

Effect of the Exposure to Workplace Bullying on Turnover Intention and The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction, Work Engagement, and Burnout

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Abstract

Statement of the Problem: One of the great challenges for organizations today is the retention of valuable human resources because this is essential to them for being globally competitive and one of the factors that can exacerbate turnover intention is the exposure to workplace bullying. Purpose: The purpose of the present investigation was to examine the effect of exposure to psychological harassment on the intention to give up employment and how job satisfaction, work engagement and burnout mediate the relationship between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention. Method: A cross-sectional/correlational design was used and a total of 1,046 employees were surveyed. We used the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the hypotheses of the study. Results: The results suggest that exposure to workplace bullying has a direct effect on the turnover intention. In addition, it was found that job satisfaction, work engagement and burnout mediated the relationship between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention. Discussion: Exposure to workplace bullying can make victims consider giving up their jobs as a form of coping. Employees' turnover has an extremely high organizational cost in terms of recruiting and training new staff.

Keywords: Workplace Bullying, Turnover Intention, Work Engagement, Burnout

Efectos de la exposición al acoso psicológico en la intención de renunciar al empleo y el papel mediador de la satisfacción laboral, el engagement y el síndrome de quemarse por el trabajo.

Resumen

Planteamiento del problema: Uno de los grandes retos para las organizaciones hoy en día es la retención de recursos humanos valiosos porque de ello depende que las mismas se mantengan competitivas globalmente y uno de los factores que puede exacerbar la intención a renunciar es la exposición al acoso psicológico. Propósito: El propósito de la presente investigación fue examinar el efecto de la exposición al acoso psicológico en la intención a renunciar al empleo y cómo la satisfacción laboral, el engagement con el trabajo y el burnout median la relación entre el acoso psicológico y la intención a renunciar. Método: Se utilizó un diseño transversal-correlacional y se encuestó un total de 1,046 empleados. Se utilizó el modelo de ecuaciones estructurales basado en residuales (PLS-SEM) para examinar las hipótesis del estudio. Resultados: Los resultados sugieren que la exposición al acoso psicológico tiene un efecto directo en la intención de renunciar. Además, se encontró que la satisfacción laboral, el engagement con el trabajo y el burnout mediaron la relación entre la exposición al acoso psicológico y la intención de renunciar al empleo. Discusión: La exposición al acoso psicológico puede hacer que las víctimas consideren renunciar a sus empleos como una forma de afrontamiento. Las renunciaciones al empleo por parte de los empleados tienen un costo organizacional sumamente alto en cuanto al reclutamiento y adiestramiento del nuevo personal.

Palabras Claves: Acoso Psicológico, Intención de Renunciar, Engagement con el Trabajo, síndrome de quemarse por el trabajo

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Introduction

The most significant challenge of organizations in a fast paced business world that want to compete globally is the retention of valuable human resource because in order to be able to compete it is necessary to attract and retain employees with needed or critical skills (Sinha & Sinha, 2012; van Dyk, 2016). One factor that may exacerbate turnover intention of valuable employees is the exposure to workplace bullying (Rodwell, Brunetto, Demir, Shacklock, & Farr-Wharton, 2014; van Dyk, 2016).

Workplace bullying is becoming a core issue for the organizations nowadays (Rasool, Arzu, Hassan, Rafi, & Kashif, 2013). Research's results, including Puerto Rico, suggest that workplace bullying has been implicated in impairing psychological health such as depression, anxiety, and symptomatology that resembles posttraumatic stress disorder (e.g., Rosado Vázquez, 2005; Rosario-Hernández & Rovira Millán, 2011; Rosario-Hernández, Rovira Millán, Pons Madera, Rodríguez, & Cordero, 2009; Rosario-Hernández et al., 2013). Also, research's results suggest that physiological outcomes impacted employees exposed to workplace bullying such as sleep disorders, physical symptom complaints, and cardiovascular diseases (e.g., Rosario-Hernández et al., 2013; Rosario-Hernández et al., 2014; Rosario-Hernández et al., 2018).

According to Bernstein and Trimm (2016), such severe individual implications, in turn, have serious organizational outcomes as employees exposed to workplace bullying experience reduced job satisfaction and increased turnover intention, which is a form of exclusion from work. Thus, exposure to workplace bullying may bring the risk of exclusion from work (Berthelsen et al., 2011; Leymann, 1996), which may take different forms such as any illegitimate distance between an employee and the work he was hired to do. Moreover, Piñuel y Zabala (2001) points out that

the ultimate goal of workplace bullying behaviors is to eliminate its target from the organization since this satisfy the bullies' needs to destroy its victim to canalize his/her impulses and psychopathic tendencies. Thereafter, the victim of such negative acts may choose to quit voluntarily because of the adverse nature of the working conditions in which bullying occurs (Berthelsen et al., 2011). Thus, previous research suggest that exposure to workplace bullying is linked to turnover intention (e.g., Bahjat, Aljawazneh, Moh, Smadi, & Ziad, 2017; Coetzee & Oosthuizen, 2017; Coetzee & van Dyk, 2017; Rasool et al., 2013).

Although the association between exposure to workplace bullying and high turnover intention is clear from the research literature, there is a lack of understanding about the mechanism that may play a critical role in this relationship. Some studies have considered as part of this mechanism job satisfaction (e.g., Nwobia & Aljohani, 2017) and work engagement (e.g., Coetzee & van Dyk, 2017), but none of them have considered examine the mediating effect of these variables together on the relationship between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention. Moreover, burnout has not been studied either alone or in conjunction with job satisfaction and work engagement as part of this mechanism.

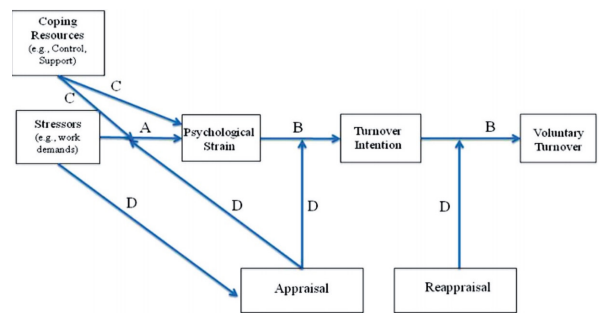
Therefore, the purpose of this cross-sectional study is to examine the direct effect of workplace bullying on turnover intention in a Puerto Rican sample of employees. Also, we want to examine the mediating effects of job satisfaction, work engagement, and burnout on the relationship between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention.

Theoretical framework

As a theoretical framework, we used the Stress-Strain-Turnover Process proposed by Fila, Eatough, and Griffeth (2016; see figure 1), in which are integrated four models: (1) General

Stressor-Strain Framework (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992), (2) Turnover Theory (Hom & Griffeth, 1995), (3) Cognitive Theory of Stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and (4) Work Demands-Control-Support (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). This integrated Stress-Strain-Turnover Process Model proposes that the individual appraises work demands and depending of the control and support that he/she perceives has on work demands is the likelihood of the appearance of strain. If the individual thinks he/she has control of the stressor and the support at work to manage it, this buffer that enables the individual to cope (Van der Doef & Maes, 1999). However, if the individual thinks that he/she does not have the control and proper support at work, strain is very likely to appear. In this case, the model proposes that strain leads to changes in attitudes and behaviors, specifically, the enactment of behavioral coping mechanisms (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992). Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) argue that these behaviors are generally reasoned before enacted. The underlying idea is that strain drives individuals to seek alternative employment opportunities with the goal of reducing strain levels (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Thus, psychological strain is closely tied to affective states; turnover intention is thought to be an attitude (Hom & Griffeth, 1995). Of course and according to Fila et al. (2016), not all individuals who experience occupational stress experience strain, and not all people who experience strain will desire to leave the organization as a result. Similarly, not everyone who desires to leave the organization will actually do so. Fila et al. consider that an individual perception or appraisal of the stressor is a general approach they suggest could capture many potentially influential individual-difference factors. Thus, the cognitive appraisal theory of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) contributes to the Stressor-Strain-Turnover Process Model by incorporating cognitive appraisal into the process. Furthermore, the process of appraisal may be triggered by specific event; in the current study is the exposure to workplace bullying, which has

been considered as a hindering stressor in other studies (e.g., Rosario-Hernández et al., 2014). A hindering stressor is one that represents a threat to one's well-being and represents a harm or loss that is perceived as a damage already sustained (Fila et al., 2016). Therefore, we propose the mechanism that exposure to workplace bullying will result in negative attitudes and strain in the form of job dissatisfaction, low work engagement and increasing levels of burnout, which will mediate the relationship between the exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention (see figure 2).



General stressor-strain framework (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992): A
Turnover theory (Hom & Griffeth, 1995): B
Cognitive theory of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984): A, D
JDC(S) model (Karasek & Theorell, 1990): A, C

Figure 1: Stress-Strain-Turnover Process model (Fila, Eatough, & Griffeth, 2016). Reproduced with Permission.

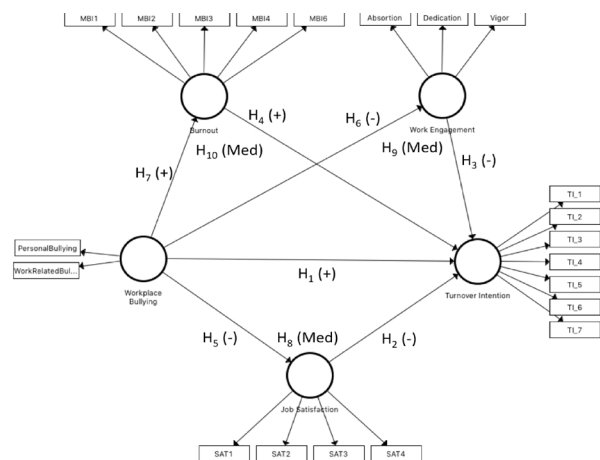


Figure 2: Research model proposed.

Workplace bullying

Workplace bullying is the process in which an employee is subjected to frequent negative acts (e.g., at least once a week) for a relatively long period of time (e.g., six months) by peers or superiors, against which defense or retaliation is hindered by the recognition of a formal or informal power imbalance (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011). These negative acts may be work related as well as person related, and they comprise direct acts, such as verbal aggression, obstruction of work tasks and physical violence, as well as indirect behaviors, such as social exclusion or veiled job sabotage (Barlett & Barlett, 2011). The Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI; 2014) suggest that 27% of American has been exposed to workplace bullying. Meanwhile, in Puerto Rico the Workplace Bullying Alliance (WBA; 2015) conducted a national survey using the same questionnaire used by WBI and found that 51.8% of Puerto Rican workers was exposed to negative acts related to workplace bullying. As Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland, and Einarsen (2014) have stated, exposure to workplace bullying can be described as a significant challenge for employees as well as organizations because of its negative consequences on both. According to Leymann (1990, 1996), if workplace bullying is not handled properly by the employer, exclusion from work in one form or another is typically the final stage of the bullying process, leading the target to further stigmatization and victimization, and difficulty in finding and maintaining work later on. Therefore, potential exclusion from work due to exposure to workplace bullying is turnover intention.

Turnover intention

Turnover intention is defined as a premeditated and intentional willfulness to leave the organization (Tett & Meyer, 1993). The employee has the deliberate goal or determination to end its current employment (De Tienne, Agle,

Phillips, & Ingerson, 2012). According to Tett and Meyer, employees' turnover intention is a central mental precursor of their definite turnover action and the final stage before they display action to exit the organization. Therefore, turnover intention is a workplace phenomenon that must be restrained as much as possible for it involves impairments (Coetzee & Oosthuizen, 2017). Within the scope of human resources management, employee turnover intention is a critical affair due to its organizational cost (Abbasi & Hollman, 2008). Thus, an important consequence of turnover intention is the high cost for companies that involves recruiting and training new employees (Wöck & Heymann, 2012).

Workplace bullying, job satisfaction, work engagement and burnout on turnover intention

Exposure to workplace bullying is proposed to have implications for job-related outcomes to extend that victimized employees feel that the organization is partly responsible for the occurrence and frequency of such negative acts (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012) and an important job-related outcome is turnover intention. For example, Coetzee and Oosthuizen (2017) conducted a cross-sectional study with a sample of 373 employees from various and diverse organizations and found that workplace bullying was related to turnover intention ($r = .40, p < .05$). In another study, Coetzee and van Dyk (2017) found that work-related bullying, personal-related bullying, and physical intimidation correlated significantly to turnover intention ($r = .45, .34, \& .29, p < .05$, respectively). Meanwhile, Van Schalkwyk, Els, and Rothmann (2011) found a positive relationship between exposure to workplace bullying strategies from supervisors and colleagues and turnover intention ($r = .28 \& .21, p < .01$, respectively) in a convenience sample of 13, 911 employees. Razzaghian and Ghani (2014) found that workplace bullying accounts for 20.4% variation on turnover intention in a

sample of 207 faculty members of different private universities. Moreover, there are some studies in which examined the long-term effects of exposure to workplace bullying on turnover intention; for example, Glambek et al. (2014) conducted a longitudinal study in which they examined if exposure to workplace bullying has an effect on turnover intention and if this effect persists for a long period of time. They found that the effects of exposure to workplace bullying on turnover intention held as indicative of longevity of its negative effects. In another longitudinal study, Clausen et al. (2016) did not find an association between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention neither at base line nor after one year of follow-up. However, after they stratified by occupation, exposure to workplace bullying predicted risk of turnover, among office workers but not among human service and sales workers and among manual workers. We propose the following hypothesis:

H₁: Exposure to workplace bullying is positively related to turnover intention.

Job satisfaction is probably the oldest and most investigated variable in organizational behavior research. Judge, Hulin, and Dalal (2012) define job satisfaction as an internal evaluation of the favorability of one's job. Job satisfaction refers to the employee's affective response to a job, based on the employee's comparison between his or her desired outcomes and the actual outcomes (Egan, Yang, & Bartlett, 2004). There are some studies results that suggest that job dissatisfaction is positively related to turnover intention (Irvine & Evans, 1995; Mobley, 1982; Trevor, 2001). Thus, Abu Raddaha et al. (2012) conducted a cross-sectional study with a convenient sample of 180 critical care nurses and reported that 59% of the that they were "Likely" or "Very Likely" to leave their current job. They also found that job dissatisfaction predicted turnover intention. Meanwhile, Xie, Liu, and Deng (2015) found a negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention ($\beta = -.668, p < .001$) in

a convenient sample of 266 graduate students in China. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H₂: Job satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intention.

Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). Rather than a momentary, specific emotional state, engagement refers to a mood, is a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). Employees who are engaged in their work find it energizing, they experience a sense of pride in what they do, time at work passes quickly and they have a sense of personal fulfillment (Biggs, Brough, & Barbour 2013; Ryan & Deci 2001; Saks 2006). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) describe of an upward positive spiral where work engagement and self-efficacy lead to improved performance in both work and family domains is one of synergy and demonstrates some similarity with May, Gilson, and Harter's (2004) engagement of the human spirit at work. Similarly, Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, and Grzywacz (2006) suggested that the feeling of mastery gained through personal accomplishment contributed benefits across domains, thus empowering people to rise to challenges. According to Laschinger and Finegan (2005), empowerment of workers provides the means by which organizations can address shortages of skilled workers, by attracting highly qualified applicants and reducing absenteeism and turnover. This echoes a common theme within organizational research that engaged workers are less likely to seek alternative employment (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Timms & Brough 2013). There are some studies that have found a negative association between work engagement and turnover intention; for example, Coetzee and van Dyk (2017) found significant correlations

between different strategies of workplace bullying and work engagement and its dimensions that ranged from $r = -.40$ to $r = -.53$ in a convenient sample of 373 employees, suggesting that work engagement might buffer turnover intention. We propose the following hypothesis:

H₃: Work engagement is negatively related to turnover intention.

Past research has demonstrated that exposure to workplace bullying result in deteriorated mental and physical health, higher level of job burnout, increased turnover intentions, and reduced job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the victims (e.g., Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Laschinger, Grau, Finegan, & Wilk, 2010; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). In a meta-analysis conducted by Nielsen and Einarsen (2012), it was found an average bullying/burnout correlation of $r = .27$ across 10 cross-sectional studies in the general management field. Other researchers have also found significant relationships between bullying and burnout in cross-sectional studies (e.g., Meliá & Becerril, 2007; Sá & Flemming, 2008). In a study conducted by Yeun (2015), it was found that burnout, specifically the emotional exhaustion, was a better predictor of turnover intention that exposure to workplace bullying in a sample of 270 nurses in Korea. We propose the following hypothesis:

H₄: Burnout is positively related to turnover intention.

Workplace bullying on job satisfaction, work engagement, and burnout

As Muchinsky and Culbertson (2016) resume it, job satisfaction reflects the degree of pleasure an employee derives from his or her job. According to Nielsen & Einarsen (2012), the inability to cope with unwanted and unfair treatment at work, such as exposure to workplace bullying, can lead to a cognitive dissonance that results in prolonged activation and feelings of discomfort. Being in such a long-lasting

uncomfortable state subsequently develop into job dissatisfaction. For example, Rodríguez-Muñoz, Baillien, De Witte, Moreno-Jiménez, & Pastor (2009) found in a longitudinal study that after two years of exposure to workplace bullying, it predicted negatively job satisfaction. They concluded that exposure to workplace bullying wears out its targets and consequently leads to a decrease in job-related well-being and this appears as a strain (e.g., job dissatisfaction) when individual is exposed to certain stressor workplace bullying for a longer time. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H₅: Exposure to workplace bullying is negatively related to job satisfaction.

Organizations would be well advised to address workplace bullying because it causes employee absenteeism, turnover, and a substantial loss of productivity, profits, and work engagement (Hauge, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2010; Hoel, Sheehan, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2011; Leymann, 1990; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). In fact, the financial costs for an organization for each case of workplace bullying are estimated to be in the tens of thousands of dollars annually, collectively costing billions of dollars at an organizations national level (Hoel et al., 2011). Because of the aforementioned psychological costs to victims of the bullying and financial costs to organizations, it is important to understand the process through which workplace bullying effects employees' well-being, and subsequently, engagement in their work. Research (Rodríguez-Muñoz et al., 2009) already shows that negative relationships exists between exposures to workplace bullying and work engagement, concluding that high exposure to bullying may rather proportionally and directly result in a decrease in work engagement. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H₆: Exposure to workplace bullying is negatively related to work engagement.

Besides the effects of the exposure to

workplace bullying of job-related outcomes, such as job dissatisfaction and work engagement, there is also evidence from research that exposure to workplace bullying has an effect on the psychological well-being of employees. For example, in the Puerto Rican work context, there are studies that have found that exposure to workplace bullying has been associated to depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress symptoms, somatization, cardiovascular disease, and sleeping difficulties (Rosado Vázquez, 2005; Rosario-Hernández & Rovira Millán, 2011; Rosario-Hernández et al., 2013; Rosario-Hernández et al., 2014; Rosario-Hernández et al., in press). In addition to these acute health reactions, it has been claimed the exposure to workplace bullying is also associated with more delayed reactions such as burnout (Einarsen, Matthiesen, & Skogstad, 1998). Burnout is defined as a state of physical and emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced efficacy (Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou, & Kantas, 2003; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Though burnout consists of three components emotional exhaustion, cynicism and personal efficacy; however, emotional exhaustion is considered the core element of burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Burnout is a well-documented psychological response to chronic job stressors (Maslach, 2004). There are evidence that support the notion that exposure to workplace bullying result in burnout, which causes significant depletion of energy resources, thereby leaving no or fewer resources to, for example, perform work-family roles (Raja, Javed, & Abbas, 2017). Hence, individuals lose their energy-related resources while coping with stressors such as exposure to workplace bullying. Afterward, this resource loss in mental and physical energy causes further resources loss and triggers exhaustion and burnout (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2001). Furthermore, Nielsen and Einarsen (2012) conducted a meta-analysis using 137 cross-sectional studies and found an $r = .27$ significant average correlation between exposure to workplace bullying and burnout. Therefore,

we propose the following hypothesis:

H₇: Exposure to workplace bullying is positively related to burnout.

The mediating effect of job satisfaction, work engagement, and burnout

The current study proposes that job satisfaction, work engagement and burnout serve as mechanisms that might explain the effect of exposure to workplace bullying on turnover intention. This proposition is due to job dissatisfaction and burnout are regarded as forms of psychological strain induced by stress because they are inherent indicators of a lack of psychological well-being at work (Häusser et al., 2010; Kahn & Byosiére, 1992; Lee & Ashforth, 1996) and are established antecedent of turnover (Griffeth & Hom, 2001; Hom & Griffeth, 1995; Todd & Deery-Scmitt, 1996; Wright & Cropanzo, 1998). On the other hand, work engagement is a relatively new construct when compared to job satisfaction and burnout, and it is considered to be in the opposite continuum of burnout (e.g., González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Lloret, 2006). Therefore, some literatures consider work engagement as a positive, fulfilling and affective motivational state of work-related well-being (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). The motivational drive leads to the expending of energy even if well-being is being threatened (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012).

In terms of the mediating effect of job satisfaction, Fila (2014) conducted a study examining the mediating role of job satisfaction on the relation between stressful work and turnover intention and found that job satisfaction partially mediated this relationship. Thus, appears that exposure to workplace bullying might have an indirect effect on turnover intention through job satisfaction. In this way, we propose the following hypothesis:

H₈: Job satisfaction negatively mediates the relation between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention.

In regard to work engagement, Storm and Rothman (2003) indicate that work engagement functions as a personal coping resource which could explain the buffering effect of work engagement on the relation between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention. Some studies' results (e.g., Coetzee & van Dyk, 2017) tend to support this notion of the mediation effect of work engagement in which it was found a significant indirect effect ($b = .13, p < .01$). Moreover, Coetzee and van Dyk found more strong indirect effects of work engagement when using its vigor and dedication dimensions on the relation between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention ($b = -.24$ and $b = -.30, p < .01$, respectively) suggesting that exposure to workplace bullying lower employees' sense of vigor and dedication, which may in turn result in higher turnover intention. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H_9 : Work engagement negatively mediates the relation between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention.

In addition to its direct effect, we propose that burnout serves as the pathway through which exposure to workplace bullying affects organizational outcomes such as turnover intention. We anticipate that exposure to workplace bullying would result in high levels of burnout due to results from previous research (e.g., Livne & Goussinsky, 2017; Varhama & Björkqvist, 2004). There is literature suggesting that unusually high or chronic stressors may predispose individuals to a downward spiral whereby burnout ensues due to continuous resource loss (e.g., Demerouti, Bakker, & Bulters, 2004; Hobfoll, 1989). Our argument about the mediating role of burnout in the relationship of exposure to workplace bullying with turnover intention specifies burnout as antecedent of turnover intention is supported by the results of

Fila (2014), who found that burnout, specifically emotional exhaustion, mediated this relationship. The impact of burnout on turnover intention is well documented (e.g., Cherniss, 1980; Maslach, 1982). Burnout has been identified as an outcome of physical and psychological job demands (e.g., Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Jourdain & Chênevert, 2010; Zapf, Seifert, Schmutte, Mertini, & Holz, 2001). In a similar vein, exposure to workplace bullying exerts physical and psychological demands on individuals (e.g., Rosado, 2005; Rosario-Hernández, 2011; Rosario-Hernández et al., 2013; Rosario-Hernández et al., 2018), and thus exposure to excessive workplace bullying can result in individuals feeling burned-out. Accordingly, a study by Happell, Martin, and Pinikahana (2003) among psychiatric nurses revealed that burnout positively correlated with the intention of employees to leave their jobs. From the foregoing, it follows that exposure to workplace bullying could be indirectly related to turnover intention via burnout. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H_{10} : Burnout positively mediates the relation between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention.

Method

Participants

A convenience sample of 1,046 workers participated in this cross-sectional study. Participants in the study were enrolled from different private and public organizations in Puerto Rico. As presented on table 1, the sample of the study was composed of 59.4% (621) females, age mean was 37.73, while education mean was 16.05, which it is equivalent to a bachelor' degree. In terms of tenure, 73.9% (773) had a permanent one, and 65.6% (686) of the research participants worked for a private organization.

Table 1. Socio-demographic information about the sample

Variable	n	%	Variable	n	%
Gender			Type of Organization		
Male	424	40.5	Public-State	281	26.9
Female	621	59.4	Public-Federal	54	5.2
Marital Status			Private	686	65.6
Single	358	34.2	Intention to Leave		
Married	443	42.4	Not at All Likely	485	46.4
Widowed	14	1.3	Unlikely	290	27.7
Divorced	113	10.8	Somewhat Likely	184	17.6
Living Together	111	10.6	Very Likely	75	7.2
Position Type				Mean	SD
Management	197	18.8	Age	37.73	11.08
Non-Management	796	76.1	Education	16.05	2.30
Employment Type			Time Working	8.75	8.33
Permanent	773	73.9			
Temporary	233	22.3			

Note: n=1,046; SD=Standard Deviation.

Materials

Background questionnaire. We created a background questionnaire to gather information about the research participants. In this background questionnaire we asked the participants to provide information about their gender, age, tenure, marital status, among others, to enable us to describe the subjects of the study.

Workplace bullying. To measure exposure to workplace bullying, we used the Negative Act Questionnaire (NAQ) developed by Einarsen, Raknes, & Matthiesen (1994) and translated into Spanish by Moreno Jiménez, Rodríguez Muñoz, Martínez Gamarra & Gálvez Herrer (2007). A reduced 14 items version of the NAQ was used to assess workplace bullying. This reduced version of the NAQ has only two subscales, which are personal bullying and work-related bullying. This scale reflects typical bullying behaviors, and the participants should respond to what degree they have suffered such behaviors during the last six months, on a 5-point Likert rating scale, ranging

from 1 (never) to 5 (daily). After responding to these items, a definition of bullying is presented and participants are requested to indicate whether they consider themselves victims of bullying according to the definition. The scale has shown good reliability and validity in previous studies (Moreno Jiménez et al., 2007; Rosario-Hernández et al., 2018). An item example is: "Being ordered to do work below your level of competence."

Turnover intention. We used the Turnover Intention Scale developed by Rosario-Hernández and Rovira Millán (2018). This is a seven-item instrument in a Likert-agreement response format ranging from 1 (Totally Disagree) to 6 (Totally Agree), which pretend to measure employee's turnover intention. An item example is: "If a good job opportunity appears, I would not hesitate to accepted it." Cronbach's alpha was reported as $\alpha = .91$ and in terms of its validity, factor analysis results suggest an internal structure of one-dimension.

Job satisfaction. We used the Job Satisfaction Scale developed by Rosario-Hernández and Rovira Millán (2018). This is a four-item instrument in a Likert-agreement response format ranging from 1 (Totally Disagree) to 6 (Totally Agree), which pretend to measure employee's job satisfaction in general. An item example is: "I enjoy the work I do." Cronbach's alpha was reported as $\alpha = .77$ and in terms of its validity, factor analysis results suggest an internal structure of one-dimension.

Work engagement. We used the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; Schaufeli et al., 2002). The UWES is comprised of 17 items measured on a seven-point Likert scale anchored by the response options 0 = never and 6 = always. Six items comprised the vigor subscale (e.g., "At my work, I feel bursting with energy"). Dedication was measured with five items (e.g., "I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose"). Finally, the remaining six items comprised the absorption subscale (e.g., "Time flies when I'm working"). Reliability of the subscales and the complete scale has been reported to fluctuate within .82 to .93 (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Rodríguez Montalbán, Martínez Lugo, and Andújar Rojas (2011) examined psychometric properties and internal structure of the UWES with a sample of Puerto Rican employees and they found that reliability of the scale and its sub-scale fluctuated within .81 to .93 using Cronbach's alpha.

Burnout. We used the emotional exhaustion subscale items from the Maslach Burnout Inventory - General Scale (MBI-GS; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). Participants used a 7-point frequency scale (ranging from 0-never to 6-daily) to indicate the extent to which they experienced each item (e.g., "I feel emotionally drained from my work."). Cronbach's alpha for the Emotional Exhaustion was reported as $\alpha = .94$. The MBI-GS has two other subscales, which are Cynicism and Professional Efficacy but were not included in the statistical analyses of the current study.

Procedure

The research proposal was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Ponce Health Sciences University and it was approved on February 10, 2016 with the protocol number 160208-ER. Participants were contacted from different organizations and were invited to participate in the study. All those who agreed to participate in the study were explained the purpose of the research. They were given the consent form, background data sheet and the study questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered individually as well as in groups by the researchers at the different organizations contacted.

Data analysis

For data analysis, partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used following the two step procedure suggested by Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2017). First, confirmatory factor analysis aimed to assess the measuring model; and secondly, evaluation of the structural model. It is important to mention the two reasons for its use in the present study, as Chin (2010) points out, that PLS-SEM has a soft distributional assumption and given that the Kolmogorok-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilks tests were significant suggesting that scores were not distributed normally. Also, the high model complexity of the current study justifies the use of PLS-SEM because the model tested has multiple mediators.

Little, Cunningham, Shahar, and Widaman (2002) recommend the use of parcels in testing structural equation modeling because result in more reliable measurement models. We, therefore, conducted our SEM analysis on a partial disaggregation model (Bagozzi & Edwards, 1998) by creating parcels of items as also recommended by Hall, Snell and Foust (1999). We created parcels of items for the variables Turnover

Intention, Burnout, Job Satisfaction, which were included in the model as latent factors with seven, five, and four indicators, respectively. Meanwhile, Exposure to Workplace Bullying and Work Engagement were included as latent factors with the abovementioned subscales as the indicators.

Results

The research model of fig. 1 was analyzed using Smart-PLS 3.2.4, a PLS structural equation-modeling tool (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015). It assesses the psychometric properties of the measurement model, and estimates the parameters of the structural model. This tool enables the simultaneous analysis of up to 200 indicator variables, allowing the examination of multiple mediator variables simultaneously among latent predictor variables indicators.

The measurement model

The data indicates that the measures are robust in terms of their internal consistency reliability as indexed by Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. All the Cronbach's alphas and the composite reliabilities of the different measures range from .79 to .97, which exceed the recommended threshold value of .70 (Hair et al., 2017). In addition, consistent with the guidelines of Fornell and Larcker (1981), the average variance extracted (AVE) for each measure exceeds .50, which is an indication of the convergent validity of the measures. Moreover, the elements in the matrix diagonals, representing the square roots of the AVE, are greater in all cases than the off-diagonal elements in their corresponding row and column, supporting the discriminant validity of the scales (see table 2).

Table 2. Correlation matrix between latent constructs, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE).

Measures	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5
1. Workplace Bullying	.95	.97	.95	(.98)				
2. Job Satisfaction	.79	.88	.70	-.31**	(.84)			
3. Work Engagement	.93	.96	.88	-.27**	.36**	(.94)		
4. Burnout	.92	.94	.75	.40**	-.44**	-.25**	(.87)	
5. Turnover Intention	.91	.93	.64	.36**	.48**	-.34**	.48**	(.80)

Note: n=1,046; *p<.05, **p<.01; the elements in the matrix diagonals within parenthesis represent the square roots of the AVE.

Another approach to examine discriminant validity of the indicators are the cross-loadings; specifically, an indicator's outer loading on the associated construct should be greater than any of its cross-loading on other constructs (Hair et

al., 2017). These results, presented in table 3, indicated that all item loaded on their respective construct and more highly on their respective construct than any other.

Table 3. *Outer loadings and cross-loadings for the indicators of each measurement*

Indicator	BO	TI	JS	WE	WB
MBI-1	.88	.43	-.37	-.22	.36
MBI-2	.87	.39	-.29	-.16	.32
MBI-3	.87	.44	-.36	-.22	.34
MBI-4	.88	.42	-.45	-.24	.35
MBI-6	.84	.41	-.43	-.24	.35
TI-1	-.20	.70	-.17	-.33	.21
TI-2	.26	.77	-.27	-.23	.22
TI-3	.45	.83	-.49	-.33	.34
TI-4	.41	.82	-.30	-.26	.26
TI-5	.33	.82	-.30	-.26	.26
TI-6	.45	.85	-.46	-.31	.35
TI-7	.41	.84	-.31	-.25	.29
JS-1	-.33	-.34	.81	.26	-.24
JS-2	-.38	-.42	.88	.34	-.31
JS-4	-.40	-.37	.83	.32	-.23
WE-Vigor	-.29	-.33	.34	.94	-.28
W E - Absortion	-.16	-.28	.28	.93	-.20
W E - Dedication	-.23	-.34	.39	.95	-.27
WB-PB	.36	.32	-.28	-.26	.97
WB-WRB	.41	.38	-.33	-.28	.98

Note: BO=Burnout, TI=Turnover Intention, JS=Job Satisfaction, WE=Work Engagement, MBI=Maslach Burnout Inventory, WB=Workplace Bullying, PB=Personal Bullying, WRB=Work Related Bullying.

Henseler et al. (2015) propose assessing the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) of the correlations to also examine discriminant validity. The HTMT approach is an estimate of what the true correlation between two constructs would be, if they were perfectly measured. A correlation between two constructs close to one indicates a lack of discriminant validity. Therefore, Henseler et al. suggest a threshold value of .90 if the path model includes constructs that are conceptually very similar. In other words, a HTMT above .90 suggest a lack of discriminant validity. Correlations between constructs appear on table 4, all correlations are below the threshold of .90, suggesting the discriminant validity of the measures. Also, since the HTMT can serve as the basic of a statistical discriminant validity test. Henseler et al. (2015) recommend the use of bootstrapping technique to derive a bootstrap with a 95% confidence interval with 5,000 random subsamples. Thus a confidence interval containing the value of one indicates a lack of discriminant validity. Conversely, if the value of one falls outside the interval's range, this suggests that the two constructs are empirically distinct. Since HTMT-based assessment using confidence interval relies on inferential statistics, one should primarily rely on this criterion. In the present study, none of the correlation between the constructs in the bootstrapping 95% confidence interval included the value of one; therefore, this suggests that the constructs are empirically distinct (see table 4).

Table 4. *Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT)*

Measure	WB	JS	WE	BO	TI
Workplace Bullying (WB)					
Job Satisfaction (JS)	.35 [.28; .42]				
Work Engagement (WE)	.29 [.22; .36]	.41 [.35; .48]			
Burnout (BO)	.42 [.37; .48]	.51 [.45; .57]	.26 [.20; .33]		
Turnover Intention (TI)	.37 [.32; .42]	.51 [.45; .56]	.36 [.30; .42]	.51 [.46; .56]	

Note: Elements in the brackets are the Confident Intervals of .90 of the HTMT's criteria for correlations.

The structural model

After the measurements were tested for validity, the structural model as provided in Figure 1, which represent the relations among the constructs assumed in the theoretical model or latent variables, was tested. In order to examine the structural model and as recommended by Hair et al. (2017), first, we checked the structural model for collinearity issues by examining the variance inflation factor (VIF) value of all sets of predictor constructs in the structural model. They fluctuated between 1.000 and 1.548, all VIF values are clearly below the threshold of 5; therefore, collinearity among predictor constructs is not a critical issue in the structural model (see table 5). Also, table 5 shows the R² values of job satisfaction (.053), work engagement (.075), burnout (.157), and turnover intention (.310), explaining 5.3%, 7.5%, 15.7%, and 31.0% of the variance, respectively. Falk and Miller (1992) suggest a value of .10 for a R-squared as a minimum satisfactory level, only burnout and turnover intention endogenous latent variables reached the threshold level of

the R-squared values. Also, the Q² value which represent an indicator of the model's out-of-sample predictive power or predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2017, p. 202). When PLS path model exhibits predictive relevance, it accurately predicts data not used in the model estimation. In the structural model, Q² values larger than zero for specific reflective endogenous latent variable indicate the path model's predictive relevance for a particular dependent construct. Thus, all Q² values of job satisfaction, work engagement, burnout, and turnover intention are above zero (.033, .061, .111, & .180, respectively). Providing support of the model's predictive relevance regarding the endogenous latent variables. The effects sizes for workplace bullying achieved f² values of .06 on job satisfaction, .08 on work engagement, .19 on burnout, and .03 on turnover intention, which reached or exceeds the minimum threshold of .02 (Chin, Marcolin, & Newsted, 2003). While effect sizes for job satisfaction, work engagement, and burnout achieved the minimum threshold on turnover intention endogenous latent variable.

Table 5. *Structural model results*

Construct	R ²	Adj. R ²	f ²				Q ²	VIF
			JS	WE	BO	TI		
Workplace Bullying			.06	.08	.19	.03		1.000
Job Satisfaction (JS)	.053	.052				.02	.033	1.541
Work Engagement (WE)	.075	.074				.02	.061	1.548
Burnout (BO)	.157	.156				.15	.111	1.243
Turnover Intention (TI)	.310	.308					.180	

Figure 3 and table 6 show the structural model of results for all direct effects and the beta values of all path coefficients are also shown. Workplace bullying had positive and significant relation to turnover intention (b= .128, p< .001) and burnout (b= .397, p< .001). On the other hand, exposure to workplace bullying had negative and significant relation to job satisfaction (b= -.311,

p< .001) and work engagement (b= -.273, p< .001). Meanwhile, job satisfaction has negative and significant relation to turnover intention (b= -.224, p< .001). While work engagement has a negative and significant relation to turnover intention (b= -.151, p= .001). Finally, burnout had a positive and significant relation to turnover intention (b= .292, p< .001).

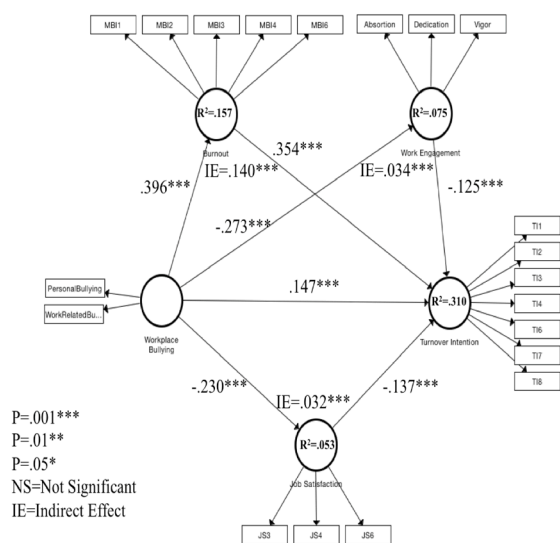


Figure 3: Direct and indirect effect results

In terms of the mediating effects of job satisfaction, work engagement, and burnout, we found that the three mediated the relation between workplace bullying and turnover intention. The total indirect effect was .206 and specific indirect effects of job satisfaction, work engagement, and burnout on turnover intention were all positive and significant as shown in table 7 (.032, .034, & .120, respectively).

Discussion

The current study aimed to examine the relation between the exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention and how this relation was mediated by job satisfaction, work engagement, and burnout. Findings concerning turnover intention as another outcome of

Table 6. Direct effect hypotheses, results and conclusions

Hypothesis	Results	Conclusion
H ₁ : Workplace bullying is positively related to turnover intention.	b = .147***	Supported
H ₂ : Job satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intention.	b = -.137***	Supported
H ₃ : Work engagement is negatively related to turnover intention.	b = -.125***	Supported
H ₄ : Burnout is positively related to turnover intention.	b = .354***	Supported
H ₅ : Workplace bullying is negatively related to job satisfaction.	b = -.230***	Supported
H ₆ : Workplace bullying is negatively related to work engagement.	b = -.273***	Supported
H ₇ : Workplace bullying is positively related to burnout.	b = .396***	Supported

Note: n=1,046; *p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001.

Table 7. Individual mediation hypotheses result, conclusion, and type of mediation

Hypothesis	Indirect Effect	Conclusion	Mediation (Yes / No; Type)
H ₈ : Job satisfaction negatively mediates the relation between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention.	.032***	Supported	Yes (Competitive)
H ₉ : Work engagement negatively mediates the relation between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention.	.034**	Supported	Yes (Competitive)
H ₁₀ : Burnout positively mediates the relation between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention.	.140***	Supported	Yes (Complementary)

Note: n=1,046; *p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001.

exposure to workplace bullying is supported by previous findings (Bahjat et al., 2017; Coetzee & Oosthuizen, 2017; Coetzee & van Dyk, 2017; Mathisen, Einarsen, & Mykletun, 2008; Quine, 1999; Rasool et al., 2013). Current results suggest that the notion of exposure to workplace bullying may be a precursor of exclusion from working life as some of the literature indicates (e.g., Berthelsen et al., 2011). Leymann (1996) argues that organizations need to handle workplace bullying properly because critical and must needed skilled employees who are exposed to such negative acts at work may exit the company as the final stage of the bullying process; in fact, according to Piñuel y Zabala (2001), it is the ultimate goal of the bullied. However, another explanation may be that turnover intention have become a way of coping of such negative acts at work to those employees exposed (Björkquist et al., 1994; Davanport et al., 1999; Namie, 2000; Quine, 1999) because is an escape behavior due to the negative and intrusive nature of the exposure to workplace bullying (Zapf & Gross, 2001). Furthermore, we concur with Zapf and Gross (2001), who indicate that leaving the organization removes exposed employees from the source of the problem altogether. In terms of the direct effects of job satisfaction, work engagement, and burnout, all had direct effects on turnover intention as found in other studies (e.g., Abu Raddaha et al., 2012; Coetzee & van Dyk, 2017; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Xie et al., 2015); nevertheless, all their direct effects were somewhat stronger than exposure to workplace bullying, especially burnout.

Besides that exposure to workplace bullying had a direct effect on turnover intention, it had also a direct and significant effect on job satisfaction, work engagement, and burnout on the direction expected on each one of them. Current results suggest that exposure to workplace bullying has a negative effect on job satisfaction and work engagement; and yet, it has the opposite effect on burnout. In other words, exposure to workplace bullying decrease job satisfaction

and work engagement, but exacerbates burnout symptoms, which is consonant with some of the literature about work-related outcomes to the exposure to workplace bullying behaviors (e.g., Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Raja et al., 2017; Rodríguez Muñoz et al., 2009).

Similarly, results from the current study suggest a possible pathway of the exposure to workplace bullying on turnover intention through job satisfaction, work engagement, and burnout. All significantly mediated the relationship between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention. However, the biggest indirect effect of exposure to workplace bullying on turnover intention was through burnout. Moreover and according to Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010) typology of mediation, job satisfaction and work engagement mediate competitively the relationship between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention; in other words, the direct and indirect effect paths are significant and in opposite directions. On the other hand, burnout mediates this relationship in a complementary way; in other words, the direct and indirect effects path are significant and in the same direction. Thus, exposure to workplace bullying may deteriorate mental and physical health of its victims depleting their resources to manage such chronic stressor and for that reason exposed employees consider to leave their organizations in order to stop the exposure of workplace bullying behaviors and the loss of their resources.

Theoretical and practical implications

The Stress-Strain-Turnover Process model (Fila et al., 2016) appears to explain the results of the current study despite the fact that we only tested it partially because we did not examine actual turnover; instead, we tested turnover intention, which is a precursor of the actual turnover. Nevertheless, including a hindering social stressor such as the exposure to workplace

bullying, which has a very strong negative impact on strain, expand the theoretical framework. Moreover, results from the current study also support the notion of the model that strain plays a critical role in the decision of an employee to consider leaving the organization.

In terms of practical implications, the current study provides an insight of the harmful effects that exposure to workplace bullying has on turnover intention, job satisfaction, work engagement and burnout. Given the fact that exposure to workplace bullying has detrimental effects at both individual and organizational levels, organizations should respond appropriately recognizing the negative implications of bullying at work. For instance, Ferris (2004) suggests that a common organizational response to workplace bullying is acknowledgement that bullying is considered normal in organizational culture and that any resulting harm is due to a lack of personal resilience, personality clash or often deny that the situation is relevant to the business, leaving the parties to settle the conflict. Further, Bentley et al. (2009; cited in Blackwood, Catley, Bentley & Tapping, 2013) argue that there are misunderstandings about what behaviors constitute workplace bullying due to the fact that they can often be subtle and discrete and the subjective interpretation of the behaviors and the context in which they occur are vital to understanding the harm experienced by the victim. According to Blackwood et al. (2013), these responses are of concern, considering organizations that accept workplace bullying or fail to accept responsibility for bullying in their workplace are not only likely to suffer from organizational costs of an unhealthy work environment, but can also be held legally accountable. Therefore, we echo with Blackwood et al. (2013) that it is imperative that organizations understand the nature of workplace bullying and approaches to prevention and intervention, and the implementation of zero-tolerance policy should also be made a priority in order to create a bully-free culture and a culture of respect, alongside

measure to enforce and embed its legitimacy and authority.

Furthermore, the results of the current study show the indirect effects of the exposure to workplace bullying on turnover intention through strain, especially the mediating effect of burnout in this relationship. Thus, needed components to accompany the zero-tolerance policy are surveillance, organizational support and training (Blackwood et al., 2013). This surveillance and monitoring demonstrates the commitment that the organization has to its zero-tolerance policy; for instance, if a supervisor notices that an employee is, for example, burned out may refer him/her to the Employee Assistance Program to receive support in managing it. Finally, employee and management training provides further opportunities to communicate and reinforce organization's expectations of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Also, training would provide details of policy, how to recognize bullying, how to go about reporting incidents of bullying, and how to assist co-workers who are targets of bullying.

Thus, occupational psychologists, managers and human resource professionals have to be aware that changing negative psychosocial aspects of the work environment, such as exposure to workplace bullying could be heightened by drawing the connection between stress, strain, turnover intention and unwanted turnover (Fila et al., 2016). Fila et al. add that the creation of a healthy psychosocial work environment may be extremely important for catching employee strain experiences, negative job attitudes, and even turnover intentions themselves before undesirable turnover occurs.

Limitations and recommendations

The current study has several shortcomings that must be recognized when interpreting the

results. First, the fact that we used self-reports to measure all the variables, which may increase the risk of common method variance. However, we conducted a common method variance (CMV) analysis using SPSS and the results shown that CMV was only 26.10%, which is well below the threshold of 50% (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) and this suggest that the use of self-reports was not a problem. Second, the cross-sectional design of our study does not allow us to conclude in terms of causal relationships. The use of a longitudinal design will offer more information in terms of the impact of workplace bullying on turnover intention and the final action of leaving the organization in a long-term, the actual turnover incident. As a matter of fact, another limitation of the current study is in itself examining the effects of exposure to workplace bullying on turnover intention instead of examining the effects on actual turnover incidents. This is arguably because gathering data on actual turnover intention can be less problematic than acquiring data of actual turnover incidents (e.g., Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009; Fila et al., 2016; Schaubroeck, Cotton, & Jennings, 1989). Moreover, Hom, Mitchell, Lee, and Griffeth (2012) indicate that using turnover intention as a substitute outcome of actual turnover is problematic because only share at most 25% of the actual turnover variance (Griffeth et al., 2000) and it is inaccurate to assume that employees with weak or no turnover intention strongly desire to stay in the organization (Steel & Lounsbury, 2009). However, the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) suggests that behavior intention precedes behavior. In this regard, Hom and Kinicki (2001) found in a study of turnover in retail store employees that 60% of employees who had answered "Definitively Yes" to a question of intention to quit had left the organization six months later. Given the central role of turnover intention on the mechanism in the turnover process (Steel & Lounsbury, 2009), there is almost general acceptance that turnover is preceded by turnover intention (e.g., Griffeth & Hom, 2001; Hom & Griffeth, 1995). Nevertheless, the information

obtained from the results of the study gives us an idea of the impact of workplace bullying on turnover intention, especially in a Puerto Rican sample. Thus, giving the high prevalence of workplace bullying in Puerto Rico (WBA, 2015), and its apparent impact on turnover intention, actual turnover incident should be considered in future research to examine fully the Stress-Strain-Turnover Process model (Fila et al., 2016), and to better understand mechanisms of exposure to workplace bullying-job attitudes-strains-turnover intention-actual turnover.

Conclusions

Our results suggest that the exposure to workplace bullying seem to have an effect on turnover intention. Moreover, job satisfaction, work engagement and burnout have a direct effect on turnover intention and these direct effects are stronger that those of the exposure to workplace. Also, they partially mediate the relation between exposure to workplace bullying and turnover intention. Giving the results of the present study, occupational psychologists, managers, and human resource professionals should be aware of the effects of exposure to workplace bullying on employees and how this could result in strain that may lead to turnover intention and the actual turnover incident, which become a way to cope with exposure to workplace bullying for the victims. Therefore, exposure to workplace bullying brings a challenge for psychologists in occupational context, managers, and human resources practitioners in the management of this phenomenon in organizations due to its individuals and organizational costs.

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