

Assessing the Mediating Role of Emotional Exhaustion in Political Behavior Effect on Turnover Intention: A Study on Alexandria Hotels

تقييم الدور الوسيط للإرهاك العاطفي في تأثير السلوك السياسي على نية ترك العمل: دراسة على فنادق الإسكندرية

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Abstract

الملخص

This study aimed at examining the effect of perceived political behavior on employees' turnover intention. Additionally, the study aimed at investigating whether emotional exhaustion mediates the effect of political behavior on turnover intention. The population of the study was the four- and five-star hotels in Alexandria. Due to the small number of population size, all hotels were included. The self-administrated questionnaire was used to collect the required data. The total number of collected questionnaires was 118 questionnaires; only 105 were valid for the statistical analysis. The results pointed out that employees' political behavior perception has a significant positive effect on their turnover intention as well as emotional exhaustion. Moreover, emotional exhaustion was found to have a significant positive effect on turnover intention. Furthermore, the study results revealed that emotional exhaustion partially mediates the effect of perceived political behavior on employees' turnover intention. According to the results, some recommendations were directed to hotel practitioners to help adjusting employees' political behavior and minimizing emotional exhaustion in order to diminish turnover intention.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الوقوف على مدى تأثير السلوك السياسي المدرك على نية ترك العمل لدى الموظفين. كما تهدف الدراسة أيضًا إلى التحقق مما إذا كان الإرهاك العاطفي يتوسط تلك العلاقة. وقد ضم مجتمع الدراسة فنادق الأربع والخمس نجوم في محافظة الإسكندرية، وقد شملت الدراسة جميع الفنادق لقلة عددهم. استخدمت الدراسة استمارات الاستبيان ذاتية الإدارة كأداة لجمع البيانات المطلوبة، وبلغ العدد الإجمالي للاستبيانات التي تم جمعها 118 استمارة، كان منها 105 استمارة فقط صالحة للتحليل الإحصائي. وقد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن إدراك الموظفين للسلوك السياسي له تأثير إيجابي على كل من نية ترك العمل، والإرهاك العاطفي. كما وُجد أن الإرهاك العاطفي له تأثير إيجابي على نية ترك العمل. وقد أشارت النتائج إلى أن الإرهاك العاطفي يتوسط جزئيًا تأثير السلوك السياسي المدرك على نية ترك العمل. وبحسب نتائج الدراسة، تم تقديم بعض التوصيات لمديري الفنادق لمساعدتهم على تعديل السلوك السياسي المتبع، والحد من الإرهاك العاطفي للموظفين لتقليل نية ترك العمل لديهم.

Keywords: political behavior; turnover intention; emotional exhaustion; hotels; Alexandria; Egypt.

الكلمات الدالة: السلوك السياسي؛ نية ترك العمل؛ الإرهاك العاطفي؛ الفنادق؛ الإسكندرية.

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1. Introduction

The organization is a social market place that consists of individuals and groups with different backgrounds, educational levels, needs, interests and goals. This diversity makes political behavior in organizations inevitable. The reason is the potential competition and struggle over the allocation of development resources like wages, salary adjustments, training, promotions, space, and departmental budgets. If resources are adequate, all employees in the organization can satisfy their goals. Since resources are limited, especially the scarcity of higher-level positions, employees will exert power to gain rewards and enhance their careers. When employees convert this power into action, they start to engage in political behavior (Aidoo & Odoi, 2018; Buchanan, 2008; Cacciattolo, 2015; Labrague et al., 2017; Robbins & Judge, 2013; Rong & Cao, 2015; Yilmaz, 2014). In addition, relationships between individuals in organizations form groups of employees based on common interest and characteristics. These groups are divided into two types; formal groups that are known and identified, and informal groups that are based on shared interests, which are usually not formally recognized (Sule, Amuni, Ashiru & Ariyo, 2015). Usually, organizations are open to politics because of these informal groups (Aidoo & Odoi, 2018). There are two aspects of political behavior either exhibited or perceived (Koçak, 2020). In this study, political behavior is discussed in terms of the second aspect that is the employee's perception of the political behavior exhibited by their colleagues. Perceived political behavior has been found to have many detrimental effects on employees' organizational trust, prosocial motivation (Koçak, 2020), performance (Albloush, Ahmad, Yusoff & Mat, 2019), job satisfaction (Chan & James, 2020), organizational commitment (Umer & Salman, 2018), job burnout (Labrague et al., 2017), and turnover intention (Al Jisr, Beydoun & Mostapha, 2020; Arefin, Alam, Islam & Molasy, 2020; De Clercq, Fatima & Jahanzeb, 2021). Even though politics is an inevitable phenomenon that exists in all organizations including hospitality organizations (Arefin et al., 2020; Daskin & Tezer, 2012; Karatepe, Babakus & Yavas, 2012; Yilmaz, 2014), there is a dearth of studies that investigate it in the hospitality industry (e.g., Arefin et al., 2020; Chan & James, 2020), especially in Egypt (e.g., Khairy, 2019). Thus, this study aimed at examining the effect of perceived political behavior on employees' turnover intention among employees of Alexandria Hotels. In addition, the study aimed at investigating whether emotional exhaustion mediates the effect of political behavior on turnover intention.

The objectives of this study are to examine the following effects among employees of Alexandria hotels:

1. The effect of perceived political behavior on turnover intention,
2. The effect of perceived political behavior on emotional exhaustion,
3. The effect of emotional exhaustion on turnover intention, and
4. To investigate whether emotional exhaustion mediates the effect of perceived political behavior on turnover intention.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Formulation

2.1 Political Behavior

DuBrin (2009) defined political behavior as a wide range of practices that are used by individuals to obtain benefits and serve their self-interests in the workplace. When employees are asked to describe

political behavior in their workplace, they typically talk about it in negative terms. They usually associate political behavior with self-serving behaviors, such as stabbing people in the back to look good in front of others, discrediting each other at work to get ahead, joining a coalition, lobbying bosses to get privileged treatment, whistleblowing, not sharing information with others to increase one's power, using information as a political tool to destroy someone else, doing favors for managers to gain salary increase or advancement, using impression management to create a favorable image, exchanging favors with others in the workplace for mutual benefits, and spreading rumors. These behaviors are not prohibited by the management and often condoned by the organization which increases the perception of organizational politics among the employees (Cacciattolo, 2014; Daskin, 2013; Daskin & Tezer, 2012; Poon, 2003; Robbins & Judge, 2013).

The level of politics differs from person to another and also from organization to another. Many studies were conducted to understand the triggers of political behavior and found out that several factors affect individuals' tendency to engage in political behavior. These factors are categorized into two groups; personal factors, derived from the different qualities of people, and organizational factors, derived from the organization's culture and internal environment (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Robbins & Judge, 2013).

2.1.1 Personal Factors Stimulating Political Behavior

2.1.1.1 Self-monitoring

Self-monitoring is a personality trait that indicates the individual's social effectiveness as it enables the individual to understand which behaviors are appropriate in different social situations. High self-monitors are more sensitive to social signals as they respond to them and provide the appropriate behavior that fits the situation. On the other hand, low self-monitors tend to ignore social signals and find a difficulty in changing their self-image to provide the appropriate behavior that suits the social situation. High self-monitors have the ability to manage their convictions and behaviors and adapt them to various situations. In contrast, low self-monitors express their real attitudes, feelings, thoughts, and opinions. (Boz, Ayan, Eskin & Kahraman, 2014; Chang, Rosen, Siemieniec & Johnson, 2012; Robbins & Judge, 2013). High self-monitors are more prone to engage in political behavior than low self-monitors (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Robbins & Judge, 2013).

2.1.1.2 Machiavellianism

Machiavellian, individuals high in Machiavellianism, are selfish and pragmatic by nature and use others for their personal gains (Riaz & Akbar, 2013). They are characterized by manipulation and desire for power and believe that the end justifies the mean. Machiavellian are more likely to engage in political behavior to protect or serve their self-interests and satisfy their goals (Riaz & Akbar, 2013; Riaz, Batool & Saad, 2018; Robbins & Judge, 2013).

2.1.1.3 Locus of Control

Locus of control is the degree to which people think they can control their life events (Mudrack & Mason, 1995). People with internal locus of control believe that what occurs to them is due to their own actions, skills, and efforts. Whereas, people with external locus of control believe that what occurs to them is due to chance, luck or divine intervention (Agarwal, 2016; O'Connor & Morrison, 2001). People with internal locus of control are more likely to engage in political behavior because they are proactive and do not leave things to fate. In addition, they believe that they can control their environment (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

2.1.2 Organizational Factors Stimulating Political Behavior

2.1.2.1 Centralization

In centralized organizations, power and control are concentrated at the top level and few people only can practice them. On the other hand, in decentralized organizations, power and control are distributed among all levels. Centralization prevent employees from participating in decision making and decrease their perception of control (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992, Muhammad, 2007). As a result, when centralization increases, the level of political behavior in the organization increases because people feel that they lose control over their work environment (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992, Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson & Anthony, 1999; Muhammad, 2007).

2.1.2.2 Formalization

Formalization is the degree to which the organization specifies its rules, policies and procedures officially (Smith & Grenier, 1982). High formalization reduces the employees' tendency to be engaged in political behavior because formalization eliminates uncertainty and ambiguity (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; O'Connor & Morrison, 2001).

2.1.2.3 Hierarchical level

The degree to which the employee engage in political behavior is related to his hierarchical level (his position in the organization). Employees at higher levels are more prone to behave politically (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Whereas, employees at lower levels are more prone to perceive the workplace as political because they are directly affected by political activities and have less control over such processes (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Muhammad, 2007; O'Connor & Morrison, 2001).

2.1.2.4 Job Autonomy

Job autonomy is the extent to which the management provides the employee with the freedom of organizing his work and determining the method to carry it out (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The greater the autonomy, the less the employees will engage in political behaviors. Because employees will not be worrying about what might be done for them from managers side. Also, they will see no need to spend time and exert efforts to behave politically (Yang, Pandey, Liao & Dobson, 2017).

2.1.2.5 Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity occurs when the employee does not know his role clearly and the ways to accomplish his job tasks (Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970). Role ambiguity allows employees to negotiate and redefine their roles. The higher the role ambiguity, the more the employees behave politically to protect and serve their interests (Muhammad, 2007; Poon, 2003; Riaz & Akbar, 2013; Robbins & Judge, 2013).

2.1.2.6 Scarcity of Resources

Scarcity of resources breeds the political behaviors. When organizational resources that belong to employees (e.g., promotions and pay raises) are limited, employees are more likely to compete for these limited resources either to protect what they have or to influence the decisions of resources allocation. This competition for limited resources results in political behaviors, tactics, games (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Poon, 2003; Robbins & Judge, 2013).

2.1.2.7 Trust Climate

The higher the level of trust in the organization, the less the employees' political behaviors. This is because they have positive expectations about the motives and intentions of others. In contrast, when there is a lack of trust within the organization, employees become suspicious of the motives and intentions of other members. As a result, they engage in political behaviors to defend their interests (Poon, 2003). On the other hand, a study conducted by Kumar and Ghadially (1989) found that political behavior in workplace leads to less interpersonal trust among employees. The reason is trust forms out of past experience and situations that create the feeling of security and confidence, whereas political interactions create a feeling of uncertainty and competitiveness. In addition, the political player's motives and intentions are always concealed.

2.1.2.8 Favoritism

Favoritism means favoring an individual or a group because of some ties or any other reasons rather than merits (Daskin & Tezer, 2012). Examples of favoritism in workplace include; getting promoted faster than others unfairly, getting higher salary to do the same job as others, or being treated better than others for no rational reason (Raja, Zaman, Hashmi, Marri & Khan, 2013). Unfavored employees who feel that they are treated unfairly tend to engage in political behaviors and perceive their work place as political (Daskin 2013; Daskin & Tezer, 2012).

2.2 Turnover Intention

The hospitality industry is characterized by having an excessive level of turnover compared to other industries (Barrows & Powers, 2009; Chen, Ayoun & Eyoun, 2018; Pizam & Thornburg, 2000), as it reached 86.3% in 2021 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). High turnover has many financial and non-financial detrimental effects on organizations. Firstly, employee turnover is very expensive and costly for employers since more money are needed to recruit, select, and train new employees. Secondly, high turnover in the hotel industry can endanger the service quality and consistency. This is because the number of skilled and talented employees is decreased, which in turn decreases guest satisfaction with the services and leads to a degradation of the organizational performance. Thirdly, the organization may lose its intellectual capital, if the leaver works for a competitor, which will negatively affect the organization's competitive advantage. Fourthly, turnover can demoralize other employees because they may lose reliable leaders and coworkers in the workplace, and they may feel less attached to the place due to fewer personal ties to colleagues. Fifthly, the remaining staff will feel pressured and overworked due to alleviate shortages. Finally, turnover leads teams to experience a loss in their tasks efficiency, because new employees need to be trained first before filling their positions, and it could threaten cohesion among team members as well (Abd El-Aty & Deraz, 2018; Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Asgharian, Anvari, Ahmad & Tehrani, 2015; Atef, El Leithy & Al-Kalyoubi, 2017; Back, Hyun, Jeung & Chang, 2020; Daskin & Tezer, 2012; Emiroglua, Akova & Tanriverdic, 2015; Farid & El-Sawalhy, 2018; George & Wallio, 2017; Griffeth & Hom, 2001; Loi, Hang-yue & Foley, 2006; Pizam & Thornburg, 2000; Wallace & Gaylor, 2012; Yavas, Karatepe & Babakus, 2018).

Tett and Meyer (1993) asserted that employee turnover intention is recognized as the final step in the voluntarily turnover process, thus it should be addressed at early stages. This point was recently supported by Afsar, Shahjehan & Shah (2018), as they conducted a study on the hospitality industry employees and found out that turnover intention is positively related to actual turnover. Turnover

intention refers to the employee's intent to quit once he finds a new suitable opportunity elsewhere (George & Wallio, 2017; Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016; Yavas et al., 2018). In order to reduce actual turnover, management should detect the factors that influence the turnover intention at early stage (Attiah & AbouDahab, 2017; McGinley, Hanks & Line, 2017; Yao, Qiu & Wei, 2019).

There are many antecedents have been found to have a negative relationship with turnover intention such as; *engagement* (Agarwal, 2016), *organizational justice* (George & Wallio, 2017), *fellow workers' warmth and competence* (Abd El-Aty & Deraz, 2018), *job satisfaction* (Chan & James, 2020; Samengon et al., 2020), *organizational commitment* (Samengon et al., 2020), *trust in supervisor*, and *on-the-job embeddedness* (Ampofo & Karatepe, 2021). On the other hand, other factors have been found to have positive relationship with turnover intention such as; *interpersonal conflict* (Haq, 2011), *work-leisure conflict* (Mansour & Tremblay, 2016), *work-family conflict* (Chen et al., 2018), *job burnout* (Back et al., 2020; Wen, Zhou, Hu & Zhang, 2020), *perception of organizational politics and political behavior* (Al Jisr et al., 2020; Arefin et al., 2020; De Clercq et al., 2021), *job stress* (Samengon et al., 2020; Wen et al., 2020), *emotional labor* (Back et al., 2020), and *emotional exhaustion* (Chan & James, 2020; Grobelna, 2021; Parray, Islam & Shah, 2022).

2.3 Emotional Exhaustion

The nature of hospitality jobs requires more than just physical labor, as it involves a relatively high degree of emotional labor (Berger & Brownell, 2009). Emotional labor is the attempt by the individual to reduce the discrepancy between felt and displayed emotions (Liu, Perrewe, Hochwarter & Kachmar, 2004). Employees in hospitality industry are always required, while interacting with customers, to display certain types of emotions such as friendliness, cheerfulness, warmth, and enthusiasm even if they conflict with their inner feeling. Practicing emotional labor for long time could be detrimental to the psychological well-being of service employees, as it may result in emotional exhaustion (Hwa, Supinah, Jepang & Nasah, 2010). Emotional exhaustion is a work-related strain and refers to the lack of energy and a chronic feeling of physical and emotional depletion due to excessive psychological and physical demand (Maslach, 1982).

Many studies have been conducted to find out factors that could lead to emotional exhaustion. These factors may include; *organizational justice* (Helkavaara, Saastamoinen & Lahelma, 2011), *workload and supervisor support* (Grobelna, 2021), *workplace incivility* (Karatepe, Kim & Lee, 2019; Parray et al., 2022), *work-leisure conflict* (Mansour & Tremblay, 2016), and *political behavior* (Chan & James, 2020). On the other hand, other studies have been conducted to find out the consequences of emotional exhaustion. Some consequences have been found to be negatively associated with emotional exhaustion such as, *job performance* (Kuruüzüm, Anafarta & Irmak, 2008), *organizational commitment* (Ciftcioglu, 2011), *engagement* (Liang, 2012), and *job satisfaction* (Chan & James, 2020; Parray et al., 2022). Other consequences have been found to be positively associated with emotional exhaustion such as, *familial disharmony* (Kuruüzüm et al., 2008), *depression* (Carod-Artal & Vázquez-Cabrera, 2013), *absenteeism* (Bährer-Kohler, 2013), *job stress* (Parray et al., 2022), and *turnover intention* (Chan & James, 2020; Grobelna, 2021; Parray et al., 2022).

2.4 Hypotheses Formulation

Based on the above literature review, turnover intention has been found to be one of the negative effects of political behavior. Besides, emotional exhaustion has been found to be one of the political

behavior consequences, and it is also one of the of turnover intention antecedents. Thus, it could serve as a mediator in the effect of perceived political behavior on turnover intention.

The current study hypotheses could be formulated as follows:

- H1.** Employees' perception of political behavior has a significant effect on their turnover intention.
- H2.** Employees' perception of political behavior has a significant effect on their emotional exhaustion.
- H3.** Employees' emotional exhaustion has a significant effect on their turnover intention.
- H4.** Emotional exhaustion mediates the effect of political behavior on turnover intention.

3. Methods

3.1 Population and Data Collection

Employees of four- and five-star hotels in Alexandria were the target population of this study. To define the study population, the research team found out that the total number of employees is not officially identified. Thus, it depended on the total number of four- and five-star hotels which is 16 hotels (Egyptian Hotel Association, 2022). Self-administrated questionnaire survey was used to collect the required data for the study. The research team set appointments with hotels' human resource managers to explain the aim of the study and assured the confidentiality of collected data. Eleven hotels agreed to participate, while the other five hotels refused. The team asked the managers to randomly distribute 20 copies of the questionnaire among employees. The distributed questionnaire was translated into Arabic language. The total number of collected questionnaires were 118 questionnaires, 13 out of which were invalid. Therefore, the total responses that were valid for statistical analysis were 105 questionnaires.

3.2 Measures

The questionnaire contained four parts. The first part aimed at collecting the employee's demographic data. The second part measures the employee's perceived political behavior by a scale developed by Kacmar and Carlson (1997). The scale was adapted and some statements were added from the scale developed by Ferris and Kacmar (1992). The third part of the questionnaire measures the employee's turnover intention by an adapted scale developed by Vigoda (2000). The final part measures the employee's emotional exhaustion by an adapted scale developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981). All the questionnaire statements were measured using five-point Likert scale, with (1) indicating "strongly disagree", while (5) indicating "strongly agree", except the emotional exhaustion section, (1) indicating "never", and (5) indicating "always".

To test the questionnaire reliability, Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs of the questionnaire were measured. According to Muijs (2004), Cronbach's Alpha value should be 0.7 or higher to indicate an acceptable level of reliability. As shown in Table 1, Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs ranged from 0.848 to 0.883 which indicates a good level of reliability.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha for Questionnaire Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived Political Behavior	.883
Turnover Intention	.848
Emotional Exhaustion	.880
All Constructs	.887

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

In order to analyze the collected data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used. The frequencies and percentages of demographic data were calculated. Then, to test the study hypotheses, the linear regression analysis and PROCESS macro for SPSS and SAS (version 3.5) were used.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Respondents' Profile

As illustrated in table 2, 58.1% of respondents were males, while 41.9% were females. Respondents who are between 20 and 29 years old representing the majority (43.8%), followed by those who aged from 30 to 39 years old (38.1%), then the respondents aged from 40 to 50 years (14.3%), and the least proportion was for those who aged over 50 years (3.8%). Concerning the marital status, respondents who are not married represents 58.1% of the total number, while 41.9% were married. The majority of respondents were college graduates (72.4%), while 25.7% hold high school certificate, and 1.9% hold M.Sc. degree. Regarding the tenure of respondents, 50.5% of them spent 1 to less than 5 years, 21% of them spent 5 to 10 years, 15.2% of them spent more than 10 years, and, lastly, 13.3% spent less than 1 year.

Table 2: Respondents' Profile

Variables	Frequency (n=105)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	61	58.1
Female	44	41.9
Age		
20 to less than 30 years	46	43.8
30 to less than 40 years	40	38.1
40 to 50 years	15	14.3
Older than 50 years	4	3.8
Marital Status		
Married	44	41.9
Not Married	61	58.1
Educational Level		
M.Sc.	2	1.9
Bachelor	76	72.4
High School	27	25.7
Tenure		
less than 1 year	14	13.3
1 to less than 5 years	53	50.5
5 to 10 years	22	21.0
More than 10 years	16	15.2

4.2 Hypotheses Testing

Linear regression analysis was used to test H1, H2 and H3 as presented in table 3. Regarding H1, perceived political behavior has been found to have a significant positive effect on turnover intention

($F = 51.073$, $p = .000$). In addition, results pointed out that perceived political behavior interprets 33% of variance that happens in the turnover intention ($R^2 = .331$). Moreover, results showed that beta coefficient is significant ($\beta = .659$, $p = .000$) which means for every 1-unit increase in perceived political behavior, turnover intention will increase by .659. Thus, H1 is supported and the regression equation could be as shown in figure 1.

Table 3: Linear Regression Analysis of Study Variables

Variables	R	R ²	F	Sig.	β	t	Sig.
Turnover Intention (Dependent Variable)							
Constant					1.113	4.535	.000**
Political Behavior	.576	.331	51.073	.000**	.659	7.147	.000**
Emotional Exhaustion (Dependent Variable)							
Constant					1.688	8.159	.000**
Political Behavior	.507	.257	35.701	.000**	.465	5.975	.000**
Turnover Intention (Dependent Variable)							
Constant					.446	1.620	.108
Emotional Exhaustion	.654	.428	77.016	.000**	.818	8.776	.000**

**p-value is significant at the .01 level.

This result was confirmed by other studies (Al Jisr et al., 2020; Arefin et al., 2020; De Clercq et al., 2021). The reason could be that perceived political behavior in the workplace represents a stressor to employees. When this stressor lasts for long time, it pushes the employees to search for new jobs outside with an intent to quit once a suitable opportunity is found.

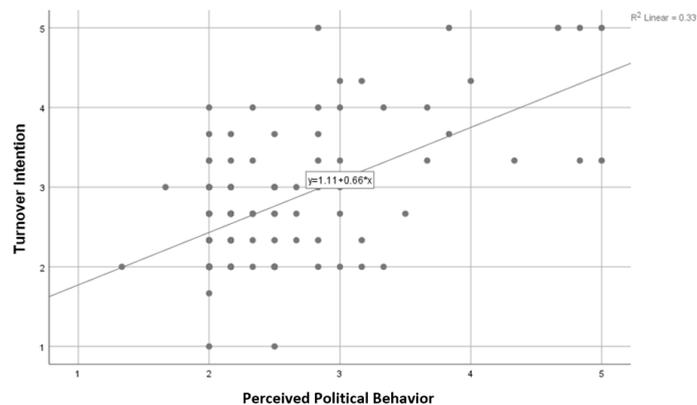


Figure 1: Scatter Plot for Correlation between Perceived Political Behavior and Turnover Intention

As for H2, perceived political behavior has been found to have a significant positive effect on emotional exhaustion ($F = 35.701$, $p = .000$). Results also manifested that perceived political behavior elucidates 26% of variance that happens in the emotional exhaustion ($R^2 = .257$). In addition, beta coefficient has been found to be significant ($\beta = .465$, $p = .000$) that means for every 1-unit increase in perceived political behavior, emotional exhaustion will increase by .465. Accordingly, H2 is supported and the regression equation could be as shown in figure 2.

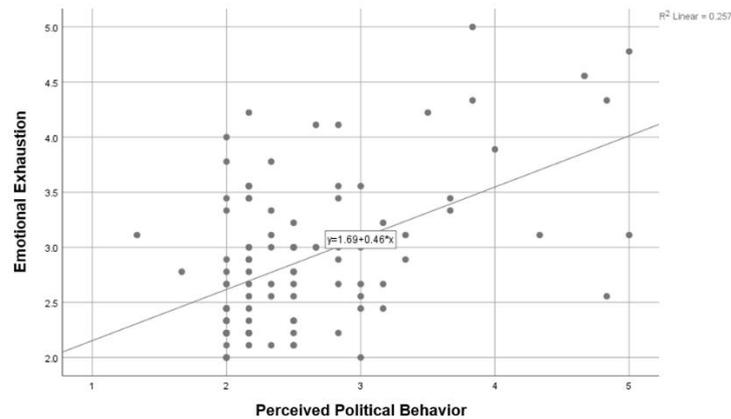


Figure 2: Scatter Plot for Correlation between Perceived Political Behavior and Emotional Exhaustion

This result was confirmed also by Chan and James (2020). This result could be explained as when the employees perceive political and manipulative behaviors in the workplace, they feel frustrated, and over time they become emotionally drained and exhausted.

Concerning H3, emotional exhaustion has been found to have a significant positive effect on turnover intention ($F = 77.016, p = .000$). Besides, results revealed that emotional exhaustion explains 43% of variance that happens in the turnover intention ($R^2 = .428$). Furthermore, beta coefficient has been found to be significant ($\beta = .818, p = .000$) that means for every 1-unit increase in emotional exhaustion, turnover intention will increase by .818. So, H3 is supported and the regression equation could be as shown in figure 3.

This result was confirmed by previous studies (Chan & James, 2020; Grobelna, 2021; Parray et al., 2022). This result could be explained as when employees experience emotional exhaustion, their desire to remain will decrease. In addition, they will have strong intention to leave their organization as a type of coping strategy with the emotional exhaustion.

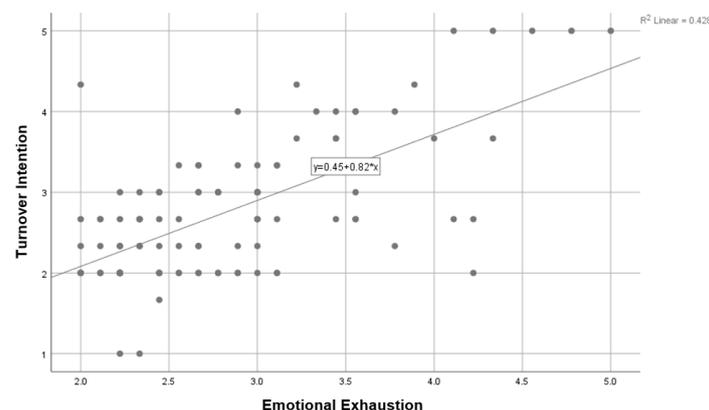
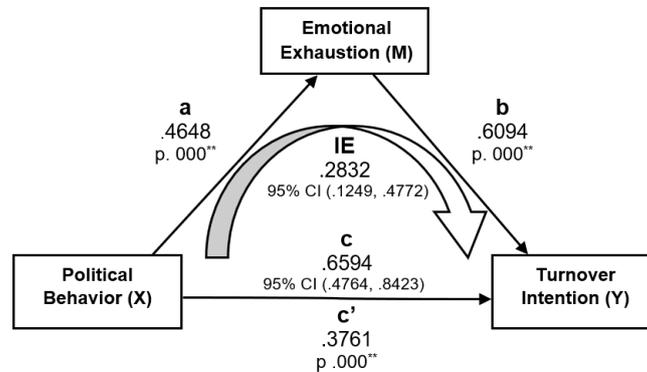


Figure 3: Scatter Plot for Correlation between Emotional Exhaustion and Turnover Intention

To test H4, a bootstrapping of 5000 samples at a confidence interval (CI) of 95% was used to conduct a mediation analysis. A regression analysis model (figure 4 & table 4) was developed to get the three coefficients of **a** ($\beta = .4648, p = .000$), **b** ($\beta = .6094, p = .000$), and **c'** ($\beta = .3761, p = .000$). The **c'** coefficient represents the direct effect of perceived political behavior (**X**) on turnover intention (**Y**) and it has been found to be significant because p value $< .01$. The indirect effect (**IE**) of **X** on **Y** through emotional exhaustion (**M**) is also significant ($\beta = .2832, 95\% \text{ CI} = .1249 \text{ to } .4772$), since

zero does not fall between the lower and upper limits of the CI. So, emotional exhaustion acts as a mediator in the effect of perceived political behavior on turnover intention. The significance of both the direct and indirect effect of political behavior on turnover intention means that the mediation of emotional exhaustion is a partial mediation as it does not fully prevent the direct effect. Thus, H4 is partially supported.



Note. a = Direct Effect of X on M, b = Direct Effect of M on Y, c' = Direct Effect of X on Y, IE = Indirect Effect of X on Y = a*b, c = Total Effect of X on Y = (DE + IE), **p-value is significant at the .01 level.

Figure 4: The Mediating Role of Emotional Exhaustion in the effect of Political Behavior on Turnover Intention

Table 4: Emotional Exhaustion Mediation in the effect of Perceived Political Behavior on Turnover Intention

Direct Effect of Political Behavior (X) on Turnover Intention (Y)						Indirect Effect of Political Behavior (X) on Turnover Intention (Y) through Emotional Exhaustion (M)			
Coefficient	SE	t	Sig.	LLCI	ULCI	Coefficient	Boot SE	LLCI	ULCI
.3761	.0923	4.0750	.000**	.1931	.5592	.2832	.0909	.1249	.4772

Note. X = Predictor Variable, Y = Outcome Variable, M = Mediator, LLCI = Lower Limit Confidence Interval, ULCI = Upper Limit Confidence Interval, **p-value is significant at the .01 level.

This result was affirmed by Huang, Chuang & Lin (2003). The role of emotional exhaustion as a mediator could be explained as when an employee finds others gain benefits due to their political behavior, he will feel stressed. If this feeling lasts for long time, the employee will experience emotional exhaustion as a response to the stress of perceived political behavior. After the employee is emotionally drained, he will feel uncomfortable in his organization and start to search for new opportunities outside with an intent to leave.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The study aimed at examining the effect of perceived political behavior on employees' turnover intention. Additionally, the study aimed at investigating whether emotional exhaustion mediates the effect of political behavior on turnover intention. The results revealed that perceived political behavior has a significant positive effect on turnover intention as well as emotional exhaustion. Moreover, emotional exhaustion has been found to have a significant positive effect on turnover

intention. Furthermore, the study results pointed out that emotional exhaustion partially mediates the effect of perceived political behavior on turnover intention. Hence, hotels management should put more efforts to diminish political behavior and emotional exhaustion as they lead to the turnover intention, which is a major problem faced by the hospitality industry. Regarding political behavior, managers should keep the same distance from all employees to avoid their feeling of jealous, which may push them to behave politically. In addition, managers could manage employees' political behavior by precluding toxic employees who behave politically to gain self-interests. Concerning emotional exhaustion, management should provide comfortable work environment for employees by offering flexible shifts, specific task description, work breaks, and fair workload allocation. Moreover, to enhance the ability of employees to handle emotional exhaustion, training programs should be provided for them on time management and how to deal with work stress and different types of customers. As for turnover intention, regular meetings with employees is very important to discuss any problems that could lead them to think of quitting.

6. Limitations and Future Research

The study excluded hotels with fewer stars than four, as they usually have fewer and simpler facilities in comparison to four- and five-star hotels. This means they recruit small number of employees who usually have limited skills. In turn, they may be unconcerned by their employees' political behavior or even their retention. Future research could examine other variables that may serve as a mediator in the effect of political behavior on turnover intention, such as organizational justice. In addition, the effect of perceived political behavior on other variables than turnover intention could be investigated, such as job performance, proactive behavior, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. Future research could also conduct the current study on hotels of different geographical areas in Egypt, or on other sectors of hospitality industry.

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