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Examining the influence of workplace bullying on intention to leave: Mediating effect of job satisfaction and job burnout

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Abstract

Workplace bullying poses significant adverse effects on individuals' physical and psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and overall work performance. A comprehensive understanding of its underlying causes and consequences enables organizations to formulate and implement effective preventive and intervention strategies, thereby promoting a healthier and more constructive work environment. The current study aims to investigate the interrelationships between workplace bullying, job burnout, job satisfaction, and turnover intention among faculty and staff employed at public universities in Mongolia. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to a randomly selected sample from six state-owned universities. The reliability of the measurement constructs and the correlations among key variables were assessed. Subsequently, the data were analyzed using covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) to examine the hypothesized relationships. The findings of the study reveal that workplace bullying has a significant positive impact on turnover intention ($\beta = 0.181$) and job burnout ($\beta = 0.484$), while it exerts a negative effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.656$). Additionally, job burnout was found to have a strong positive influence on turnover intention ($\beta = 0.886$), whereas job satisfaction exhibited a weak yet statistically significant negative effect on turnover intention ($\beta = -0.137$). Furthermore, mediation analysis indicated that job burnout (VAF = 42.8%) and job satisfaction (VAF = 19.0%) serve as significant mediators in the relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention. The results of the study demonstrate that workplace bullying exacerbates negative environmental factors within organizations, reduces employee job satisfaction, and increases the risks of job burnout and turnover. To prevent these outcomes, it is essential for organizational management to establish clear policies and supportive systems.

Keywords: Intention to leave, Job burnout, Job satisfaction, Workplace bullying.

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1. Introduction

Research on workplace bullying, once considered a closed and sensitive topic within organizational life and rarely addressed in scientific literature, has gradually established its place in social, academic, and legal research. It has since become a widely studied issue that has garnered significant attention from numerous scholars [1]. In particular, the issue has been brought into sharp focus in the information age, attracting significant public attention [2].

This heightened awareness, however, is not merely a result of increased public discourse but rather a reflection of the fact that workplace bullying remains a persistent and pressing challenge in real-life organizational contexts [3]. A chronological review of existing studies shows that early research on workplace bullying primarily approached the issue from a psychological perspective. Over time, however, the scope of inquiry has expanded to include a range of disciplines, such as sociology, communication theory, law, organizational behavior, and medical sciences. Numerous studies have confirmed that workplace bullying has detrimental effects not only on the targeted individuals but also on witnesses. Victims of bullying are shown to experience severe psychological consequences, including deep emotional distress, loss of self-confidence, and even suicidal ideation, thereby significantly impairing their mental health [4, 5].

At the organizational level, cases of workplace bullying have been observed to lead to a noticeable decline in productivity, increased absenteeism and employee turnover, rising legal costs associated with resolving bullying-related disputes, and damage to the organization's public image and reputation [6]. Researchers have acknowledged this phenomenon, emphasizing that workplace bullying not only deteriorates employee health but also poses significant negative consequences for the organization itself [7].

Higher education institutions are often regarded as ideal workplaces, known for their roles in knowledge creation, intellectual development, research, teaching, and public service [8]. However, despite this prestigious image, they are not immune to the issue of workplace bullying, which persists similarly to other sectors. Higher education institutions are often perceived as ideal workplaces, recognized for their comprehensive functions in knowledge generation, intellectual advancement, research, teaching, and public service. However, despite this prestigious image, they are not exempt from the issue of workplace bullying, which is prevalent across various sectors. As noted by some scholars [9], the so-called 'ideal' image of universities does not necessarily shield them from the occurrence of workplace bullying.

Workplace bullying continues to exist behind the impression of a 'perfect working environment' [10]. In an effort to preserve their public image, higher education institutions have not only concealed such behaviors but, in some cases, have allowed them to become embedded within the organizational culture itself [11]. This may suggest that the higher education sector tends to either inadequately address or completely overlook negative behaviors such as workplace bullying. While workplace bullying may negatively affect the working environment within universities, it could also lead to the dissemination of unfavorable information to the public, potentially damaging the institution's reputation [12].

The necessity for university faculty to maintain their positions and preserve their professional status can, in itself, become a significant factor contributing to workplace bullying. Holding an academic position at a prestigious university intensifies competition for such roles. These observations suggest that workplace bullying remains a persistent issue within academic environments, and addressing this problem continues to be an open and unresolved challenge.

The National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia, with financial support from the European Union, conducted a study entitled "Certain Issues Concerning the Right to Work in Small and Medium Enterprises." The findings revealed multiple human rights violations, including the denial of the right to freedom of association, failure to implement collective agreements, withholding copies of employment contracts even after signing, unpaid trial periods, workplace bullying and harassment by management, discrimination, and manifestations of forced labor. Furthermore, the study noted that workplace harassment and discrimination were prevalent in many business entities and organizations [13].

Workplace bullying is a widespread issue that can occur in organizations and enterprises of any size or scale. However, in Mongolia, research on this subject remains limited. It is essential for organizations to take proactive measures by developing and implementing policies aimed at preventing and addressing workplace bullying. Providing adequate support to victims is also of critical importance in effectively combating this form of misconduct. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship and impact of workplace bullying, intention to leave, job burnout, and job satisfaction, using faculty and staff at a state-owned university in Mongolia as a case study. The findings will also be compared with the results of previous research conducted by other scholars.

2. Literature Review

Workplace bullying is widely recognized as having profound negative consequences for both individuals and organizations, posing significant psychological and social risks. Substantial evidence supports this assertion [14]. Scientific research on workplace bullying began in Europe in the early 1990s [15-18]. Since then, the academic community has shown growing interest in the topic, and it has come to be known as one of the defining research themes of the 1990s, particularly in relation to employee health, performance, and well-being. Workplace bullying has since been internationally recognized as a critical issue within the field of occupational research [19].

In his 1976 book *The Harassed Worker*, researcher Brodsky [20] defined workplace bullying as a process in which an employer, colleague, or client persistently harasses, intimidates, or undermines an individual, thereby creating physical and psychological pressure, fear, and distress. Tammy [21]. Wilson [17] further emphasized that workplace bullying has detrimental effects on an employee's overall well-being, fostering negative attitudes toward work, increasing absenteeism, and ultimately harming the employee's mental and physical health. In their [22] study, scholars Esser and Wolmerath defined workplace bullying as a series of harmful incidents occurring over an extended period of time, directed at an individual, which are perceived by the target as personal attacks or obstacles in the workplace. Workplace bullying can thus be characterized as a form of aggressive and coercive behavior aimed at an individual or a group of employees, involving any inappropriate, intimidating, or degrading actions intended to cause harm, instill fear, or create a hostile work environment [19].

Research on workplace bullying has primarily emerged not from purely theoretical or analytical perspectives but from the practical need to address a significant social issue. Consequently, the phenomenon has been examined and interpreted through a limited number of theoretical frameworks, reflecting certain conceptual constraints [23]. This limitation poses challenges in applying the findings of such research to real-world contexts and in explaining how workplace bullying interacts with other variables. To further this field of study, there remains a need to develop new theoretical models that integrate previous theories while accounting for the unique characteristics of workplace bullying. A fundamental methodological approach to establishing such theoretical foundations involves the utilization of social psychological models [23].

Leymann [16] and Leymann [24] conducted studies proposing and investigating hypotheses related to the work environment, establishing that workplace bullying originates from job design and the social context within organizations. Research focusing on individual factors has demonstrated that workplace bullying often results from personal traits and distinctive characteristics of individuals that either cause harm to others or render them vulnerable to bullying [19]. Systematic studies on the work environment have identified factors such as role conflict, workload, role ambiguity, job insecurity, and cognitive demands as significant risk contributors to the occurrence of workplace bullying [25]. Workplace bullying has become a pervasive issue within organizations, regardless of their size or sector of operation. At the individual level, such bullying adversely affects employees by diminishing their self-esteem, impairing mental health, causing insomnia, and potentially leading to severe psychological distress [26]. Additionally, workplace bullying negatively impacts job-related attitudes, resulting in decreased job satisfaction, disengagement from work, and ultimately reduced job performance [27].

Previous studies have established that workplace bullying significantly undermines employees' job satisfaction, well-being, and overall health, posing serious threats to their safety and mental health [28]. Workplace bullying can manifest in various forms, including physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, all of which exert considerable negative effects on the victim's well-being, job satisfaction, performance, and productivity.

The study conducted by Hauge et al. [29] demonstrated that workplace bullying adversely affects not only employees' mental health and well-being but also work-related factors such as absenteeism, job satisfaction, and organizational stability. Even after accounting for other variables, including job demands, decision-making authority, role ambiguity, and role conflict, their findings indicate that workplace bullying significantly contributes to increased levels of anxiety and depression. Moreover, the negative consequences of workplace bullying extend beyond the professional environment, potentially exacerbating family conflicts and increasing social costs due to illness and termination of employment [30]. Due to the various adverse consequences of workplace bullying, scholarly interest in this relationship has been increasing. Research on workplace bullying has focused on examining the interrelations between bullying and certain organizational behavior variables, such as job satisfaction, job burnout, performance, and turnover intention. These studies have contributed to identifying and addressing critical organizational challenges associated with workplace bullying [31].

2.1. The Relationship Between Workplace Bullying and Intention to Leave

One of the many negative consequences of workplace bullying is turnover intention [32]. Turnover intention is defined as an employee's motivation or desire to leave the organization. In other words, it reflects an employee's willingness to terminate their current position and explore other employment opportunities. Turnover intention is considered a consequence of stress-related factors such as workplace bullying and workload [33]. An employee's intention to leave their job primarily depends on the individual's own decision [34]. While employees may leave their positions for various reasons, workplace bullying and workload are among the primary causes. Workplace bullying often triggers avoidance behaviors [35], leading individuals to decide to leave their jobs as a means of escaping difficult or adverse conditions. [33].

The negative effects of workplace bullying extend beyond the targeted individual, also adversely impacting colleagues. Studies indicate that up to 20% of those who witness workplace bullying decide to leave their jobs as a result of its consequences [36]. Research by Razzaghian [37] demonstrated that workplace bullying influences turnover intention among teachers. Numerous studies across various sectors and professions have confirmed the significant impact of

workplace bullying on employees' intention to leave their jobs [35, 38]. Therefore, we propose the following initial research hypothesis.

H_{1a}: Workplace bullying increases employees' intention to leave.

2.2. The Relationship Between Workplace Bullying and Job Burnout

Excessive workload leads to emotional and psychological distress, resulting in physical and mental exhaustion. Job burnout is defined as a psychological disorder characterized by negative mental consequences stemming from work-related stressors [39]. Burnout is a consequence of workplace bullying and induces chronic stress and emotional fatigue among employees. Employees who are subjected to workplace bullying experience significantly higher levels of job burnout compared to those who are not exposed to such behaviors [40]. Managerial bullying is particularly detrimental, increasing employees' intention to leave their jobs by a factor of four, whereas bullying from colleagues most significantly reduces job satisfaction [41].

Recent evidence suggests a positive correlation between workplace bullying and both job dissatisfaction and burnout [42]. Workplace bullying has been identified as a primary contributing factor to employee burnout, significantly affecting both the psychological and physical well-being of workers [43, 44]. Workplace bullying often causes employees to withdraw from their work and colleagues, which further intensifies feelings of burnout. Numerous studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between workplace bullying and employee burnout [42, 43, 45]. Based on this evidence, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

H_{1b}: Workplace bullying increases employee burnout.

2.3. The Relationship Between Workplace Bullying and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is one of the most vital concerns for any organization and represents a complex and often contested construct. To date, there is no universally agreed-upon definition of job satisfaction. Broadly, job satisfaction reflects employees' attitudes toward their work and is commonly understood as the degree to which individuals feel positively or favorably about their jobs. It encompasses the extent to which employees find their work pleasant, enjoyable, and fulfilling.

Workplace bullying causes employees to perceive their work environment as unpleasant and demotivating, ultimately leading to decreased job satisfaction [46]. Employees who are subjected to interpersonal aggression at work often experience heightened fear and negative emotions, which in turn adversely affect their overall job satisfaction [47]. Workplace bullying is strongly associated with decreased job satisfaction among affected employees [44]. Such bullying reduces employees' overall satisfaction with their work [48], which can result in diminished work quality and impaired performance [49]. Numerous studies have consistently confirmed the adverse effects of workplace bullying on job satisfaction [43]. Based on these findings, the following research hypothesis is proposed.

H_{1c}: Workplace bullying negatively affects job satisfaction

2.4. The Relationship Between Job Burnout and Intention to Leave

Burnout refers to a state in which individuals experience feelings of exhaustion and depletion resulting from their work [50]. When burnout intensifies, it may lead employees to consider changing their profession [51]. Burnout is one of the key factors influencing turnover intention, and there is a significant correlation between burnout and the intention to leave a job [52].

Organizations with high employee turnover tend to exhibit lower job satisfaction and higher levels of burnout among their employees [53]. Burnout is a significant factor influencing educators' intentions to leave their profession [54]. Researchers have identified a positive relationship between burnout and employee turnover [55]. Studies across various professions have consistently found that employees experiencing burnout are more likely to develop intentions to leave their jobs [54-57].

Employees exposed to workplace bullying often experience burnout, which can lead to an increased intention to leave their jobs [40]. Negative emotions arising from emotional exhaustion due to workplace bullying contribute to the development of turnover intentions. Burnout has been found to mediate the relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention [58]. Based on these studies, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H₂: Job burnout influences the intention to leave the job.

H_{4a}: Job burnout mediates the relationship between workplace bullying and the intention to leave the job.

2.5. The Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and the Intention to Leave the Job

High employee turnover indicates poor leadership that fails to effectively manage employees and their job satisfaction. Employee job satisfaction is closely linked to the intention to leave the organization. Job dissatisfaction often leads to thoughts and intentions of quitting [54]. Conversely, as employee dissatisfaction increases, the desire to leave the organization also rises, which in turn affects employee turnover [59]. Numerous previous studies have demonstrated that job dissatisfaction is a significant factor contributing to employee turnover, while high job satisfaction reduces the intention to leave the organization [54, 59].

Job satisfaction has been identified as a moderating or mediating outcome in various tested models examining the relationship with job stress [40]. Job stress is a significant cause of job dissatisfaction, which in turn generates turnover intentions. Individuals exposed to job stress often experience reduced job satisfaction and may develop depression, potentially leading to an increased intention to leave their job [60]. Based on these studies, we propose the following hypotheses.

H₃: Job satisfaction influences turnover intention.

H_{4b}: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between job stress and turnover intention.

In summary, burnout and job satisfaction are considered mediators in the relationship between job stress and turnover intention. Based on this, we propose the following model, which is presented in Figure 1.

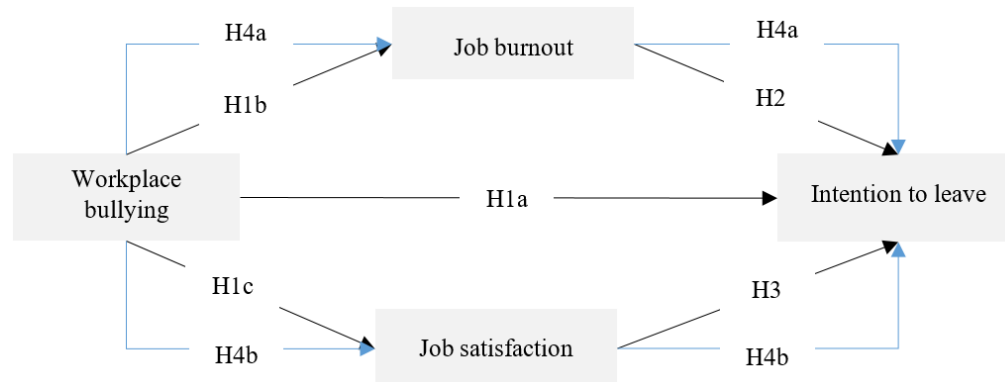


Figure 1.
Research model.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Data Collection and Sample Size

When selecting the sample for the survey, a confidence level of 95% (the minimum acceptable level) and a confidence interval of 5% (the allowable margin of error between the population parameter and the sample estimate) were applied. Considering the population size of 3,895 faculty and staff members at a public university, the calculated sample size was 306 [61]. Since the study utilized data from 349 faculty and staff across six universities, the sample is considered representative of the population.

The survey was conducted between October 5 and December 25, 2023, using both electronic and printed formats. A total of 390 questionnaires were distributed to six universities. Of these, 358 paper-based and 37 online responses were received, totaling 395 responses. After screening, 349 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis, with 46 questionnaires excluded due to non-compliance or incompleteness.

3.2. Instruments and Data Analysis

Research instruments: The survey questionnaire comprised two sections. The first section gathered basic demographic information about the participants, while the second section measured variables related to job satisfaction, work engagement, employee loyalty, and turnover intention. This study employed previously validated instruments utilized by prior researchers, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 to assess respondents' answers.

- **Workplace bullying:** To assess workplace bullying in the survey, the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R) developed by Einarsen et al. [62] was employed.
- **Intention to leave:** To assess employees' turnover intention, four items developed by Hasselhorn et al. [63] were utilized.
- **Burnout:** Burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS), developed by Maslach and Jackson [64].
- **Job Satisfaction:** Job satisfaction was assessed using the scale developed by Macdonald and MacIntyre [65].
- All four measurement scales demonstrated high reliability and strong internal consistency. The reliability coefficients exceeded 0.7, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) values were greater than 0.5, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded significance levels of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis.

Data processing: For data analysis, we utilized the IBM SPSS 24 and Smart PLS 4.1.1.2 software packages from the Social Sciences statistical suite [66]. In this study, descriptive statistics were employed to identify demographic characteristics, dependent, independent, and mediating variables.

Background information on participants: A total of 349 employees participated in the study, of whom 69.3% were male and 30.7% female. Regarding age distribution, 43.0% of participants were aged 25-39, while 48.7% were aged 40-54. Among the respondents, 6.0% were affiliated with School A, 24.1% with School B, 21.8% with School C, 9.2% with School D, 15.8% with School E, and 23.2% with School F. In terms of work experience, 59.4% had been employed for up to 15 years, while 37.6% had 16 to 30 years of work experience.

3.3. Measurement of Model Assessment

SPSS 23.0 and Smart PLS 4.0.9.9 are used in the data analysis. The analysis is carried out in three steps:

1. Develop a research model and provide a pilot test to check its validity and reliability.
2. Estimating variables and conducting various tests to verify the validity of the variables included in the survey.
3. Analyzing inter-relationships between observed and latent variables by Partial Least Squares Covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-CB-SEM).

4. Results

4.1. Analysis of Confirmatory Factors

Before testing the research hypotheses, it is necessary to verify whether the proposed model qualifies as a structural equation model. In other words, to assess the discriminant validity of the eight main variables in the study, the structural equation model fit indices were examined using Smart PLS version 4.0.9.9. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Results of a CFA analysis.

Model fit	χ^2/df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	NFI
Standard	< 3	<0.08	>0.9	>0.9	> 0.90
Results	2.575	0.075	0.911	0.910	0.965

The analysis results indicate that the model fit indices— $\chi^2/\text{df} = 2.575$ (< 3), SRMR = 0.075 (< 0.08), CFI = 0.911 (> 0.90), TLI = 0.965 (> 0.90), and RMSEA = 0.075 (< 0.08) demonstrate that the proposed research model meets the criteria for acceptable fit [67].

4.2. Reliability Analysis

To assess the reliability of the research constructs, reliability analysis was conducted for each factor, yielding Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7 [68]. This indicates that the questionnaire was appropriately designed, allowing for further analysis. Additionally, the Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients for all constructs exceeded 0.5 [69], further confirming the high reliability of the factors. For each latent variable, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) coefficient exceeded 0.5 [70] and was greater than the correlations with other latent variables, demonstrating adequate discriminant validity. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Outcomes of the variable's reliability analysis.

Factors	Factor loading	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Workplace bullying-WB	0.703-0.805	0.960	0.957	0.619
Intention to leave- ITL	0.747-0.861	0.842	0.833	0.672
Job burnout -JB	0.701-0.801	0.907	0.920	0.544
Job satisfaction-JS	0.704-0.821	0.873	0.878	0.535

Descriptive statistics and pairwise correlation coefficients for all measured variables included in the study are presented in Table 3. The analysis indicates that the correlations among the model components are below the recommended threshold of 0.8 [71], suggesting minimal issues with multicollinearity.

Table 3.
Results of the Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity.

	Mean	SD	WB	ITL	JB	JS
WB	3.3804	0.87850	(0.721)			
ITL	3.4801	0.92656	0.433	(0.756)		
JB	3.4801	0.92656	0.470	0.717	(0.666)	
JS	3.5088	0.98425	-0.586	-0.326	-0.225	(0.659)

Note: ***Significant at the 0.001 level; **significant at the 0.01 level; * and significant at the 0.05 level. Diagonal elements (bold) in brackets are the square roots of AVEs. Below the diagonal elements are the correlations between the constructs.
Variable definition: WB, Workplace Bullying; ITL, Intention to leave; JB, Job Burnout; JS, Job Satisfaction.

4.3. Covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM)

We employed Partial Least Squares Covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-CB-SEM). During the analysis, we examined the correlations between the independent and dependent variables. The findings confirmed all three assumptions, with every regression weight being positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). The results of the survey are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.
Research results in PLS-CB-SEM.

Hypothesis	Path	Standardize Beta	Standard Error	T statistics	P value	Remarks
H1a	WB→ ITL	0.181***	0.049	5.654	0.003	Accepted
H1b	WB→JB	0.484***	0.040	12.160	0.000	Accepted
H1c	WB→JS	-0.656***	0.045	14.498	0.000	Accepted
H2	JB→ ITL	0.886***	0.057	15.476	0.000	Accepted
H3	JS→ ITL	-0.137***	0.046	8.992	0.000	Accepted

Note: ***: $p < 0.001$; **: $p < 0.01$; *: $p < 0.05$, significance levels are two-tailed
Variable definition: WB, Workplace Bullying; ITL, Intention to leave; JB, Job Burnout; JS, Job Satisfaction.

After establishing the validity and reliability of the measurement model, the next step involved testing the hypothesized relationships by running the PLS algorithm, followed by the bootstrapping procedure.

As shown in Table 3, all the proposed hypotheses were supported by the research findings. The results indicate that workplace bullying has a direct but weak positive effect on the intention to leave ($\beta = 0.181$). Additionally, workplace bullying exerts a strong and significant positive impact on burnout ($\beta = 0.484$; $t = 12.160$; $p < 0.001$), while it is negatively and significantly related to job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.656$; $t = 14.498$; $p < 0.001$). Simply put, an increase in workplace bullying leads to higher levels of employee burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and consequently, the emergence of the intention to leave. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.534 indicates that these factors explain 53.4% of the variance, while the remaining portion is accounted for by other variables not included in the model. Therefore, the hypotheses H1a, H1b, and H1c are supported. Moreover, it was observed that burnout has a direct and very strong effect on the intention to leave ($\beta = 0.886$; $t = 15.476$; $p < 0.001$). The results indicate that an increase in burnout significantly influences employees' intention to leave, thus confirming hypothesis H2.

Additionally, the results indicate that job satisfaction has a negative and weak effect on the intention to leave ($\beta = -0.137$; $t = 8.992$; $p < 0.001$). The analysis shows that lower job satisfaction is associated with an increased intention to leave, whereas higher job satisfaction corresponds to a decreased intention. Therefore, hypothesis H3 is supported.

To examine whether burnout and job satisfaction mediate the relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention, a combined mediation analysis was conducted using Smart PLS. The results presented in Table 5 indicate that both burnout and job satisfaction serve as full mediators in this relationship. Based on the Variance Accounted For (VAF) analysis, burnout accounted for 42.8% of the mediation effect, while job satisfaction accounted for 19.0%. These results indicate that as workplace bullying increases, burnout and the intention to leave are significantly affected, thereby supporting hypothesis H4a. Additionally, the findings confirm that as workplace bullying reduces job satisfaction, the intention to leave correspondingly increases to a certain extent, thus supporting hypothesis H4b.

Table 5.
Job burnout and Job satisfaction's mediating effect.

Hypothesis	Path	Direct effects	Indirect effects	Total effects
H4a	WB → JB → ITL	0.181***	0.428***	0.609***
H4b	WB → JS → ITL	0.181***	0.190***	0.371***

Note: ***: $p < 0.001$; **: $p < 0.01$; *: $p < 0.05$, significance levels are two-tailed

Variable definition: WB, Workplace Bullying; ITL, Intention to leave; JB, Job Burnout; JS, Job Satisfaction.

All effects of the relevant moderating variables (Beta coefficients) were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), thus confirming the acceptance of all proposed hypotheses.

5. Discussion

Workplace bullying primarily arises in organizations characterized by weak management practices and insufficient skills. Regardless of its form, such stress adversely affects employees' health and well-being, negatively influencing their work attitudes and interpersonal relationships. This, in turn, leads to decreased job satisfaction, reduced productivity and performance, diminished employee retention, and a weakening of organizational culture.

This study aimed to examine the mediating effects of job burnout and job satisfaction on the relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention. The findings of this study are consistent with previous international research, indicating that workplace bullying is present to a certain extent within the environment of Mongolian public universities.

The results confirmed all of our proposed hypotheses.

- The statistical analysis of the study ($\beta = 0.181$, $p < 0.01$) confirmed a direct and positive relationship between workplace bullying and the intention to leave (H1a). Specifically, employees experiencing higher levels of workplace bullying are more likely to develop intentions to leave their jobs. This finding aligns with previous international studies indicating that employees exposed to workplace bullying tend to consider leaving their positions [32, 33, 35, 38].
- The study confirmed a positive and strong relationship between workplace bullying and burnout (H1b), with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.484$. This finding supports the assertion that excessive workplace bullying leads to increased emotional and physical exhaustion. The result is consistent with previous research conducted by Maslach et al. [39], Giorgi et al. [40], Chowdhury et al. [43], Srivastava and Dey [45] and Javaheri et al. [42].
- The study revealed a strong negative relationship between workplace bullying and job satisfaction (H1c), with a path coefficient of $\beta = -0.656$, indicating that an increase in workplace bullying is associated with a decrease in job satisfaction. This finding aligns with the results of previous studies by Bowling and Beehr [46], Coetzee and van Dyk [60], Chowdhury et al. [43], Galanis et al. [44] and Nielsen et al. [47].
- The results of the study demonstrated a very strong positive relationship between burnout and intention to leave (H2), with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.886$. In other words, higher levels of employee burnout significantly increase the likelihood of leaving the organization. This finding is consistent with previous research by Russell et al. [54], Lu and Gursoy [55], Humphrey [56] and Samadi et al. [57].
- There is a weak but negative relationship between job satisfaction and intention to leave (H3), with a path coefficient of $\beta = -0.137$. Lower levels of job satisfaction among employees are associated with an increased likelihood of turnover. This finding is supported by previous studies conducted by Liu et al. [59] and Russell et al. [54].

- The key finding of our study is that both burnout and job satisfaction fully mediate the relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention. Specifically, as workplace bullying increases, burnout intensifies, which in turn significantly elevates turnover intention [58]. Additionally, a decrease in job satisfaction is associated with a corresponding increase in the intention to leave, to a certain extent, as supported by Coetzee and van Dyk [60]. These results were confirmed through our empirical analysis.
- The principal finding of this study is that both burnout and job satisfaction serve as full mediators in the relationship between workplace bullying and intention to leave. Specifically, the results indicate that as job stress increases, burnout correspondingly intensifies, leading to a significant rise in turnover intention. Furthermore, a decrease in job satisfaction is associated with a moderate increase in turnover intention. These relationships were empirically confirmed through the present research.

These results clearly demonstrate that factors such as organizational culture, leadership styles, and human resource policies exert a significant influence on the psychological well-being and performance of faculty and staff.

6. Conclusion

Workplace bullying exerts both direct and indirect negative effects on employees' burnout, job satisfaction decline, and turnover intentions. Burnout emerges as the most influential variable affecting employees' decisions, indicating that it poses a significant threat not only to the well-being of stressed individuals but also to overall organizational productivity. While job satisfaction can be maintained through a low level of workplace bullying and a supportive work environment, the findings highlight that it rapidly deteriorates as workplace bullying increases, warranting serious attention.

Based on the research findings, it is emphasized that organizational management should provide support to employees experiencing workplace bullying by developing and implementing internal policies. Additionally, improving human resource culture, leadership, and team support, enhancing internal communication flows, ensuring transparency and fairness, regularly assessing employee satisfaction, and conducting preventive studies are essential measures to address and mitigate workplace bullying effectively.

If the organization preserves its competitive advantage and embraces its position in the market, it will ominously depend on the retention of valuable employees and their loyalty to the organization. Consequently, banks need to consider factors for sustaining employee loyalty and reducing the intention to leave any organization. These results have practical significance, and they can be incorporated into organizational performance, human resources policies on the improvement of employee satisfaction, training, and development programs, as well as employee participation plans.

6.1. Limitations and Future Research

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, several limitations should be acknowledged, which may guide directions for future research.

First, the research sample was confined to faculty and staff from six public universities in Mongolia. While the sample size was statistically adequate, the generalizability of the findings may be restricted due to contextual and cultural differences. Future studies should consider incorporating participants from private universities and diverse organizational sectors, both within and outside Mongolia, to enhance external validity. Second, the reliance on self-reported data may have introduced common method bias, despite the statistical measures taken to reduce its effects. Future research could integrate multiple data sources, such as supervisor assessments or objective organizational records, to triangulate findings and strengthen validity. Third, while this study confirmed the mediating roles of job burnout and job satisfaction, potential moderating variables such as coping strategies, organizational support, or individual resilience were not examined. Future research should investigate these moderators to identify conditions under which the impact of bullying may be mitigated.

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