order factor and includes negative attitudes, performance difficulty and depressive mood (Leiter & Durup, 1994). It thus seems mindfulness may be more operant for more complete constructs of mental health than it is for partial or sub-constructs.

### **6.3 Implications for practice**

The current study highlights the significance of personal resources in mitigating WPB in the organizations, and indicates that psychological resources like resilience play key roles in confronting and dealing with demands/stressors such as bullying. Thus, HR experts need to employ intervening strategies to face with the critical phenomenon of bullying. It is undeniable that bullying exists in almost all

organizations. While it seems almost impossible to completely eradicate it from the workplace, preventive strategies and policies need to be formulated and implemented to tackle the occurrence of bullying. To do so, practitioners first, need to define and clarify workplace bullying in the organizations to enlighten employees about its issues and subsequent results. Secondly, anti-bullying policies should be drafted, enacted and enforced in the organization such as bullying whistleblowing, in order to encourage potential and actual victims in freely and fearlessly reporting these practices, and embolden appropriate corrective actions towards perpetrators and contributors at any echelon of the organization.

Third, hotel industry top executives need to practically implement policies and organizational philosophies promoting healthy and friendly work environment that mitigates or annihilates abusive behaviors, and where employee can be confident in reporting any violence and bullying behaviors related problems in the workplace. The resource caravan passageways (Hobfoll et al., 2018) advocates that the organization plays a crucial part in setting the ecological conditions, in which personal resources exist, that foster or impede resources sustenance or creation.

In addition, in the case of ineffective implementation of preventive actions against bullying, managers and HR practitioners should invest in coping strategies training programs. In this respect, they should provide opportunities for their employees to enhance their personal resources through resilience training, to teach employees how to deal with stressful and demanding behaviors and situations at work. The hospitality setting is a stressful and demanding work environment in which violent behaviors are sometimes considered as normal treatments, Therefore, there is a need



to employ such training programs to equip employees with higher awareness of their mental resources and strengthen their reserves of psychological resources in order to hinder the effect of demanding work environment like in the hospitality industry.

At last, our study noted that increasing amount of workplace bullying predicted up to a certain point greater emotional exhaustion, and then beyond that the later would drop due to individual difference in enacting appropriate coping strategies. However though, and it is noteworthy, not all employees do manage high emotional demands and this could lead to darker thoughts; for instance Yoon, Jeung, & Chang (2016) found that high emotional demands and low job control related to suicidal ideation in sales and service workers, while Nielsen, Nielsen, Notelaers, & Einarsen (2015) disclosed that workplace bullying was a precursor of suicidal ideation of a sample of 1,846 Norwegian employees. More sinister events occurred with the actual suicide of nearly 90 employees of the French-based telecommunication firm *France Telecom* (renamed *Orange* since 2013) between 2008 and 2015, or the wave of suicide at the electronic components manufacturing corporation Foxconn in 2010 (Waters, 2017). *Postmortem* investigations from the published letters from deceased employees revealed that management harassment, work overload, military-style management, and extended working hours etc... were the cause of the sinister call (Waters, 2017). Thus, bearing in mind the prevalence of some of these factors in the hospitality industry, and the findings of the current study, it is of utmost importance for all relevant stakeholders in this industry to take preventive measures for these undesirable events not to occur again.

## **6.4 Study limitations and research avenues**

Numerous limitations of this study should be underscored. First, this study used self-report measures which may still produce common method variance, despite the procedural remedies and statistical test used in this study. Second, the cross-sectional design of our research does not illustrate the causality that can be prevalent in a lagged period between bullying and emotional exhaustion. Third, data were collected during winter period that led to lower number of participants. The winter season in a seasonal tourism economy like the scope of our research is usually less dynamic which forces hotels to staff down in order to control their costs. Fourth, the results of this study cannot be generalizable to the whole hospitality industry, as we placed our focus on an understudied research area of the literature and within the hotel sector considering only 4- and 5-star hotels. Finally, the tested model only proposed WPB as a single predictor of EEX through resilience and PDIS; it is noteworthy that considering the complexity and challenges characterizing the hospitality industry occupational environment, several other individual or organizational factors could also account for the variance in employee EEX and henceforth included in the model.

Several avenues for future research could stem from this study. First of all, forthcoming research interested in replicating this study may consider implementing a time-lag data collection, and preferably with a longitudinal research design. This can considerably reduce the common method variance and take into account the causal effect that time will play in this relationship. Second, we encourage scholars to focus on workplace bullying and mental health in the hospitality industry. Specifically, future research in this respect should be conducted in other

geographical areas, hotel types and accommodation facilities, and other hospitality sectors, to draw a more general consensus in the whole industry and significantly advance the literature. Third, we recommend extending this model by including the other symptoms of burnout to the existing emotional exhaustion to see whether in such case the mitigating role of mindfulness would be significant, and include other predicting variables to the current model. Also, an investigation of other mediating and moderating variables, or serial mediating variables will be of great contribution to the literature.

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## **APPENDIX**

## **Measurements**

**Dear sir/Madam**

In order to perform a research study to enhance our understanding about the factors that impact hotel employees job outcomes, we need to fill the questionnaire which takes about 15 minutes. Your responses to the questions will be kept confidential. For each participant we allocate code number to assure the employees about the confidentiality of the project. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Best regards

How often have you experienced the following in your workplace?

- Items:
1. Never
  2. Now and then
  3. Monthly
  4. Every week
  5. Daily

1- Someone withholding information, which affects your performance.

2- Humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your Work.

3- Ordered to work below competence

4- Having key areas of responsibilities removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks

5- Spreading of gossip and rumors about you

6- Being ignored or excluded

7- Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, attitudes, or private life

8- Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger

9-Intimidating behavior such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking/barring the way.

10- Hints from others that you should quit.

11- Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes.

12- Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach.

13- Persistent criticism of your work.

14-Having your opinions and views ignored.

15-Practical jokes carried out by people you do not get along with.

16-Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines.

17-Having allegations or accusations made against you.

18- Excessive monitoring of work.

19- Pressure not to use earned job benefits (e.g., sick leave, vacation time, travel expenses).

20-Being the subject of excessive teasing and Sarcasm.

21- Unmanageable workload.

22- Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse.

How frequently have you experienced the following?

Items: 1. Almost always

2. Frequently

3. Sometimes

4. Occasionally

5. Seldom

6. Almost never

1. I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until sometime later.

2. I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.

3. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.

4. I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.

5. I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.

6. I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time.

7. It seems I am “running on automatic” without much awareness of what I’m doing.
8. I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.
9. I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I am doing right now to get there.
10. I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I’m doing.
11. I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time.
12. I drive places on “automatic pilot” and then wonder why I went there.
13. I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.
14. I find myself doing things without paying attention.
15. I snack without being aware that I’m eating.

How frequently have you experienced the following?

- Items:
1. Almost always
  2. Frequently
  3. Sometimes
  4. Occasionally
  5. Seldom
  6. Almost never

1. When I have a setback at work, I have trouble recovering from it, moving on.(R) .
2. I usually manage difficulties one way or another at work.
3. I can be “on my own,” so to speak, at work if I have to.
4. I usually take stressful things at work in stride.
5. I can get through difficult times at work because I’ve experienced difficulty before.
6. I feel I can handle many things at a time at this job.

To what extent do you agree with these statements?

Items: 1. strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Fair

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

1-I feel emotionally drained from my work.

2-I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.

3-Working with people all day is really a strain for me.

4-I feel burned out from my work.

5-Working directly with people puts too much stress on me.

6-I feel frustrated with my job.

7-I feel used up at the end of the workday.

8-I feel like I am working too hard on my job.

9-I feel like I am at the end of my rope.

How often you experienced it during the previous week?

Items 1. Not at all

2. Most of the time

3. Some of the time

4. Occasionally

5. Extremely

1. Suddenly scared for no reason.

2. Feeling fearful.

3. Faintness, dizziness, or weakness.

4. Feeling tense or keyed up.

5. Blaming yourself for things.
6. Difficulty in falling asleep or staying asleep.
7. Feeling blue.
8. Feeling of worthlessness.
9. Feeling everything is an effort.
10. Feeling hopeless about future.

#### Demographic Data

Age:

18-27

28-37

38-47

48-57

58-67



Gender:

Male

Female

Education

Primary school

secondary or high school

vocational school

Undergraduate school

Graduate

Marital status

Single or divorced

Married

Organizational tenure

Less than 1 year

Between 1-5 years

Between 5-15 years

More than 15 years