

## The Mediator Role of Negative Affect Impacted by Workplace Bullying on Intention to Leave and Conflict Handling Styles

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### Abstract

*This research was intended to reveal the mediating role of negative affect within the effect of workplace bullying on intention to leave and conflict handling styles. The research was conducted in Konya and Isparta, in Turkey, among 350 health care employees. As a result of the study, workplace bullying and negative affect have a positive relationship. While negative affect has a negative relationship with conflict handling styles, a positive relationship with intention to leave. According to result of the study, it was determined that the variable negative affect has a fully-mediating role within the effect of workplace bullying on intention to leave and conflict handling styles. This study indicates that variable of negative affect has full mediating role within the negative impacts of workplace bullying on intention to leave and conflict handling styles. It is understood that as a result of bullying, individual should control emotions in order to conserve self. It means having individual emotional intelligence. Thus, it is expected that individual would expose less negative affective results (similarly mentioned in our study, decreasing conflict handling style and increasing intention to leave). Hence, impact of a second variable is assumed.*

**Key Words** Workplace Bullying, Negative Affect, Intention to Leave, Conflict Handling Styles.

### Introduction

#### Workplace bullying

There has been not a clear, legal basis or a general guidance related as in which situations this term would be occurred in practice in accordance with workplace bullying or mobbing that seemed and named as a different major subject in many European countries (Zapf and Gross, 2010, p. 497). With this view, workplace bullying represents important methodological problems for researchers (Rayner, 1997, p. 199; Quine, 1999, p. 228). Despite of the fact that, according to Einarsen et al. (2003) the most accepted definition of workplace bullying is that “workplace bullying means to impact one’s job related tasks negatively as harassment, assault, social exclusion” (Moreno-Jiménez *et al.*, 2009, p. 359; Chappell and Martino, 2006, p. 22), besides according to Leymann is that “collection of one or more persons against another person and preparation for an attack and being against to another person by their created group” (Leymann, 1996, p. 168; Duffy and Sperry, 2007, p. 398). Workplace bullying is defined as a process that implemented by one or more employees and covering systematical exclusion attempts in order to harm victim’s personal rights (Quine, 2001, p. 74).

Workplace bullying would have been emerged when a person has been damaged, offended, excluded socially or exposed humiliating behaviors and attempted to one’s position downward and it is required to identify these behaviors as bullying behaviors that they should be expressed repeatedly (at least once a week) and long- lasting ( at least 6 months) (Zapf and Gross, 2010, p. 498; Moreno-Jiménez *et al.*, 2009, p. 359; Einarsen, 2000, p. 384). Workplace bullying can be seen in various types such as humiliating behaviors, threat to professional status like blaming, calling with name, humiliation, threat to personal standing, exclusion, excessive work load, destabilization etc. (Rayner and Hoel, 1997, p. 183).

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### Conflict handling styles

Interpersonal conflict as a dimension of conflict, which consists of negative emotions and feelings (Barki and Hartwick, 2004, p. 219), is defined as negative emotional responses to occurred conflicts between independent individuals or groups and attempts in order to achieve aims (Barki and Hartwick 2004, p. 8). The concept of conflict, which is perceived as to fulfill one's desires and occur negative emotions for the other side (Wall and Callister, 1995, p. 517), uncovers various different behavior styles (Rahim et al., 2000, p. 10). As a one of these behaviors, conflict styles has expressed a general picture of an individual's communication tendency across conflict (Oetzel and Toomey, 2003, p. 601).

Assorted conflict handling style has been presented in the literature (Follett, 1926 and 1940; Blake and Mouton, 1964; Hall, 1969; Thomas and Kilmann 1974; Thomas, 1976; Pruitt 1983; Pruitt and Rubin, 1986; Rahim, 1983). Among these, for example Blake and Mouton (1964) contributed to the literature for the first time conflict handling styles such as forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising and problem solving (Rahim et al., 2000, p. 10). After that, a similar model was developed by Thomas (1976) and Rahim (1983) (Sorenson et al., 1999, p. 27). 5 dimensions of conflict handling style has an important place in the studies and named as integrating, compromising, dominating, obliging, avoiding (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000, p. 54; Rahim et al., 1992, p. 424).

**Integrating** includes open communication, information sharing and determination of differences, that accepted by both sides in order to reach the solution and associated with problem solving that generates creative solutions (Rahim et al., 1992, p. 424; Utley et al., 1989, p. 287; Barki and Hartwick, 2001, p. 202).

**Obliging** reflects a style that not care about differences for realizing the interests of the other side and satisfying that one and emphasises just current situations (Rahim et al., 1992, p. 424; Utley et al., 1989, p. 287; Barki and Hartwick, 2001, p. 202).

**Dominating** expresses win-lose relationship or covered oppressive behaviors that displayed toward the winner (Rahim et al., 1992, p. 425). Besides, this style is meant that efforts of a person by using power, profession or effect to own over another person (Utley et al., 1989, p. 287; Barki and Hartwick, 2001, p. 202).

**Avoiding** is associated with beware or avoided behaviors. A person, who adopts this style, has avoided to fulfill own desires (Rahim et al., 1992, p. 425; Utley et al., 1989, p. 287; Barki and Hartwick, 2001, p. 202).

**Compromising** is associated with conceding own desires of both sides and finding a common ground in order to make an acceptable decisions for parties (Rahim et al., 1992, p. 425; Utley et al., 1989, p. 287; Barki and Hartwick, 2001, p. 202).

There are many individual variables that affects on conflict handling styles mentioned above. Emotion (Thompson et al., 1999), positive and negative affect (Desivilya and Yagil, 2005), personality difference (Callanan et al., 2006; Barki and Hartwick, 2004), emotional awareness (Jordan ve Troth, 2004), assertiveness, ability to emphasize (Kaushal and Kwantes, 2006), status of individuals to choose the way they get used (Gross and Guerrero), owned social skills of individual (Rahim et al., 2002) can be counted among these variables. Especially, as observed examination of individual, who exhibits bullying behaviors, and victim behaviors and also conflict handling styles is important in order to prevent workplace bullying, because of offering a framework (Keashly and Nowell, 2011, p. 431). As based on these approaches, Hypothesis 1 was developed.

**H1:** Workplace bullying is negatively associated with conflict handling styles.

Negative affects that may occur as related with work or as individual, undermines people's skill of coping, who have exposed bullying behaviors, or leads situations that cannot be controlled as individually (Hansen et al., 2011, p. 20). However, individual conflict handling styles offer a framework for some important effects on behavioral choices, aims and actors as related explaining bullying dynamics (Einarsen et al., 2011, p. 432). Therefore, interpersonal conflict management tendencies have expressed as a general identified way to prevent bullying behaviors (Salin, 2008, p. 223). At this point, the effect of negative affect on the relationship between workplace bullying and conflict handling style was asked to search and the following Hypothesis 2 was developed.

**H2:** In the relationship between workplace bullying and conflict handling styles, negative affect have an impact of mediator.

### Negative affect

Lazarus (1991) indicates that positive and negative affects should be seen as separate elements instead as opposed poles. Lazarus expresses that while negative affect is resulted from prevention of individual expectation and aims, positive affects has consisted of perception of achieve an objective or an unexpected gain. Positive affect, which is one of predominant dimensions of spirit, reflects a combination with emotions such as high energy and happiness characterized by positive assessment, however negative affect consists of various emotions like trouble, fear and pain (Philips and Morris, 2012, p. 150).

Conflicts, which occur at the point of differentiation of values, needs, interests, aims, lead for individuals negative emotions called as negative affect (Barki and Hartwick, 2001, p. 198). In a study that conducted by Rizkalla, Wertheim, and Hodgson (2008, p. 1599), individuals, who has implemented conflict handling styles, recede negative affect closely and pay attention to viewpoints of the others instead of managing own affects and also go at finding formula according to needs and interests of both parties. In this study, following Hypothesis was developed by assuming the same perspective.

**H3:** Negative affect is negatively associated with conflict handling styles.

Various results have been observed as in the literature that victims of workplace bullying have lived offently negative factors such as stress, mental stress reactions and low self confidence than individuals who not exposed bullying behaviors (Vartia, 2001, p. 65) and they have mostly diagnosed with depression, anxiety symptoms and negative changes with their mental health than the others (Hansen, et al., 2006, p. 69). Similarly, occurred results because of workplace bullying can be arranged as low self confidence, insomnia, depression, suicide owing to taking pleasure by lethal ideas surgery for stress related factors (Adams, 1997, p. 178). As in the basis of these approaches, it is assumed that workplace bullying behaviors are associated with negative affect and the following Hypothesis was developed.

**H4:** Workplace bullying is positively associated with negative affect.

### Intention to leave

There is no a significant finding which shows workplace bullying as an indicator of actual personel turnover. There are many causes of intention to leave. For instance, burnout (Heinen, et al., 2013), low organizational commitment (Yurchisin et al., 2010; Flinkman et al., 2008; Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008), job dissatisfaction and low affective commitment (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008; Firth et al., 2004), low perceived justice (Loi et al., 2006) and stress (Firth et al., 2004). Also, in the study of Johnsrud and Rosser (2002) it has been emphasized that various factors such as work load, rewards, management relations, support, service quality, life standards impact individuals' careers, status and intentions to leave (Rosser, 2004, p. 294). In the light of acquirements obtained from literature, it is understood that embodiment of emotion occur negatite affect can be named such as depression,

hopelessness, fatigue. Thus, such intense emotions as depression and stress impact intention to leave (Chiang and Chang, 2012, p. 154) and this view has enabled us to develop following Hypothesis.

**H5:** Negative affect is positively associated with intention to leave.

Besides, individuals, who are exposed workplace bullying behaviors, live many negative effects of these behaviors and may have preferred to leave the workplace by believing that the organization underrate their care and their subjective well being status (Djurkovic et al., 2008, p. 406). In the light of this perspective, it is considered that in the relation between workplace bullying and intention to leave the concept of negative affect has a mediating role and Hypothesis 6 and Hypothesis 7 were developed.

**H6:** Workplace bullying is positively associated with intention to leave.

**H7:** In the relationship between workplace bullying and intention to leave, negative affect have an impact of mediator.

## Methodology

### Purposes and hypotheses

This research has been developed to investigate the mediating role of negative affect within the effect of workplace bullying on intention to leave and conflict handling styles in the health care employees.

### Sample and data collection

The study population involves employees (N= 350) working in four public hospitals in Turkey. All personnel at these hospitals working at the time of data collection were contacted, and the study was conducted with 350 employees, selected random sample, who are volunteer to participate (172 employees in public hospital in Konya, 178 employees in public hospital in Isparta). The study was conducted on location with the consensus of the hospital administration. The survey questionnaires were distributed to each department, the participants were provided with written informed consent form, and they were informed that their involvement was voluntary and confidentiality and anonymity of the participants in this study were guaranteed. As a result, 350 questionnaires were analyzed in this study. This study was conducted and planned between June 1, 2011 and August 10, 2012. It was found that age average of the participants is 34,56, average of professional working years is 11.73. Participants have been composed several professions such as nurses (% 47.1), health officer (%18.3) and medical technician (%34.6) and most of them have an education with associate degree (%43.4) and are women (%61.4).

### Survey instruments

A quantitative analysis methodology was used for this exploratory study. Employee attitudes on workplace bullying, positive and negative affect, intention to leave and conflict handling styles were assessed through the workplace bullying scale, PANAS, turnover intentions scale and conflict handling styles scale.

**Positive and negative affect schedule.** Watson, Clark and Tellegen's (1998) PANAS scale was used. The PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) consists of 10 positive affects (interested, excited, strong, enthusiastic, proud, alert, inspired, determined, attentive, and active) and 10 negative affects (distressed, upset, guilty, scared, hostile, irritable, ashamed, nervous, jittery, and afraid). Participants were asked to rate items on a scale from 1 to 5, based on the strength of emotion where 1="very slightly or not at all" and 5="extremely". Initial studies in development of the PANAS showed that the scales are stable at appropriate levels over a 2-month time period, highly internally consistent and largely

uncorrelated. (<http://stressandhealth.stanford.edu/measures/PANAS.html>). It was adapted to Turkish by Gençöz (2000). Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was found for Negative Affect as .83, for Positive Affect as .86. negative and positive affect scores within the scale, were calculated separately (Gençöz, 2000; Eryılmaz and Öğülmüş, 2010). First version of the scale, which has a high validity for Turkish, was used in the research.

**Table 1. Information related to the PANAS scales**

Scale	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach Alpha	N
positive affect	3.00	.93	.8834	10
negative affect	1.91	.82	.8467	10

**Workplace bullying scale:** The scale of Quine, (2001) was used. It was rated with 5- likert (1= never, 5= extremely). The scale is composed of total 20 questions and has 5 dimensions as 4 item “Threat to professional status”, 7 item “Threat to personal standing”, 4 item “Isolation”, 2 item “Overwork”, 4 item “Destabilization”. Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was identified as .81 (Quine, 2001, p. 77). In this study, validity and reliability of scale in Turkish was analyzed.

**Turnover intentions scale:** Validity of the scale, which was taken from the study of Brashear and et al. (2005), was found highly Cronbach Alpha=0.92). the scale was composed of 6 items and was rated with 5- likert (5= Strongly disagree, 1= Absolutely agree). In this study, validity and reliability of scale in Turkish was analyzed.

**Conflict handling styles scale:** The scale was taken from Rahim’s (1983) study. The questions within the scale was being shared for various dimensions like 7 questions for Integrating, 7 questions for Avoiding, 5 questions for Dominating, 6 questions for Obliging, 4 questions for Compromising. Rahim’s scale that composed of 28 questions was included in the study. It was rated, by depending on original scale, with 5 likert (1= Strongly disagree, 5= Absolutely agree). It was adapted to Turkish by Kozan (1989). Dimensions of Integrating, Avoiding, Dominating, Obliging, Compromising was composed respectively of 7 questions ( $\alpha$ : 0.8615), 6 questions ( $\alpha$ :0.7365), 5 questions ( $\alpha$ :0.7330), 4 questions ( $\alpha$ :0.6421) and 6 questions ( $\alpha$ :0.6659) and the dimensions was found quite reliable ( $\alpha$ >0.60) or reliable highly ( $\alpha$ >0.80). Version of the scale, which made validity in Turkish by Kozan (2989), was used in this research.

## Data Analysis

In this research, the data were evaluated by the packaged software of SPSS 10.0. To examine the content validity of the measures, was tested by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and path analysis was performed by LISREL VIII program.

**Table 2. Items and item loadings from confirmatory factor analyses for intention to leave scale**

Items	(CFA) Standardized Loadings	(CFA) <sub>1</sub>	Item reliability	t- Value	Item-Total Correlations	Mean	SS	CR	AVE
<b>Turnover intention</b>								.83	.82
1.	.72 <sup>a</sup>								
2.	.82 <sup>a</sup>								
3.	.85	.85	.72	19.49	.904**	1.95	1.4		
4.	.91	.90	.81	21.54	.921**	2.02	1.4		
5.	.93	.95	.90	23.54	.959**	1.95	1.3		
6.	.92	.92	.85	22.40	.934**	1.97	1.4		

Note: Standardized item loadings reported for CFA.  $p < .001$  for all loadings.

<sup>a</sup> Dropped item to need modification indices CR: Construct reliability.

Goodness-of-Fit Statistics:  $\chi^2/df=93.46/9=10.38$ , NNFI=.92, CFI=.95, AGFI=.81, GFI=.92, IFI=.95, RMSEA=.164.  
 Goodness-of-Fit Statistics\*:  $\chi^2/df=8.62/2=4.31$ , NNFI=.99, CFI=1.00, AGFI=.94, GFI=.99, IFI=1.00, RMSEA=.09.

**Intention to leave:** For the purpose of identifying the validity of intention to leave scale was made confirmatory factor analysis. In the results of confirmatory factor analysis, could not to be reached to Goodness of Fit scores with the original scale that composed of 6 questions (Goodness-of-Fit Statistics:  $\chi^2/df=93.46/9=10.38$ , NNFI=.92, CFI=.95, AGFI=.81, GFI=.92, IFI=.95, RMSEA=.164). First and second questions were removed from the scale because they needed correction index and so, Goodness of- Fit score could be reached ( $\chi^2/df=8.62/2=4.31$ , NNFI=.99, CFI=1.00, AGFI=.94, GFI=.99, IFI=1.00, RMSEA=.09). In the scale,  $0,05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0,10$  is just as acceptable level (Schermelleh and Moosbrugger, 2003). Accordingly, new scale that composed of 4 questions was found as having Goodness of Fit score.

After achieving adequate overall fit indices, the measurement model was further evaluated for its reliability and validity. Chin (1998) indicated that “the standardized loading for each item should be greater than 0.7 to demonstrate reliability but a value of 0.50 is still acceptable” (Nusair and Hua, 2010, p. 315). Besides, t value is also supposed to be significant (Hui, 2003). The reliability of the measure included in the model ranges from 0.72 to 0.90 thus it indicates good item reliability. Besides, t value is also supposed to be significant (See. Table 2). To test the reliability of the constructs, reviewers suggested us reporting composite reliability (CR) instead of Cronbach Alpha (internal consistency of measures) (<http://zencaroline.blogspot.com/2007/06/compositereliability.html>. Accessed:03.09.2010).

As it is seen in Table 2, CR coefficients are found at.83. The scale of intention to leave offers construct reliability accordingly.

Having ensured that a scale instrument meets the necessary levels of reliability, the next step would be the scale validity. Although there are various forms of validity, this study tested only convergent validity (Nusair and Hua, 2010, p. 316). The average variance extracted (AVE) as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981), was used to assess convergent validity. Guidelines suggest that the average variance extracted value should exceed 0.50 for a construct (Nusair and Hua, 2010, p. 318). As shown in Table 2, AVE coefficient is 0.82, over the limit of 0.50. Hereunder intention to leave scale offers construct validity. It appears to be the values of mean at high level. Item-total correlations of factors were examined for level of internal consistency for scale. The median of the distinguish abilities of the items has been found 0.93, which means that it is a pretty high value. The item-total correlations for intention to leave items were values varying from 0.90 to 0.96. Hereunder, it could be stated that the scale of intention to leave shows a good level of internal consistency for the scale.

**Table 3. Items and item loadings from confirmatory factor analyses for workplace bullying scale**

Items	(CFA) Standardized Loadings	(CFA) $\lambda_1$	Item reliability	t- Value	Item-Total Correlations	Mean	SS	CR	AVE
Workplace Bullying Threat to professional status								.84	.77
1.	.76	.80	.64	17.27	.895	1.81	1.19		
2.	.82	.87	.76	19.51	.911	1.91	1.71		
3.	.76	.72	.52	14.75	.780	1.37	.82		
4.	.65 <sup>b</sup>							.87	.62
Threat to personal standing									
5.	.73	.75	.56	15.98	.851	1.75	1.14		
6.	.88	.89	.79	20.70	.907	1.58	.99		
7.	.77	.79	.62	17.19	.852	1.56	.97		

8.	.58 <sup>b</sup>													
9.	.76	.73	.53	15.30	.805	1.44	.92							
10.	.52 <sup>b</sup>													
11.	.66 <sup>b</sup>										.83	.76		
Isolation														
12.	.79	.79	.62	16.99	.890	1.47	.89							
13.	.76	.75	.56	15.75	.831	1.38	.82							
14.	.83	.83	.69	18.23	.907	1.45	.93							
Overwork											.75	.61		
15.	.81	.82	.67	17.29	.903	1.53	.97							
16.	.74	.74	.55	15.21	.905	1.51	.98							
Destabilization											.88	.65		
17.	.81	.81	.66	17.80	.856	1.73	1.07							
18.	.88	.89	.79	20.64	.895	1.76	1.16							
19.	.81	.81	.66	17.86	.860	1.68	1.09							
20.	.72	.72	.52	15.10	.818	1.64	1.04							

Note: Standardized item loadings reported for CFA.  $p < .001$  for all loadings.

<sup>a</sup> Dropped item to need modification indices, <sup>b</sup> The standardized loading for each item should be greater than 0.7 to demonstrate reliability but a value of 0.50 is still acceptable, olduğu için düşen soru.

Goodness-of-Fit Statistics:  $\chi^2/df=734.78/160=4.59$ , NNFI=.88, CFI=.90, AGFI=.77, GFI=.83, IFI=.90, RMSEA=.101.

Goodness-of-Fit Statistics\*:  $\chi^2/df=295.53/94=3.14$ , NNFI=.93, CFI=.95, AGFI=.86, GFI=.90, IFI=.95, RMSEA=.078.

Workplace bullying scale. In the original scale that composed of 20 questions and 5 dimensions could not be reached Goodness of Fit scores (Goodness-of-Fit Statistics:  $\chi^2/df=734.78/160=4.59$ , NNFI=.88, CFI=.90, AGFI=.77, GFI=.83, IFI=.90, RMSEA=.101). 4., 8., 10. and 11. questions were removed from the scale because they needed correction index and so, Goodness of- Fit score could be reached (Goodness-of-Fit Statistics\*:  $\chi^2/df=295.53/94=3.14$ , NNFI=.93, CFI=.95, AGFI=.86, GFI=.90, IFI=.95, RMSEA=.078). Factor loads relating to each factor are given in Table 3. All the factor loads are seen to be over .70. This new version of the scale has no questions that have item reliability score as below .50. The reliability of the measure included in the model ranged from 0.52 to .79 thus indicating good item reliability. Besides, t scores we found significantly (See. Table 3). As shown in Table 3 CR coefficients are placed in acceptable distance as .75-.88. According to that the scale has supplied composite reliability. As shown in Table 3, also AVE coefficient is .61, its mean over .50. The scale has supplied construct validity. The item-total correlations for the scale items were: Various scores between the distance as .78 ile 91. According to that it could be expressed that scale is showing a good level of internal consistency.

## Results

Correlation results related with variables are placed in Table 4.

**Table 4.** The Result of Correlation Analysis

	Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Positive affect (1)	3.00	.927														
Negative affect (2)	1.91	.819	.302**													
Integrating (3)	3.91	.835	.052	-.167**												
Avoiding (4)	3.33	.829	-.082	-.193**	.334**											
Dominating (5)	2.73	1.022	-.260**	-.265**	.142**	.397**										
Obliging (6)	3.13	.713	.087	.074	.362**	.291**	.295**									
Compromising (7)	3.62	.802	.216**	.067	.471**	.307**	.131*	.532**								
Total point Conflict handling styles (8)	3.33	.641	-.077	-.151**	.603**	.642**	.591**	.640**	.606**							
Intention to leave (9)	1.97	1.311	.137*	.364**	-.290**	-.328**	-.234**	-.078	-.059	-.283**						
Threat to professional status (10)	1.70	.923	.116*	.486**	-.207**	-.249**	-.328**	-.031	.053	-.239**	.401**					
Threat to personal standing (11)	1.58	.856	.115*	.491**	-.299**	-.229**	-.229**	-.049	-.066	-.229**	.483**	.675**				
Isolation (12)	1.43	.773	.028	.373**	-.307**	-.244**	-.160**	-.087	-.117*	-.228**	.455**	.547**	.734**			
Overwork (13)	1.52	.883	.010	.371**	-.335**	-.253**	-.168**	-.150**	-.133*	-.274**	.484**	.576**	.699**	.747**		
Destabilization (14)	1.70	.932	.091	.432**	-.268**	-.272**	-.263**	-.106*	-.065	-.255**	.537**	.665**	.756**	.693**	.738**	
Workplace Bullying (15)	1.59	.755	.085	.500**	-.326**	-.289**	-.269**	-.098	-.074	-.284**	.547**	.809**	.893**	.852**	.869**	.896**

Bullying has a relation with conflict handling style negatively ( $r=-.284$ ). Negative affect has a relation with conflict handling style ( $r=-.151$ ) negatively. Bullying and negative affect are correlated positively ( $r=.500$ ). Negative affect and intention to leave are correlated positively ( $r=.364$ ). Also, bullying and intention to leave are correlated positively ( $r=.547$ ) ( $p<.05$ ).

### The structural model

The hypothesized model is depicted in Fig. 1.

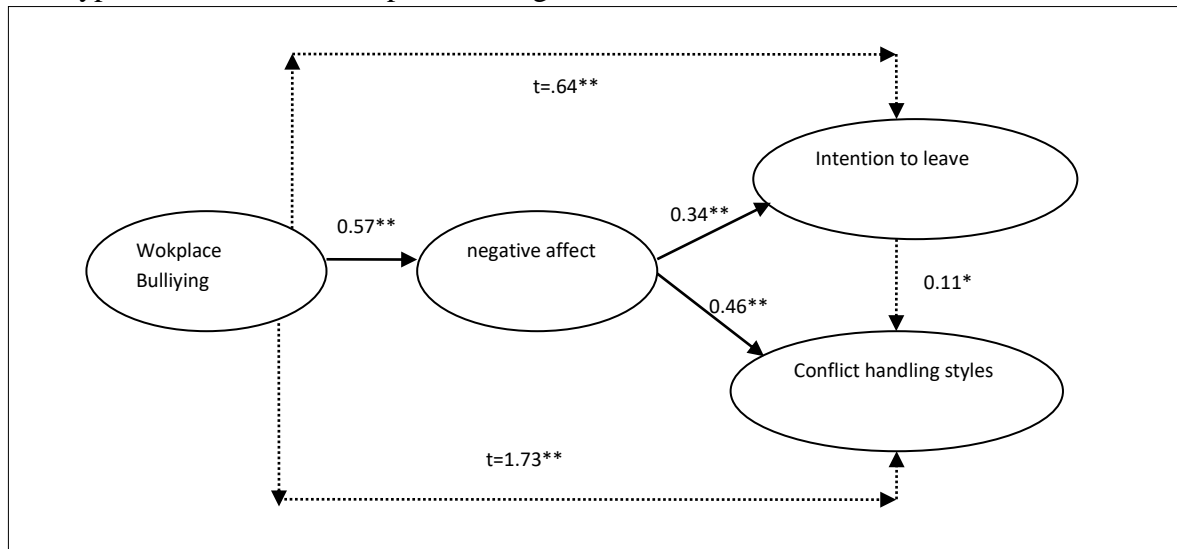


Figure 1. The model of the research ..... (indicates the invalid relationship)  $t^*=.64$   $t^{**}=1.73$

According to the study of Baron and Kenny (1986), data was analyzed within the mediating conditions (Şimşek, 2007, p. 25-31) in order to test hypothesis and define the mediating effect of negative affect. In the first stage, the relation between bullying and intention to leave was identified with path analysis. In the similar way, the relation between bullying and conflict handling style was identified with path analysis. In result of path analysis, path coefficient between bullying and intention to leave was found as .22 ( $p<.05$ ). In result of path analysis, path coefficient between bullying and conflict handling style was found as .35 ( $p<.05$ ). This result has been reflected the first one of the mediating conditions and it has pointed a possible relation.

In second stage, Model 1 was examined in order to define the mediating effect of negative affect on bullying and intention to leave. In the examination, the relations between bullying and negative affect (.57,  $p<.01$ ), negative affect and intention to leave (.34,  $p<.01$ ) and negative affect and conflict handling styles (.46,  $p<.01$ ) were found significantly. Accordingly, Hypothesis 3, Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5 were accepted. Additionally, according to these results all mediating conditions were fulfilled. When Goodness of Fit indexes related with Model 1 were examined, following results were found, CFI (Comparative fit index) score as .99, GFI (Goodness of fit index) score as .99, AGFI (Adjusted goodness of fit index) score as .93,  $\chi^2$  (Chi-square statistics) score as 4.79, degree of freedom (df)=1,  $\chi^2/df$  score as 4.79 and RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation) score as 0.10. In the model reached scores are close to Goodness of Fit scores, so it could be expressed that model is acceptable.

In Model 1, being added a direct path from bullying onto intention to leave and conflict handling styles had not leded an improvement in model fits, on the contrary, made a negative contribution to the Goodness of Fit. Path coefficient between bullying and intention



to leave was found as .04 ( $p > .05$ ) (Fig. 1). So, such a result has reflected that there is no relationship between bullying and intention to leave ( $p > .05$ ). Similarly, path coefficient between bullying and conflict handling styles was found as .10 ( $p > .05$ ) (Fig. 1). So, such a result has reflected that there is no relationship between bullying and conflict handling styles ( $p > .05$ ). Besides, in the tested model, the path from bullying both to intention to leave ( $t = -.64$ ) and conflict handling styles ( $t = 1.73$ ) is not significant, so it could be understood that the tested model is a mediating model. According to that, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 6 were accepted.

For reached scores in the model, are close to fit scores, it could be expressed that model is acceptable. The absence of the relation between bullying and intention to leave and conflict handling styles has demonstrated full mediating role. As a result, it could be stated negative affect has a full mediating role in the relation between bullying, intention to leave and conflict handling styles. Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 7 were supported. Thereby, at sight these all results it is possible to say that bullying has an effect on intention to leave and conflict handling styles just with the mediating role of negative affect. So, Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 7 were accepted.

## Discussions

In a nutshell, according to presented information within the study, workplace bullying and negative affect have a positive relationship. While negative affect has a negative relationship with conflict handling styles, a positive relationship with intention to leave. According to result of the study, it was determined that the variable negative affect has a fully- mediating role within the effect of workplace bullying on intention to leave and conflict handling styles.

As one of the results of this study, the positive relation between workplace bullying and negative affect can be supported similar findings in the literature. Indeed, in the study of Campbell and Morrison (2007, p. 1587) workplace bullying is found as related with paranoid thoughts that individuals have negative views and emotions about themselves and their lives. Correspondingly, having individuals, who exposed workplace bullying, negative mental status such as anger, insomnia, restlessness, crying, feeling bad has been indicated in study results carried by Karataş and Öztürk (2011, p. 85). Similarly, it has been identified that workplace bullying prompts many negative results for individuals. For example, burnout (Laschinger *et al.*, 2010, p. 2739), stress, absenteeism, low emotional well being (Bentley, *et al.*, 2012, p. 358), revenge (Moreno-Jiménez *et al.*, 2009, p. 362), intention to leave (Tepper *et al.*, 2009, p. 164) etc.

Negative affect developed after workplace bullying has caused to complicate an individual to cope with conflict separately. Actually, many positive effects of positive thinking for individual such as value judgements, expectations have been mentioned (Rego *et al.*, 2014, p. 200). Similar effect manifests in the process of conflict handling. For as much as conflict and emotions have affected each other. One, who experienced negative affect, has preferred seldomly integration and compromising that one of the most ideal ways (Desivilya and Yagil, 2005). Therefore, it should not be overlooked that negative affect has an important impact on conflict handling.

As another result indicates negative affect has a relation with intention to leave positively. According to obtained findings, negative affect of employees that occurred by workplace bullying impacted negatively both employees and views about occupations and organization. According to results of in the study conducted by McCormack *et al.* (2009, p. 2117) and Berthelsen *et al.* (2011, p. 183), while workplace bullying undermines affective commitment to the organization, it increases intention to leave.

Finally, it was indicated that variable of negative affect has full mediating role within the negative impacts of workplace bullying on intention to leave and conflict handling styles. It is understood that as a result of bullying, individual should control self emotional management and be able to control emotions. It means having individual emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998; Mayer *et al.*, 2000; Cooper and Sawaf, 2000). Thus, it is expected that individual would expose less negative affective results (similary mentioned in our study, decreasing conflict handling style and increasing intention to leave). Hence, impact of a second variable is assumed. For the future researches, investigating the influences of emotional intelligence in this process would contributed in the literature significantly.

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