



Investigating the dysfunctional impact of deviant work behaviors within the academic environment

submitted by

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التحقيق في التأثيرات السلبية للسلوكيات الوظيفية المندرفة في بيئة العمل الأكاديمية

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ABSTRACT

Stress and negative behaviors in the workplace are major concerns for many organizations today.

Deviant work behaviors, in their various forms, have serious consequences and therefore represent a key area requiring attention.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the impact of three specific deviant behaviors: workplace exclusion, bullying, and cyber-bullying. To test the proposed model and hypotheses, data were collected using a proportional stratified random sample of 385 undergraduate students within the academic environment of Cairo University. Analysis of the data revealed that (1) workplace exclusion, bullying, and cyber-bullying were strongly and significantly negatively correlated with students' academic performance, self-esteem, and affective commitment to the university. (2) These deviant behaviors explained 26 % of the variance in academic performance, 25.8 % in self-esteem, and 26.2% in affective commitment.

Keywords: workplace exclusion; bullying; cyber-bullying; academic performance; self-esteem; affective organization commitment.

المستخلص:

يُعد التوتر والسلوكيات السلبية في بيئة العمل من القضايا الرئيسية التي تواجه العديد من المؤسسات في الوقت الحاضر. وتُعد السلوكيات المنحرفة في العمل، بمختلف أشكالها، ذات عواقب وخيمة، مما يجعلها مجالاً حيويًا يتطلب اهتمامًا خاصًا. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فحص تأثير ثلاثة أنواع محددة من السلوكيات المنحرفة، وهي: الإقصاء في بيئة العمل، والتنمر، والتنمر الإلكتروني. ولاختبار النموذج المقترح والفرضيات، تم جمع البيانات باستخدام عينة عشوائية طبقية نسبية مكونة من ٣٨٥ طالبًا جامعيًا ضمن البيئة الأكاديمية بجامعة القاهرة. وكشفت نتائج تحليل البيانات أن: (١) الإقصاء في العمل، والتنمر، والتنمر الإلكتروني كانت مرتبطة سلبًا وبدرجة دالة إحصائية بأداء الطلاب الأكاديمي، ومستوى تقديرهم لذاتهم، ودرجة التزامهم العاطفي تجاه

الجامعة. (٢) أوضحت هذه السلوكيات المنحرفة ما نسبته ٢٦٪ من التباين في الأداء الأكاديمي، و٢٥,٨٪ من التباين في تقدير الذات، و٢٦,٢٪ في الالتزام العاطفي. الكلمات المفتاحية: الإقصاء في مكان العمل؛ التنمر؛ التنمر الإلكتروني؛ الأداء الأكاديمي؛ تقدير الذات؛ الالتزام العاطفي التنظيمي

Introduction

The study of employee behavior in the workplace has become essential and urgent due to factors such as globalization, industrialization, workforce diversity, demographic changes, and technological advancements. It has been noted that all employees can exhibit harmful behaviors, which can be categorized as minor or major deviations. Minor examples include deliberately reducing productivity , intentionally slowing down work, taking long breaks, consistently arriving late or leaving early (Babarom et al., 2017). Furthermore, many researchers have identified “deviant workplace behavior (DWB)” as a key area that has a significant impact on today’s employees and organizations. In the contemporary context, DWB has been recognized as a major challenge faced by all types of organizations—industrial, service, and commercial—whether in developing or developed countries (Aksu, 2016; Abdullah & Marican, 2017; Gotz et al., 2018; Iqbal et al., 2017; Jiang et al., 2017). Therefore, understanding these deviant workplace behaviors and investigating their associated individual and organizational antecedents, as well as psychological and behavioral consequences at the individual and organizational levels, has emerged as an important and prominent research area in the field of organizational behavior and human resource management. To date, various forms of deviant workplace behaviors have been investigated using different terms and concepts. Relevant terms include bullying, exclusion, incivility, organizational misconduct, productivity-damaging behavior, workplace disruption, antisocial behavior, and sexual harassment (Jiang et al., 2017; Gotz et al., 2018; O'Reilly et al., 2013; Peng and Zeng, 2017; Howlader et al., 2018).

Emphasizing the similarity that exists in the relationship between employees and their workplace and students and their academic institutions, it is very clear that both contexts engage in same systematic and structured environments based on different relationships (as supervisors and subordinates in workplace, professors, students and their peers in the academic environment). Moreover, both settings requests collaboration, performance, adherence to rules and reliance on their systems for support and guidance (as for organizations, employees depend on their organization for direction and development. Similarly, students depend on their college for mentorship, academic resources and instructions). Consequently, deviant behaviors like exclusion, ostracism, bullying and cyber-bullying have a clear impact on the academic environment affecting the students' performance, well-being and health in similar ways as organizations.

Therefore, this study will primarily focus on investigating the key outcomes of three notable forms of workplace deviance— workplace exclusion, bullying, and cyber-bullying within the academic environment of Cairo University.

2. Theoretical Foundation

This section focuses on the literature review related to theoretical frameworks on workplace exclusion and cyber-exclusion, as well as workplace bullying and cyber-bullying, highlighting their main findings from the victims' perspective.

2.1 Workplace exclusion:

The concept of workplace exclusion has been considered a relatively recent focus in organizational research. However, it has previously been examined in relation to topics such as workplace bullying, counterproductive work behaviors, and social influence tactics (Robinson & Schabram, 2017). Initially, exclusion was viewed as a subset of broader phenomena, including workplace deviance, aggression, antisocial behavior, and counterproductive actions. Yet, accumulating evidence suggests that workplace

exclusion is a distinct and unique construct. As a result, this phenomenon has attracted growing scholarly attention (Wang, 2024).

From the viewpoint of individuals experiencing it, workplace exclusion (ostracism) can be perceived as the degree to which employees feel neglected or ostracized or deliberately excluded by their coworkers in a professional environment (Wang, 2024; Williams, 2007; Ferris et al., 2008, 2017). This form of exclusion is broadly recognized as a widespread social issue that can occur across various types of organizations, regardless of their objective, size, or geographic location. Manifestations of such behaviors may include restricting and omitting necessary information, refraining from direct eye contact or discussions, ignoring colleagues, or exhibiting emotionally distant and unapproachable attitudes. Basically, such acts are considered as a removal of expected social engagement in settings where interpersonal interaction is standard and normally existing (Robinson et al., 2013; Ren et al., 2016; Fatima, 2016).

Although interest in this topic has grown, there is still no universally accepted definition of workplace exclusion, as perspectives vary based on different academic disciplines. Nonetheless, there is a common agreement among scholars that exclusion in the workplace expose negative effects for both individuals and organizations. Researches have outlined several categories of exclusion (Radliff, 2014; Field, 2014; Fatima, 2016; Fiset & Bhawe, 2019; Ferris et al., 2017), including:

- **Physical Exclusion (isolation)** : This involves detaching an employee from others, often by assigning them to distant or isolated physical locations. Such separation can limit their ability to interact and collaborate with colleagues.

- **Social Exclusion (marginalization):** This typically entails ignoring or withdrawing the target from any social or professional interactions , denying their access to any opportunities, services and blocking them from having the right to participate in all aspects compared to others. Social exclusion can occur in many ways and on different levels including overlooking the ideas and the opinions of the target i.e., their contribution are always dismissed, interrupted or deprived from the chance to speak) , exclusion from communication (i.e., consistently left out from emails lists, not being informed about social gatherings or team meetings), physical actions (i.e., avoiding eye contact or conversation with the target , relocating the target away from other team members) and disregarded from groups team meetings and projects (i.e., by passed repeatedly from any meetings, trainings). Social exclusion results in undermining the individual's sense of belonging.(Ferris et al., 2008; Fatima, 2016).
- **Cyber Exclusion:** Nowadays most workplace are digitalized, accordingly, exclusion can occur via any means of electronic communication. This includes overlooking emails ,messages and phone calls of certain employees , ignoring their digital contributions by all the means and excluding them from virtual workspaces. By considering the extensive transition to remote and hybrid work environments, this form has become increasingly common and damaging.
- **Linguistic Exclusion:** As language diversity among organizational members increases due globalization and other factors, exclusion based on language barriers has become notable and more visible. When employees speak different language from the dominant one in their workplace, they may be discarded from communication and group inclusion. It was argued that the employees who are linguistically excluded will experience feelings of misidentification, strangers and

alienated , which in turn reduce group cohesion (Kulkarni, 2015; Zhang & Peltokorpi, 2016).

This problem arises because language is considered the main method of communication and sharing information among organizational members. Consequently, language-based isolation can create misunderstandings, strain interpersonal relationships, and intensify stress levels. In turn, this may reduce employees' positive workplace behaviors and increase counterproductive behaviors (Radliff, 2014; Field, 2014).

Consequences of workplace exclusion: Strong debates exists among scholars regarding the effects of workplace exclusion on victims (individuals experiencing it). Supporters view exclusion to be functional for both the actor and the group (organization), while critics view it as largely destructive to individuals and organizational culture.

Supporters (Rem et al., 2017; Zadro et al., 2017; Hales et al., 2016; O'Reilly et al., 2013) suggest that workplace exclusion is , when applied carefully, may serve beneficial purposes, including:

1. Shielding the organization from individuals perceived as uncooperative, perilous , questionable or misaligned with its values (Support group perspective).
2. Sending non-verbal cues that encourage behavioral correction and conformity (Support actor's perspective). .
3. Easing group tension and conflicts by subtly ignoring or removing individuals who do not integrate well (Support group perspective).
4. Serving as conflict resolution tool with low effort by avoiding confrontations with disruptive behavior or the need to explicitly negotiate or punish it (passive avoidance),

resulting in eliminating ongoing friction through removal rather than reconciliation (Support actor's perspective) .

Conversely, critics argue that workplace exclusion is inherently harmful and produces enduring psychological, emotional, and organizational damage. From this perspective, exclusion signals social detachment, segregation, loneliness, failure and loss.

Research shows that exclusion for a short period about 2 minutes may results in prompt immediate and intense reactions such as emotional distress, heightened weakness, and mental disorder, resulting in physical pain and intensifying the feeling of withdrawal and isolation.

Such incidents can result in long-term destabilizing effects including depression, alienation, increased self-doubt, decreased self-esteem, negative attitudes towards their workplace, peers, and supervisors and may leads to resignation . When exclusion is persistent, it often leads to chronic emotional instability and exhaustion , psychological distress and job dissatisfaction (Williams et al., 2022).

Studies consistently report that being excluded in the workplace results in serious detrimental outcomes. These may include increased prolonged stress, emotional pain , decrease in the sense of meaningfulness and connectedness, lack of motivation and creativity, poor performance , high absenteeism and turnover rate , reduced job satisfaction and organizational commitment .

Additional symptoms that greatly impact excluded individual's long term mental health and wellbeing including anxiety, difficulty focusing , trouble sleeping, physiological pain ,feelings of paranoia or loss of control, cognitive disorders and destructions in confidence and self-esteem level. Also, they might experience conflict between work and personal life leading to deterioration in their overall functioning.

Additionally, Workplace exclusion threatens and violates four core psychological needs: belongingness, meaningfulness, self-esteem and control (O'Reilly et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2016; Fatima, 2016; Robinson & Schabram, 2017; Zhang et al., 2017; Zadro et al., 2017). Since employees' performance and organizational success and survival are closely linked, these consequences pose a significant threat to productivity, work effectiveness and morale. Exclusion not only reduces innovation and engagement but also discourages discretionary effort and extra-role contributions and diminishes organizational loyalty (Tu et al., 2019; Schoel et al., 2014; Robinson & Schabram, 2017).

Based on the aforementioned arguments, the researcher posits that workplace exclusion diminishes employees' willingness to exert discretionary effort for the benefit of their organization. This, in turn, fosters negative perceptions toward the workplace, colleagues, and supervisors, ultimately resulting in reduced job satisfaction. Extending this notion to the academic context, it is anticipated that similar dynamics may affect students in educational institutions.

More specifically, when students experience exclusion within academic settings—be it from peers, faculty, or administrative staff—they are likely to develop adverse perceptions of their learning environment. Such experiences may negatively influence their academic performance, self-perception, and emotional connection to their institution.

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: There is a strong, negative, and significant relationship between workplace exclusion and (a) the academic performance level of students; (b) the level of self-esteem among students; and (c) the affective commitment of students within the academic environment of Cairo University.

2.2 Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying has become a growing concern, emerging as a pervasive issue across various organizational settings. Extensive research has highlighted its detrimental consequences, negatively impacting not only the victims but also the perpetrators and the organization as a whole (Bentley et al., 2012; Appelbaum et al., 2012; Desrumaux et al., 2015; Aricak, 2016; Gamian et al., 2017; Farley et al., 2023).

Despite its prevalence, there remains no universally agreed-upon definition of workplace bullying. Scholars and practitioners interpret the concept differently, influenced by their disciplinary backgrounds and research perspectives. The failure to establish an agreed upon definition is further complicated by the overlap with other closely related concepts such as workplace aggression; harassment; mobbing; violence and workplace misbehavior. These terms are frequently used interchangeably because they often describe similar behaviors that can also occur in bullying situations such as isolation. The absence of clear definition for bullying creates obstacles for researchers attempting to compare or generalize findings within this field (Radliff, 2014; Aricak, 2016).

Despite the variety of definitions available for this concept, the framework introduced by Einarsen et al. (2011, p.4) is considered the most widely recognized in scholarly research. They describe workplace bullying as behavior that involve exclusion, harassment, insulation or actions that adversely impact an individual's work behavior. For a behavior to be classified as bullying or mobbing, it must occur persistently and repeatedly over a prolonged period". Thus, workplace bullying is understood as a gradual process, wherein the targeted individual increasingly occupies a subordinate position and becomes the focus of sustained negative social interactions (Einarsen et al., 2020).

In addition to the traditional view of workplace bullying, some scholars have examined the phenomenon through the lens of cyber-bullying (Pero, 2011; Cases et al., 2013; Kowalski & Limber, 2013; Antoniadou et al., 2015, 2016). Traditional workplace bullying has been characterized by a range of harmful behaviors. For instance, Bentley et al. (2012) define workplace bullying as “repeated and persistent negative actions that encompass social isolation, silent treatment, rumor-spreading, personal attacks on victims’ beliefs and lives, excessive criticism, undue surveillance, withholding vital information, stripping individuals of responsibilities, and verbal aggression”. Similarly, Desrumaux et al. (2015) describe it as a pattern of recurrent hostile behaviors intended to harm another person. Examples include making hurtful comments, ridiculing, deliberately excluding individuals from group activities, engaging in physical aggression (e.g., hitting, pushing, or shoving), and spreading false rumors.

In summary, workplace bullying can be defined as an unacceptable and inappropriate form of behavior that intimidates, offends, degrades, insults, or humiliates an individual, whether in the presence of colleagues, clients, or customers. It encompasses a wide spectrum of actions—both physical and psychological—that undermine the dignity and well-being of the targeted individual.

2.3 Workplace Cyber-bullying:

In recent years, rapid technological advancements driven by the information and communication revolution have given rise to the phenomenon of **cyber-bullying within organizations**. Cyber-bullying is commonly defined as “a deliberate and hostile act carried out by an individual or group through electronic means, repeatedly over time, targeting a victim who finds it difficult to defend themselves” (Smith, 2012; Antoniadou et al., 2016).

McCord (2024) further elaborates that this phenomenon is referred to “using various terminologies, ranging from explicit labels such as ‘*cyber-bullying*’ to more subtle terms

like '*e-rudeness*' or '*technology-enacted abusive supervision*.'" Despite this variation, these definitions share core elements, specifically focusing on negative interpersonal interactions in the workplace facilitated by technological means.

While some scholars consider workplace cyber-bullying a **subset of traditional bullying**—manifested through digital communication channels (Bauman & Pero, 2011; Kowalski & Limber, 2012 ; Casas et al., 2013 ; Kokkinos et al., 2014; Antoniadou et al., 2015 ; Tanrikulu & Campbell, 2015; Mayers & Cowie, 2017)—others argue that it represents a **distinct form of workplace aggression**, involving different actors, motives, and behavioral patterns.

Although a universally accepted definition remains elusive, Grover (2023) identifies several common characteristics of cyber-bullying:

- The use of electronic media;
- Intentional harm or harassment;
- Aggressive behavior;
- Repetitive actions;
- Power imbalances;
- Anonymity (or perceived anonymity);
- Public exposure enabled by the persistent and pervasive nature of digital platforms.

Unlike traditional workplace bullying, cyber-bullying affords perpetrators anonymity and the ability to reach a vast audience, intensifying its harmful impact (Beran & Li, 2007 ; Lazuras et al., 2013 ; Forssell, 2016; Farley et al., 2017 ; Myers & Cowie, 2017).

Workplace cyber-bullying behaviors can generally be classified into **two categories**:

1. **Direct (Overt) Cyber-bullying:** This includes sending disrespectful, offensive, or insulting messages via emails or other communication technologies, as well as publicly criticizing a colleague's work on intranet platforms or online forums.
2. **Indirect (Covert) Cyber-bullying:** Examples include spreading false or misleading information about a colleague through social media, intentionally ignoring work-related emails, or excluding an individual from essential digital communications.

Given the unique features of cyber bullying—such as the anonymity of perpetrators, the enduring visibility of harmful content, and the constant accessibility through digital media—organizations face significant challenges in devising effective strategies to mitigate its adverse effects (Oguz et al., 2023).

The concept of cyber-bullying, though originating from traditional bullying, has evolved into a distinct phenomenon with unique characteristics. It encompasses a variety of terms such as *online bullying*, *cyber aggression*, *cyber violence*, *electronic aggression*, and *internet harassment*. Scholars like Smith (2012), Antoniadou et al. (2016), Tanrikulu and Campbell (2015), and Grover (2023) have identified several fundamental distinctions between traditional bullying and cyber-bullying.

Firstly, traditional bullying typically involves direct, face-to-face interactions, whereas cyber-bullying often occurs indirectly through digital platforms. Secondly, unlike traditional bullying, which requires no technological proficiency, cyber-bullying is inherently dependent on advancements in information and communication technologies. Thirdly, the role of bystanders in cyber-bullying is more complex, given the digital environment's ability to amplify and prolong incidents beyond the immediate social context.

Fourthly, traditional bullying is often driven by the need to establish a power dynamic in front of witnesses, a motivation less apparent in cyber-bullying, where anonymity is common. Fifthly, perpetrators of cyber-bullying rarely observe the victim's immediate emotional reactions, unlike in traditional bullying where responses are visible in real-time. Lastly, while traditional bullying is generally limited to a small, localized audience, cyber-bullying can reach a vast and persistent audience. Harmful online content can remain publicly accessible indefinitely, unless actively removed by the perpetrator or platform authorities.

In the digital age, victims find it increasingly difficult to escape cyber-bullying, as the pervasive nature of technology ensures continuous exposure. Unlike traditional bullying, which can often be avoided by leaving the physical environment, cyber-bullying infiltrates both personal and professional spaces, rendering victims vulnerable at all times.

Workplace bullying, in its various forms, is increasingly recognized as one of the most prevalent issues within organizations, linked to a range of harmful outcomes. Extensive research has demonstrated that workplace bullying negatively impacts individuals' psychological, physiological, and occupational well-being (Smith, 2012 ; Chang et al., 2013 ; Kowalski and Limber, 2013; Lazuras et al., 2013; Elipe et al., 2015 ; Gualdo et al., 2015 ; Desrumaux et al., 2015 ; Rose & Tynes, 2015 ; Antoniadou et al., 2016 ; Aricak, 2016 ; Plopa et al., 2017 ; Oguz et al., 2023 ; Celuch et al., 2024). These studies consistently report that individuals who are victims of bullying are more likely to suffer from health-related issues, emotional distress, and decreased work performance. Furthermore, those targeted by bullying tend to exhibit higher levels of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem compared to their non-bullied peers. They are also more likely to experience increased stress, lower achievement levels, reduced commitment to their job and organization (as to their studies and their college) and, diminished organizational citizenship behaviors (such as helping colleagues), and a greater tendency to withdraw physically and psychologically from the workplace.

In light of these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: There is a strong, negative, and significant relationship between workplace bullying and:(a) the academic performance levels of students,(b) the self-esteem levels of students, and(c) the affective commitment of students within the academic environment of Cairo University.

Research conducted by Celuch et al. (2024), Olsen et al. (2017), Gamian et al. (2017), Farley et al. (2017), Mayers and Cowie (2017), Cioppa et al. (2015), Martinez-Monteagudo et al. (2019), and Escartin et al. (2019) has shown that the widespread adoption of new information and communication technologies (ICT) has significantly contributed to the rise of cyber-bullying. These studies highlighted that victims of cyber-bullying are more likely to experience elevated levels of anxiety, depression, stress, suicidal thoughts and attempts, low self-esteem, anger, sleep disturbances, stomach pain, headaches, fatigue, poor appetite, concentration difficulties, and increased absenteeism. Additionally, victims often display heightened fear, which can result in avoidance of teamwork, decreased concentration, reduced critical thinking abilities, a higher risk of psychiatric disorders, lower emotional intelligence, and greater emotional exhaustion. Based on these findings, the researcher formulates the following hypothesis:

H3: There is a strong, negative, and significant relationship between workplace cyber-bullying and (a) the academic performance levels of students,(b) the self-esteem levels of students, and(c) the affective commitment of students within the academic environment of Cairo University.

3. Research problem:

Despite the growing interest in understanding deviant work behaviors and its severe implications, its dysfunctional impact within academic institutions is still unclear and insufficiently understood as most of the researches conducted focused primarily on

In the light of the previously formulated research hypotheses, research problem can be clearly stated as investigating the dysfunctional impact of deviant work behaviors within the academic environment addressing a critical gap in both theory and practice.

4. Research objectives

To acquire a deep understanding of the issue under investigation, this research aims to:

- Clarifying, through the literature review, what do we mean by deviant work behaviors and what are its basic forms.
- Exploring the three forms of deviant work behavior namely workplace exclusion, bullying, and cyber-bullying.
- Identifying which of these deviant behaviors will greatly impact the key outcomes of interest?
- Providing some recommendations that can help academic institutions to manage and reduce deviant behaviors among students effectively.

5. Research importance

Investigating the dysfunctional impact of deviant work behaviors within academic environments possess critical importance on both theoretical and practical levels.

On the theoretical level, the research will :

- Sheds the light on organizational dynamics, as deviant work behavior can be considered as a symptom of underlying problems within any institution that

need to be highlighted (as bad communication, unclear system) consequently, understanding these problems and the factors contributing to it can help in alleviating its detrimental effect which in turn will positively impact the students' performance and create ethical academic environment.

- Expand theoretical frameworks, as studying deviant work behaviors in an academic institution provide an opportunity to expand theoretical frameworks by exploring these negative behaviors in an environment that have similar characteristics of workplace as most of the conducted research focus on work place environment. This will helps in understanding the causes and consequences of these behaviors among students , thereby , developing effective policies and practices to prevent and address such behaviors (such as providing training programs on ethical behaviors).
- Enhance students' performance level and well-being , as conducting research on deviant behaviors helps organizations in general and academic institutions in specific to explore its negative impact on the physiological and psychological well-being of individuals that leads to stress, health problems , excessive absenteeism and anxiety.

On the practical level, the research will:

- Helps in understanding these behaviors in our Egyptian society and specifically in academic environment (Cairo university) and adequately

create positive academic environments that can boost students' performance, reduce their absenteeism and stress.

- Diagnose these deviant behaviors (which is considered a problem that exist in our academic institutions) among students and clearly provide answers for unresolved questions such as ;
 - why students' performance are sometimes characterized to be low despite having supportive mentorship ?
 - why students' nowadays are characterized by having low affective commitment towards their college ?
 - why students' nowadays exhibit low levels of self-esteem at different levels?
 - To what extent these deviant behaviors affect the student's affective commitment, their self-esteem and their performance level?
- Help academic institutions to develop different policies and interventions that can build better and healthier learning environment that will enhance students' outcomes and well-being.

6. Research Model

The proposed research model aims to investigate the negative impacts of workplace exclusion and workplace bullying (including both traditional and cyber bullying) on students' academic and emotional outcomes.

The researcher has developed the hypotheses based on the proposed research model as indicated in figure (1).

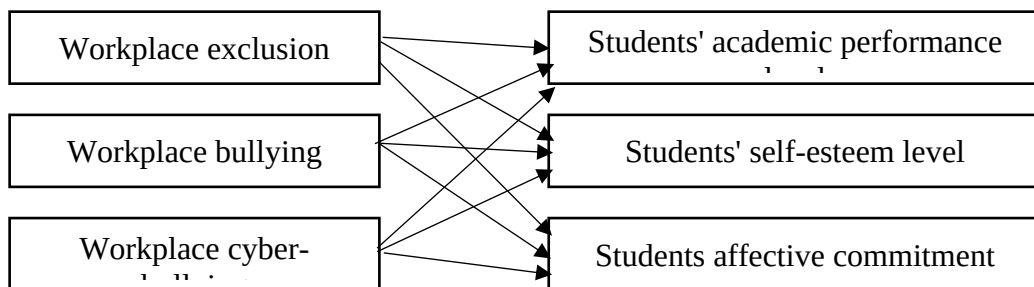


Figure (1): The Suggested Research Model Source: Prepared by the researcher.

The relationships between these variables aim to explore the detrimental effects of workplace exclusion, bullying, and cyber-bullying on students' academic performance, emotional well-being, and their sense of belonging to the academic environment. The research model helps understand how these workplace dynamics influence not only the academic outcomes but also the social and psychological state of students.

7. Research variables:

For ensuring clear and precise understanding , key variables need to be defined including:

1. **Workplace exclusion** refers to being socially excluded, isolated, or ignored within the work environment, leading to negative psychological and behavioral consequences. This model hypothesizes that workplace exclusion may negatively affect students' academic performance, self-esteem, and their emotional commitment to their academic institution (Williams, 2022)..

2. **Workplace Bullying** encompasses various harmful behaviors such as harassment, aggression, or mistreatment directed at an individual. This research will examine both traditional workplace bullying and cyber-bullying, analyzing their distinct yet interrelated effects on students' psychological and academic outcomes. (Farley, 2023).
3. **Cyber-bullying** which occurs through digital platforms, is specifically examined in this model as a unique form of bullying in the workplace. The anonymity and reach of cyber-bullying may have different consequences compared to traditional bullying, especially on students' emotional well-being and academic engagement (McCord, 2024).
4. **Performance level** is a measurable degree to which an individual or system accomplishes predefined objectives and evaluated against pre-established criteria including quality, effectiveness and efficiency. The term performance level pertains to students' academic success, it shows their accumulated score in their task completion, accuracy and goal attainment, in which can be shaped by several factors including effort, motive, and external pressures such as workplace exclusion or bullying (Howlader, 2018).
5. **Self-Esteem Level:** It reflects an individual's personal assessment of their own value. It shows whether the individuals view themselves positively or negatively (Schmitt, 2005). It is noted that high self-esteem individuals tend to engage more in leadership roles and team work, boosts initiatives and problem solving, and shows resilience to stress. On the other side, low self-esteem individuals have high turnover rate , burnout and absenteeism, avoid challenges due to their fear of failure and characterized by anxiety with self-sabotaging behaviors.
This study aims to explore the influence of workplace bullying and cyber bullying on the self-esteem levels of students which expected to be reflected in their

academic performance , social skills (where high self-esteem levels are predicted to be more participative and build better relationships) and career readiness.

6. **Affective Organizational Commitment** refers to the emotional attachment an individual has to their organization with the tendency to exert high levels of effort, influenced by feelings of loyalty, identification, and belonging. In the context of workplace bullying and exclusion, this variable explores how negative workplace behaviors (like bullying or exclusion) impact students' emotional attachment to their colleges.

8. Measurement instruments

The adopted scale is 5 point-Likert type scale which ranged from "1" reflecting strongly disagree and never and "5" reflecting strongly agree and always .

Furthermore, the researcher relied on an expert in the area of organizational behavior to translate the administered questionnaire into Arabic to ensure that it is clearly understood by all the respondents. Finally, all research variables were examined through the use of validated measurement instruments as follows:

8.1 Workplace exclusion

To measure work place exclusion, it will be assessed by 10 items using 5 point likert scale, where all items are coded in the positive direction indicating that (5 represents Always and 1 represents Never; "others ignored you at your college", "your greetings were not returned by your peers") adapted from Ferris (2008).

8.2 Workplace Bullying

To asses exposures to bullying behaviors, it will be measured using by 10 items using 5 point likert scale was used, where all items are coded in the positive direction indicating that (5 represents Always and 1 represents Never; " persistent criticism of

your efforts ") adapted from Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R) Einarsen (2009).

8.3 Cyber-bullying

To asses exposures to bullying behaviors, it will be assessed by 10 items using 5 point likert scale, where all items are coded in the positive direction indicating that (5 represents Always and 1 represents Never ; "someone spread false rumors about you online", "you received aggressive emails from a colleague", "you were excluded from online communication for example group chats") adapted from Farley (2016).

8.4 Affective Organizational Commitment

To evaluate affective organizational commitment, it will be assessed by 10 items using 5 point likert scale, where all items are coded in the positive direction indicating that (5 represents strongly agree and 1 represents strongly disagree; "I feel a strong sense of belonging to the organization", "I am proud to tell others I am part of this organization") adapted from Meyer & Allen (1997) as cited in Meyer (2013).

8.5 Self-Esteem Level:

To measure self-esteem levels, it will be assessed by 10 items using 5 point likert scale, where all items are coded in the positive direction indicating that (5 represents strongly agree and 1 represents strongly disagree; "I believe that my contributions are valued at my college", "I feel confident in my academic abilities") adapted from Schmitt & Allik (2005).

8.6 Performance Level:

The performance level for university students will be assessed by using 2 evaluation reports of 10 items each using 5 point likert scale, where all items are coded in the positive direction indicating that (5 represents always and 1 represents Never; "I consistently meet or exceed academic goals", " I participate in class discussions ", "the student collaborate effectively in team projects") adapted from AAC&U (2009); Lizzio,A., et al. (2006); Nakamoto & Schwartz (2010).

This standardized scale facilitates a nuanced examination of both the prevalence and intensity of bullying-related experiences, providing comprehensive assessment of their deferential effect on emotional well-being and academic performance.

9. Research Methodology

Given the research problem and objectives, this study employs a quantitative, descriptive, and analytical methodology. It relies on hypothesis testing based on sampled opinions to develop conclusions and recommendations aimed at benefiting society. The research design is cross-sectional in nature.

9.1 Sampling

The study population comprises all undergraduate students currently enrolled in the various colleges and institutions at Cairo University. Given that the total population exceeds 10,000 students, a proportional stratified random sampling (PSRS) technique was employed to ensure representativeness. This method was chosen due to the homogeneity within each stratum (i.e., within individual colleges) and heterogeneity between strata (i.e., across different colleges such as Commerce , Computer science, Engineering , Pharmacy, Medicine , etc.), which reflects the academic diversity across fields of study.

Based on Saunders et al. (2011), for a population over 10,000, a sample size of 385 students is sufficient at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. The sampling process involved:

- (a) dividing the population into mutually exclusive strata based on college enrollment,
- (b) calculating each stratum's proportion relative to the total population, and
- (c) selecting a random sample from each stratum accordingly.

A total of 385 questionnaires were distributed proportionally across 14 colleges. Table (1) presents the participating colleges and the number of questionnaires distributed and returned. Out of the 385 questionnaires distributed, 315 were returned, yielding a

response rate of 82%. After reviewing the submissions, 25 were found to be incomplete, resulting in 290 valid questionnaires for analysis.

Table (1): Participating colleges and the number of questionnaires distributed and returned.

Colleges	The distributed	The returned
Faculty of Art	21	16
Faculty of Agriculture	36	30
Faculty of Broadcasting	21	17
Faculty of Commerce	47	44
Faculty of Computer Science	16	13
Faculty of Dar El Aloom	21	16
Faculty of Dentist	19	15
Faculty of Econ. and Political Science	17	11
Faculty of Engineering	29	25
Faculty of Law	31	25
Faculty of Medicine	51	41
Faculty of Medicine	51	41
Faculty of Pharmacy	19	15
Faculty of Science	34	28
Faculty of Veterinary	23	19
Total	385	315

10. Statistical analysis and results

10.1 Validity

While the researcher employed widely recognized and validated measurement scales, it was imperative to reassess their content and construct validity given the study's distinct cultural and environmental setting. To this end, a panel of ten esteemed professors—experts in psychology, organizational behavior, and management—was convened to evaluate the face validity of these instruments. Their expert insights were thoroughly considered, leading to appropriate refinements. The collective feedback

ultimately confirmed the suitability and face validity of the measurement tools employed.

10.2 Reliability

The reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, alongside validity checks. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 2.

Table (2) Cronbach Alpha Coefficients and validity of the scales

Variables scales	α coefficient	Validity
Workplace exclusion	0.880	0.940
Workplace Bullying	0.910	0.950
Workplace cyber-bullying	0.894	0.947
Academic performance level	0.895	0.948
Self-esteem level	0.942	0.960
Affective organization commitment	0.883	0.940

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that all the measurement scales used in the study are both reliable and valid. Specifically, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranged from 0.880 to 0.942, while validity coefficients were between 0.940 and 0.960. Given that the minimum acceptable level for reliability, as suggested by Sekaran (2000), is 0.60, these findings confirm that the scales meet the essential criteria required for conducting the research.

10.3 Testing the hypotheses

To examine the three proposed hypotheses, the Pearson correlation technique was employed to assess the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3. These findings reveal that:

Table(3) Descriptive analysis and correlations of the examined variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Workplace exclusion	3.72	0.47	1	-----	-----	-----	-----
Workplace bullying	3.34	0.42	0.437	1	-----	-----	-----
Workplace cyber-bullying	3.10	0.46	0.328	0.470	1	-----	-----
Academic performance level	3.40	0.49	-0.538***	-0.575**	-0.564***	1	-----
Self-esteem level	3.50	0.61	-0.595**	-0.505**	-0.503**	0.543	1
Affective commitment	3.57	0.56	-0.570***	-0.567**	-0.554*	0.343	0.457

*** $P < 0.001$, ** $P < 0.01$, * $P < 0.05$

The results presented in Table 3 indicate the following key findings:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** The mean scores for all variables exceed 3, reflecting the central anchor point of the utilized measurement scales.
2. **Correlation Analysis:** The Pearson correlation coefficients reveal several strong, negative, and highly significant relationships between the study variables:
 - a) **Hypothesis 1 (H1):** There are significant negative relationships between workplace exclusion and students' performance level ($r = -0.538$, $p < 0.001$), self-esteem ($r = -0.595$, $p < 0.001$), and affective commitment to their colleges ($r = -0.570$, $p < 0.01$). These results support the acceptance of H1.
 - b) **Hypothesis 2 (H2):** Workplace bullying also shows strong negative correlations with students' academic performance ($r = -0.575$, $p < 0.01$), self-esteem ($r = -0.505$, $p < 0.01$), and affective commitment ($r = -0.567$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, H2 is accepted.

c) **Hypothesis 3 (H3):** Similarly, workplace cyber-bullying is strongly and negatively correlated with academic performance ($r = -0.564, p < 0.001$), self-esteem ($r = -0.503, p < 0.05$), and affective commitment ($r = -0.554, p < 0.01$), leading to the acceptance of H3.

3. **Regression Analysis:** Beyond the correlation analysis, multiple regression was conducted to further explore the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Specifically, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to assess the extent to which the three independent variables explain the variance in each dependent variable. The detailed regression statistics are provided in Tables 4, 5, and 6.

4. **Table(4) The multiple regression statistics for the variables affecting on the academic performance level**

Variables	Unstandardized β	Standardized β	R	R^2	T value	Sign. level
Workplace exclusion	0.493	- 0.533	.515	0.265	8.140	0.01
Workplace Bullying	0.483	-0.573	.510	0.260	8.220	0.001
Workplace Cyber-bullying	0.533	-0.548	.506	0.256	8.160	0.01

Total Model	R=0.510	$R^2 = 0.260$	Sign. Level =0.01
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Table(5) The multiple regression statistics for the variables affecting on the self-esteem level

Variables	Unstandardized β	Standardized β	R	R^2	T value	Sign. level
Workplace exclusion	0.584	-0.587	.505	0.255	8.310	0.001
Workplace Bullying	0.534	-0.529	.510	0.260	8.410	0.01
Workplace Cyber-bullying	0.555	-0.524	.508	0.258	8.20	0.01

Total Model	R=0.507	R² =0.258	Sign. Level =0.001
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Table(6) The multiple regression statistics for the variables affecting on the Affective Commitment level

Variables	Unstandardized β	Standardized β	R	R ²	T value	Sign. level
Workplace exclusion	0.567	-0.563	.516	0.266	8.189	0.001
Workplace Bullying	0.588	-0.567	.508	0.258	8.204	0.01
Workplace Cyber-bullying	0.523	-0.563	.512	0.262	7.894	0.001

Total Model	R= 0.512	R² =0.262	Sign.Level =0.001
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The results presented in Tables 4, 5, and 6 reveal the following key insights:

- a) The standardized regression coefficients (Beta weights) for workplace exclusion, bullying, and cyber-bullying closely mirror the patterns observed in the Pearson correlation coefficients (r values) reported earlier in Table 3. This consistency reinforces the strength and direction of the identified relationships.
- b) Furthermore, the regression analysis demonstrates that workplace exclusion, bullying, and cyber-bullying collectively explain 26% of the variance in students' academic performance ($R^2 = 0.260$), 25.8% of the variance in self-esteem ($R^2 = 0.258$), and 26.2% of the variance in affective commitment ($R^2 = 0.262$). These findings highlight the significant explanatory power of the three independent variables in relation to the key outcomes of interest.

11. Discussion

This study aimed to examine the impact of workplace exclusion, bullying, and cyber-bullying on undergraduate students within the academic environment of Cairo University. The analysis of the collected data yielded several important findings:

1. **Hypothesis Testing:** All three developed hypotheses were strongly supported, confirming the existence of significant negative relationships between workplace exclusion, bullying, cyber-bullying, and the students' academic performance, self-esteem, and affective commitment to their colleges.
2. **Strength of Relationships:** The correlation coefficients (r) and standardized regression coefficients (β) were found to be highly significant, indicating robust and meaningful relationships between the independent and dependent variables.
3. **Relative Impact of Workplace exclusion:** Among the three deviant behaviors studied, workplace exclusion exhibited the strongest negative relationships with students' self-esteem and affective commitment. Specifically, the relationships were quantified as follows:
 - Exclusion & Self-esteem: ($r = -0.595, p < 0.01; \beta = -0.587, p < 0.001$)
 - Exclusion & Affective Commitment: ($r = -0.570, p < 0.01; \beta = -0.563, p < 0.001$)
 - Exclusion & Academic Performance: ($r = -0.538, p < 0.001; \beta = -0.533, p < 0.01$)
4. **Impact of Bullying and Cyber-bullying:** Workplace bullying and cyber-bullying were more strongly associated with declines in academic

performance and affective commitment than with self-esteem. However, the differences between their effects were not statistically significant. The key relationships were as follows:

- Bullying & Academic Performance: ($r = -0.575$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta = -0.573$, $p < 0.001$)
- Cyber-bullying & Academic performance: ($r = -0.564$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = -0.548$, $p < 0.01$)
- Bullying & Affective Commitment: ($r = -0.567$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta = -0.567$, $p < 0.01$)
- Cyber-bullying & Affective Commitment: ($r = -0.554$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta = -0.563$, $p < 0.001$)
- Bullying & Self-esteem: ($r = -0.505$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta = -0.529$, $p < 0.01$)
- Cyber-bullying & Self-esteem: ($r = -0.503$, $p < 0.05$; $\beta = -0.524$, $p < 0.01$)

5. **Theoretical Support:** These findings align with previous research (e.g., Antoniadou et al., 2016; Coyne et al., 2019; Fatima, 2016; Ferris et al., 2017; Gualdo et al., 2015) that highlight the detrimental effects of workplace deviant behaviors on victims. The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory provides a comprehensive explanation for these results. According to COR, when students face persistent exclusion, bullying, or cyber-bullying, their personal resources (e.g., energy, emotional resilience, social support) are depleted. If they perceive themselves unable to cope or replenish these resources, negative psychological and behavioral consequences follow, such as:

- Reduced academic effort and engagement
- Increased negative feelings toward their colleges
- Lowered self-esteem and negative self-perception

6. **Psychological and Behavioral Consequences** :Existing literature (Appelbaum et al., 2012; Aricak, 2016; Farley et al., 2017; Gualdo et al., 2015; Kokkinos et al., 2014; Myers & Cowie, 2017) supports these findings by documenting how exposure to exclusion, bullying, and cyber-bullying leads to mental health challenges such as stress, anxiety, isolation, and sleep disturbances. These issues, in turn, impair students' ability to concentrate, complete academic tasks, participate in college activities, and maintain regular attendance.
7. **Social Needs and Academic Outcomes**: From a Maslowian perspective, when students feel ignored or excluded, their fundamental need for belonging is unmet. This deprivation reduces their academic performance as they:
 - Rely solely on their limited knowledge without peer support
 - Miss out on collaborative learning and synergy
 - Experience decreased concentration and motivation
8. **Self-esteem Implications**: The negative relationships between workplace deviant behaviors and self-esteem stem from the direct link between one's sense of self-worth and their experience of inclusion or exclusion within social and academic environments.

12. Conclusion

This research highlights the impact of deviant work behaviors (DWB) within academic context indicating that these behaviors- including exclusion "ostracism", bullying and cyber bullying- can severely undermine both students' performance and well-being and institutional effectiveness.

The research findings indicated that these deviant behaviors and its consequences not only confined with work place settings but are also prevailing in academic environment and negatively affecting its expected key outcomes (students' performance, affective commitment and self-esteem level). The research results revealed that all the three forms of workplace deviant behaviors have strong, negative, and significant effects on key student outcomes. Specifically:

(1) Workplace exclusion is negatively, strongly and significantly related with : (a) students' academic performance level, their self-esteem level, and with their affective commitment level for their colleges.

(2) Workplace: bullying is negatively, strongly and significantly related with: (a) the student's academic performance level, (b) their self-esteem level, and (c) their affective commitment level for their colleges.

(3) Cyber-bullying is negatively, strongly and significantly related with: (a) the student's academic performance level, (b) their self-esteem level, and (c) their affective commitment level for their colleges.

Additionally, the research results reveal the importance of establishing behavioral policies and developing appropriate strategies that can help in reducing and managing deviant behaviors in all its forms.

Finally , research findings underscore the urgent need to address deviant behaviors in academic environment for securing mental health , students' academic performance , high emotional connection to their institutions and ensuring a respectful and productive educational environment.

13. Research recommendations

In light of the research findings and from the researcher perspective, the following recommendations are suggested to help alleviate deviant work behaviors within academic institutions. Proposed recommendations are divided into two categories :

First : Recommendations on the institutional level :

- Develop policies and clear strict behavioral rules that explicitly define deviant behaviors including exclusion, bullying and cyber bullying. Accordingly, this policies need to be actively enforced to ensure accountability at all levels.
- Conduct training programs and workshops for enhancing students' awareness for respecting cultural diversity , dispute resolution, open communication and respectful interaction. Accordingly, these programs will minimize the emergence of deviant behaviors and boost positive learning environment.
- Create anonymous channels that students can use it to report any deviant behaviors safely without having the fear to be harmed. These confidential channels should be supported with fair and adequate investigations to ensure prompt handling of these behaviors and guarantee that it effectively managed .
- Provide counseling and psychological support for victims of deviant behaviors to help them reduce its negative effect (including health problems, mental health, stress, anxiety) and encourage them to effectively confront these behaviors afterwards.

- Actively ensure that professors and administrators show a respectful way of interaction. Accordingly, this will normalize a respectful code of conduct which will influence all the other individuals to follow.
- Encourage students at different levels to join student activities, team work projects. This will help in reducing the probability of being ostracized.
- Proactive monitoring of official digital platforms to reduce the probability of occurrence of these deviant behaviors and ensure quick response if it is needed.

Second : Recommendations on the students' level:

- Due to the advancement in technology, cyber bullying is considered one of the most commonly exist deviant behaviors among students. Some suggestions are presented to deal with this deviant behavior by
 - Making sure to change the passwords periodically to avoid being known by others and ensure privacy.
 - Report any incident related to this negative behavior immediately to ensure safety.
 - Seeking support and help whenever exposed to this negative behavior to limit its harmful effect and actively deals with it.

14. Limitations of the research

This study, while providing valuable insights, is not without its limitations. The most notable limitations include:

1. **Cross-Sectional Design:** The research utilized a snapshot survey design, which provides a limited view of the phenomena under study. As a result, the interpretation of the findings is constrained by the inability to draw causal inferences, as the design does not capture changes over time.
2. **Reliance on Self-Report Measures:** The research employed self-report questionnaires to assess the key variables. Accordingly, relying exclusively on self-report measures introduces several conceptual and methodological

challenges that might affect its generalizability including response biasness, lack of objectivity as it is known for being subjective by nature, memory recall problems, mood state biasness and interpretation variability.

15. Future research:

Future researches should be devoted for exploring and analyzing the diverse psychological and behavioral consequences of deviant workplace behavior in different settings including both governmental and private institutions to address and resolve its negative outcomes. These behaviors can range from minor disruptions to severe misconduct including spreading rumors, employee silence, cyber loafing, social undermining, work place violence and counterproductive work behaviors.

Additionally, Investigating and comprehending the underlying reasons and roots of deviant workplace behaviors is crucial for developing strategies to address it effectively and mitigate its adverse outcomes which in turn affects both parties, individuals and their organizations.

Building on the findings of Rudert et al. (2023), it is clear that most of the research related to exclusion concentrated on the targets or the excluded individuals, including their different reactions and experiences. Limited attention was given to the excluders (source) to understand and address their motives for excluding others. Thus, further empirical research is required to analyze the reasons why individuals can decide to exclude others as deviant workplace does not occur in vacuum, it is a response to underlying organizational or personal problems.

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