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Perceived Over Qualification And Dysfunctional Outcomes: A Moderated-Mediation Model Of Relative Deprivation And Career Centrality

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ABSTRACT

This study was intended to research the effect of perceived overqualification on counterproductive work behavior (CWB), emotional exhaustion (EE), and turnover intention (TI) among the faculty members of the Pakistani public higher education system. The study particularly examined the mediating/intermediating impact of the relative deprivation (RD) and moderating impact of career centrality (CC). The study hypothesized that highly qualified employees felt emotional strain and disengagement when they perceived their skills to have been underutilized and this affects their behavior in a negative manner. Quantitative research design was followed with the use of a structured questionnaire that was given to 355 fulltime faculty members of the public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Pakistan, who were selected on the basis of random sampling. The tool had dimensions of POQ, RD, CWB, EE, and TI. The data were analyzed using SPSS where descriptive and reliability analysis were conducted and then using Smart-PLS where measurement and structural model tests were done. Findings indicated that perceived overqualification was a significant predictor of relative deprivation that completely mediated its influence on counterproductive work behavior, emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. The centrality of career was not statistically significant as a moderating factor. Such results highlight that perceptions of unfairness and inadequate use are some of the psychological factors that are major contributors to burnout and deviance among academic employees. The research has some practical implications to university administrators and HR policy makers: matching qualifications with jobs, introducing the transparent reward systems, and providing the psychological support programs, which help to avoid emotional burnout. The future research needs to consider longitudinal designs and the use of a sample in the private-sector or inter-provincial to increase the generalizability and investigate other mediating and moderating constructs.

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Keywords: Perceived Overqualification, Relative Deprivation, Emotional Exhaustion, Counterproductive Work Behavior, Turnover Intention, Career Centrality, Higher Education, Pakistan.

Background / Introduction

The perceived over qualification (POQ) has become one of the topical concerns in the modern organizational research because labor markets provide more educated and skillful employees and many jobs have not yet been transformed regarding their content and complexity. Increased turnover intention is an unbroken and practically valuable result of POQ. In numerous empirical studies and syntheses, employees who feel that they are overqualified tend to declare more intentions of leaving the organization. As an illustration, the evidence that POQ is positively correlated with turnover intentions is small-to-moderate, based on research using large samples and meta-analytic data, instigated by cognitive and affective responses to person-job misfit (Harari et al., 2017; Chen, Yang, and Lei, 2021). In theory, employees develop frustration and a poor growth perspective when they perceive that their skills are not being fully exploited and this makes them seek the job opportunities available out of necessity leading to their intention to leave. Since turnover intention is a very strong indicator of actual turnover, the POQ-turnover relationship constitutes an evident management issue: organizations that do not identify and harness employee potential stand the risk of high voluntary turnovers and human capital drainage.

Perceived overqualification is also associated with active and detrimental workplace behaviors commonly referred to as counterproductive work behavior (CWB). CWB entails voluntary behaviors that hurt the organization or its members as these include workplace deviance, sabotage, and interpersonal aggression (Bennett and Robinson, 2000). The empirical research indicates that POQ has a positive correlation with CWB, and various studies have established a linkage between the perceptions of an individual as being overqualified and various psychological processes including relative deprivation or boredom, which explain the explanation of the relationship between the two. In a representative research, the perceived overqualification was associated with the emergence of relative deprivation, and denouncing with a variety of CWBs, the association stayed significant after the consideration of demographic and job factors (Schreurs, Hamstra, Jawahar, and Akkermans, 2021). Other longitudinal and multi-wave designs also reproduce the POQ-CWB association and pose that the active misbehaviors by employees can be used as trying to reinstate what they believe to be equitable or as an expression of frustration associated with feeling under-utilized. This pattern of behavior has a critical role due to the harmful effect on productivity, morale, and corporate reputation and similarity in other detrimental consequences like diminished citizenship behaviors.

The third notable examines the effect of POQ on the well-being of its employees, especially emotional exhaustion, which is the primary aspect of burnout. Emotional exhaustion is a display of emotional over strains and diminishing one emotional capacity (Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, 2001). Recent empirical research shows that workers who consider themselves overqualified have more emotional exhaustion, which is arguably due to long-term dissonance in the ability of the worker and job requirements. As an example, research in technological and service-related settings has established that POQ correlates with an increased level of emotional exhaustion and that this stressor can impair creative output and promote withdrawal behavior (Gong et al., 2021; Chambel

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and Castro, 2021). According to effort-reward imbalance, overqualified workers place extended resources of personal resources (pursuing education, working hard, aspiration) but lower job difficulty, appreciation, or difficulty than they anticipate, and this discrepancy will breed depletion and strains. Emotional exhaustion has not only one consequence (mental health, reduced job satisfaction) but also another consequence (absenteeism, reduced performance), so it is one of the key dependent variables in any integrative model of POQ outcomes.

Though both turnover intention, CWB, and emotional exhaustion are different domains of outcomes attitudinal, behavioral, and psychological respectively, turnover intention and CWB are theoretically and empirically interconnected in POQ studies. The early underutilization of an overqualified employee and associated emotions of exhaustion can be the antecedent to overt behaviors (e.g., CWBs) and ultimately cause the employee to develop exit cognitions. On the other hand, the reinforcement of stress and increase in the turnover decision could be triggered by early involvement in minor deviant behaviors. Various studies have thus argued that multifaceted consequences of overqualification would be better understood by analyzing two or more outcomes at the same time to determine whether various mechanisms or time series explain the diverse outcomes. This multi-outcome view can be argued by meta-analytic evidence that POQ is associated with a broad set of negative outcomes, but with a weaker association by outcome ranging from a minimum effect size through different settings using different operationalizations of overqualification.

In addition to creating bivariate relationships, the recent studies show that it is important to get the conditions of boundaries and intervening processes to determine when and how POQ creates negative outcomes. Although the existing model still considers POQ as the central independent variable and aims to assess turnover intention, CWB, and emotional exhaustion as dependent variables, other extant studies suggest that there are some contextual and personal variables which can either magnify or attenuate the relationships. As an example, job design, quality of leadership and job crafting attenuation can reduce the conversion of POQ to deviance or turnover but an organizational climate that does not care about the talents of its employees can enhance emotional burnout. The current background focuses on the three DVs without further specifying the mediator and moderator in the current case, however, understanding of these conditioning factors would be valuable in reading the effect sizes, as well as, controlling the interventions to minimize the adverse effects of POQ.

POQ is a significant disparity between requirements and the abilities of workers, which is displayed in attitudinal, behavioral, and psychological consequences. Turnover intention, counterproductive work behavior and emotional exhaustion reflect the complementary aspects of POQ contribution to individuals and organizations; empirically all three have shown sufficient positive outcomes in many scenarios, measurement plans as well as research designs. Incorporating the study of these results in a single framework allows not only a theoretically important achievement, namely the establishment of mutual and exclusive routes but, at the same time, a practical contribution is also made, namely the determination of which organizational levers have the most significant potential to improve employee drainage, deviance, and loss. This integrated focus, therefore, serves as a timely solution to organizations being more utilization of talent and to overqualification latent costs.

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Problem Statement

The current working environment is witnessing an upsurge in the challenge because employees are increasingly displaying unfavorable results of increased turnover intention, counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) and emotional fatigue. All of these lead to substantial damages to the performance of an organization, its morale, and sustainability, making them dangerous to operational well-being and employee safety in the long term (Ren et al., 2025; Mohamed, 2025). With the labor markets being already saturated with the highly qualified talent, when workers feel unappreciated or insufficiently utilized, these negative attitudes and behaviors are apt to be expressed in these dire consequences (Chen et al., 2021; Hameed et al., 2024).

Turnover intention is one of such challenges that have become a huge topic of concern in the world. The modern-day research indicates that workers who believe they do not fit the job or are not appreciated are also prone to leave their companies much more frequently (Luo et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2021). The chronic turnover intention disrupts organizational learning, rising operational expenses, and the continuity of strategic value, particularly in the fields of knowledge intensity (Hameed et al., 2024). Such an increasing desire to quit is indicative of a lack of satisfaction with the existing job status as well as the supposed lack of career growth or of proper use of personal competencies (Ren et al., 2025).

Just as worrying is the development of counterproductive work behaviors (CWB)-volitional behaviors that are detrimental of the organization or its occupants. Recent empirical evidence suggests that CWB has risen in the conditions, where workers experience a feeling of injustice, prejudice, or the inability to utilize the available jobs (Schreurs et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2025). These activities consist of withdrawal behavior, sabotage, interpersonal deviance or withholding of information thus are slowly eroding social and functional aspects of the workplace culture. Low frequency CWB even is linked to a lower level of trust, team dysfunction, and high productivity losses (Ren et al., 2025; Schreurs et al., 2021). The continuity of CWB is a behavioral exemplification of frustration and checking out, which supports why setting up the background of its provoking factors is a compelling issue in the contemporary work environment.

Moreover, the psychological burnout that occurs due to the persistent work-related stress, i.e., emotional exhaustion, has become increasingly common as an occupational problem. Empirical studies highlight the fact that workers who feel that there is inconsistency between their potential and job demands tend to become more weary, disheartened, and emotionally drained (Gong et al., 2021; Mohamed, 2025). Emotional burnout negatively affects the employee engagement, creativity, and resiliency, and also increases absenteeism and the lack of commitment to the organization (Ren et al., 2025). Research in a wide range of industries, including the medical field, education industry, and service, indicates that emotional fatigability has emerged as a vital predictor of burnout and turnover overall (Mohamed, 2025; Gong et al., 2021).

The independent study of turnover intention, counterproductive work behavior, and emotional exhaustion has been studied widely; however, the occurrence of these aspects at the same time has not been addressed properly based on empirical evidence. Most organizations are dealing with them individually, with disjointed interventions that do not consider these issues as interconnected harming factors or as mutually reinforcing (Ren et al., 2025; Luo et al., 2023). Both cognitive withdrawal (turnover intention), behavioral deviance (CWB) and emotional depletion (exhaustion) are a multidimensional

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version of employee disengagement, which needs comprehensive research.

Thus, according to the available literature, there is an urgent need to conduct the integrated empirical study of turnover intention, counterproductive work behavior, and emotional exhaustion as the mutually occurring findings, which complement each other, and describe the negative results of workplace dissatisfaction and misfit. The interaction of these effects and the way they support each other is the key to creating the overall approach to human resource management that is focused on the maintenance of motivation among the employees, the stability of the organization, and its sustainability in the long run.

Aim of the Study

The main objective of the proposed research is to investigate the effects of the perceived over qualification (POQ) on negative work outcomes of employees namely turnover intention, counterproductive work behavior (CWB) and emotional exhaustion in the moderation of relative deprivation. The research also tends to observe how career centrality mediates the indirect connection between POQ and these outcomes, thus pointing out upon what application and to whom the adverse impacts of the perceived over qualification are the most significant. Incorporating cognitive and affective insights into the relative deprivation construct, this study will aim at giving a comprehensive insight into the mechanisms through which the perceived overqualification is converted into cognitive withdrawal, behavioral deviance and emotional strain among the employees.

Objectives of the Study

To test the direct relationship among turnover intention, counterproductive work behavior as well as emotional exhaustion on perceived overqualification to investigate the direct influence of perceived overqualification on turnover intention among the employees.

To determine the relationship between perceived overqualification and negative work outcomes and determine whether the relationship is mediated by relative deprivation.

To establish the moderating effect of career centrality on the relationship between relative deprivation and each of the outcome variables.

To examine whether the relative deprivation mediated the influence of perceived overqualification on turnover intention, counterproductive work behavior and emotional exhaustion,

To provide theoretical contributions to the relative deprivation structure not just extension but articulation of dysfunctional working results of cognitive (POQ), affective (RD) and motivational (career centrality) attributes.

Literature review

Perceived over qualification (POQ) the subjective perception of being overqualified in that education, skills or experience are more than required in a job has been a popular antecedent of various adverse employee outcomes POQ induces a perceived feeling of non-belonging and underutilization which may destroy motivation and satisfaction (Maynard et al., scale development; review evidence). In practice, POQ has been found to forecast various employee reactions, both cognitive withdrawal and active deviance and strain, in both contexts and across nations.

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POQ and relative deprivation (mechanism link)

Relative deprivation (RD) is the concept that reflects how people think they have been unfairly deprived compared to the relevant others or to their expectations; it gives attention to losses or to deprived bounties and generates angst, frustrations as well as resentment (classic theory). The theoretical connection between POQ and RD is also simple, as employees who feel overqualified compare their contribution (skills, effort) with the results (task difficulty, rewards) and perceive a discrepancy, which creates RD (person-job misfit - perceived injustice). The evidence seems to follow this route: Schreurs et al. (2021) and Erdogan and colleagues (previously background information) discovered that POQ has a positive correlation with RD in several samples, and RD is the reason why POQ can lead to negative affect and behavior.

H1 (mechanism): Relative deprivation of the employees is positively correlated with Perceived overqualification.

Relative Deprivation and Turnover Intention (RD - DV1)

The affective and cognitive condition of RD predisposes employees to the exit cognitions. Whenever employees perceive themselves as treated unfairly about referent other employees or as compared to what they might deserve in their job, there are increased chances of exploring other employment opportunities and have intentions to quit (turnover intention). The longitudinal and cross-sectional studies indicate that RD (or constructs closely related to the RD, e.g., perceived injustice or breach of the psychological contract) predicts larger turnover intention, as leaving is one of the means to rectify perceived injustice or find different environments where qualifications are more utilized. The recent empirical studies of POQ contexts indicate that RD is a mediator of POQ- turnover relationships in knowledge-intensive samples.

H2: There is a positive correlation between relative deprivation and turnover intention. This means that POQ will enhance turnover intention through high relative deprivation.

Counterproductive Work Behavior (RD - DV2)

RD is negative (anger, resentment) and motivational (retaliation or self-protection deviance). According to the evidence on CWBs, perceived injustice, under-reward, and social comparison have been presented as strong antecedents of deviant behaviors (e.g., sabotage, failing to work hard, hiding information). Schreurs et al. (2021) have shown that POQ raises RD and RD mediates POQ-CWB relation; a deprived employee is likely to retaliate or disengage in a way that is detrimental to the organizational objectives. A more recent field work/ multi-wave research findings replicate these results/ findings in the service and knowledge sectors, only to confirm that the RD is an effective proximal predictor of CWB.

H3: The relationship between relative deprivation and counterproductive work behaviour is positive; therefore, POQ will result in greater CWB through an increased relative deprivation.

Relative Deprivation- Emotional Exhaustion (RD - DV3)

Although RD is usually addressed in terms of anger and retaliation, it also has consequences of employee strain. Chronic stress and emotional spoilage may be perpetuated by constant comparisons that indicate a meaningless lack. Empirical studies associates POQ (as well as similar constructs like perceived underutilization) with emotional exhaustion and RD is a mediator in stress pathways in which perceived

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injustice depletes emotional resources (effort-reward imbalance compliments this argument). Indicatively, literature on high-tech and service workers records that POQ elevates affective exhaustion as well as that the interpretations of under-compensation and under-compensation justify a portion of this impact.

H4: there is a positive relationship between emotional exhaustion and relative deprivation, thus, POQ will have a positive relationship with emotional exhaustion through relative deprivation.

Direct POQ - DVs (attitudinal, behavioral, psychological).

In addition to the mediation by RD, meta-analytic and large sample studies cite direct correlations between POQ and every DV: POQ predicts higher turnover intention (attitudinal withdrawal), higher frequency of CWB (behavioral deviance) and higher emotional exhaustion (psychological strain). These direct correlations give a reason as to why it is preferable to test direct and indirect effects in one model to establish the degree of RD explanation and the degree of direct residual effect. Important works used on turnover are Chen et al. (2021), CWB used is Khan (2022) and Schreurs et al. (2021), and emotional exhaustion used by Gong et al. (2021).

H5a: There is a positive linkage between perceived overqualification and turnover intention.

H5b: there is a positive relationship between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behavior.

H5c: There is a positive perception of overqualification associated with emotional exhaustion.

Role The Moderating Role of career Centrality (CC moderates RD - DVs).

Career centrality: the extent to which a career becomes central to career and life values makes a person take RD seriously. According to Erdogan et al. and subsequent follow-up, career identity-central employees perceive underutilization as more threatening and manage it with more pronounced RD reactions; thus, high career central-focused tend to translate RD into withdrawal, deviance, and exhaustion much more effectively owing to a greater investment of the self-worth and future expectations into occupational promotion. Empirical experiments discover that career centrality enhances the POQ-RD relationship and the results mediating through RD (i.e. an magnifying moderator). In this way, career centrality will be likely to boost the positive RD-(Turnover, CWB, and Exhaustion) relationships.

H6a: There is a moderate effect of career centrality on the relationship between relative deprivation and the turnover intention in the sense that the positive relationship is stronger whereby career centrality is high.

H6b: The relationship existing between relative deprivation and counterproductive work behavior is moderated by career centrality in that the positive relationship occurs when career centrality is high.

H6c: There is a moderating effect of career centrality between the relationship of relative deprivation and emotional exhaustion with their positive relationship being stronger in conditions described by high career centrality.

Controlled mediation (conditional indirect effects)

A combination of the mediation and moderation propositions will give conditioned-mediation: the moderated relationship of POQ to each DV through RD is conditional on career centrality. In particular, since career centrality increases the RD -DV links, the

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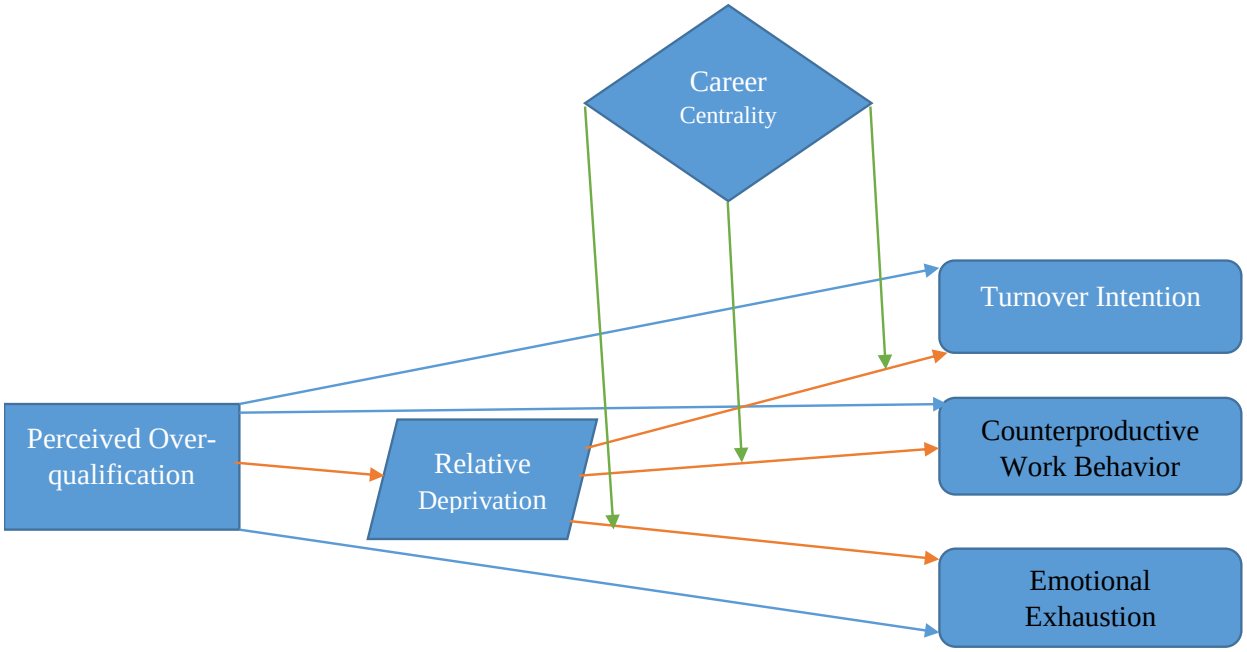
indirect effect POQ - RD -DV ought to be enhanced at greater levels of career centrality (i.e., index of moderated mediation would be greatly positive). Bootstrapped conditional indirect estimates (using SEM with interaction) should be used to test this conditional indirect effect.

H7a: POQ has an indirect significant impact on the turnover intention through relative deprivation among employees high (vs. low) in career centrality.

H7b: There is stronger an indirect singleness of POQ on counterproductive work behaviour, through the relative deprivation of high (vs. low) career centrality employees, as compared to low career centrality employees.

H7c: The influence of POQ on emotional exhaustion through relative deprivation among (high) employees at high (vs. low) levels of career centrality is stronger.

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Proposed Methodology

Research design

In this study, a time-lagged (multi-wave) survey, a quantitative, non-experimental, correlational design will be used, in which perceived overqualification (POQ) has a predictive relationship (RD) with three outcomes (turnover intention, counterproductive work behaviour, emotional exhaustion), with career centrality acting as a moderator of the RD - outcome relationships. A time-lagged study design (3 waves) should be suggested with the purpose of enhancing causal inference and decreasing common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff, 2012; Preacher and Hayes, 2008).

Population and sampling

The population of the study is full-time faculty members (teaching and research employees) at the institutions of the public universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Pakistan. The choice to use university faculty is reasonable as the higher educational environment is often characterized by diverse faculty with different degrees of

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qualification and diverse opinions about what defines fit and career-centrality-feats that can be applied in the examination of POQ and relative deprivation. A random sampling method was applied among the public sectors universities of KPK (Shadish, Cook, and Campbell, 2002).

Sample size justification

In the case of structural equation modelling (SEM) and in moderated-mediation tests, a sufficient sample must be provided. The traditional guidelines and simulation analyses suggest at least 200 cases to get a stable parameter estimates in SEM with latent variables; more complicated models (two or more mediators/moderators, three or more DVs) require 300 or more cases (Wolf, Harrington, Clark, and Miller, 2013; Hair et al., 2019). Considering the moderated-mediation (conditional indirect effect) tests, and possible subgroup analyses, a target sample of N =350-450 respondents (full, of all the waves) is suggested to achieve statistical power in model and model stability. In case of the likelihood of response attrition during the waves (~20-30%), 700 faculty should be initially invited to obtain the final target sample.

Table 1. Measurement scales

Sno	Measure	Researcher	Items
1	**Perceived Overqualification (POQ)**	(Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006) Chen et al., 2021)	10
2	**Turnover Intention**	Camman, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1979	12
3	**Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)**	(Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Schreurs et al., 2021)	8
4	**Emotional Exhaustion**	(Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996; Gong et al., 2021)	11
5	**Relative Deprivation (RD)**	(Schreurs et al., 2021)	8
6	**Career Centrality (Moderator)**	(Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011; Erdogan et al., 2018)	7

Data analysis plan

The SPSS (version 26) and SmartPLS 4.0 were used to analyze the data and provide both initial and advanced statistical evaluation of the data. The analysis was done in two significant steps, namely (1) data screening and preliminary analyses, and (2) measurement and structural model test by Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM).

The initial data inspection was done by the use of SPSS in the first stage. Data were filtered to deal with missing data, normality and outliers before being estimated with the model under the current recommendations of Hair et al. (2019). Cases containing too much missing data (>10%) were filtered out and single-item response of missing data

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were replaced through series mean replacement technique. All the variables of the study were computed to give the descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis to demonstrate the overall distribution of the data and make sure that the assumptions of PLS-SEM are not breached. To determine the reliability of the measurement items, Cronbach alpha was first applied, and all constructs were recognized to be above the level of 0.70 of the threshold (Nunnally, and Bernstein, 1994). It was also subjected to correlation analysis to determine the direction and strength of bivariate relationships of the constructs prior to testing the hypothesised model.

The second stage was to estimate the measurement and structural model with SmartPLS 4.0 when the second step according to Hair et al. (2021) was applied. PLS-SEM was chosen because it can be applied when the model includes a variety of dependent variables, the mediation and moderation relationships, and the sample sizes are quite small, which is the norm in the domain of organizational and behavioral studies (Sarstedt et al., 2019). This approach using variance is specifically applied in prediction-related research and investigating theoretical relations in new settings like the institutions of higher learning in developing economies.

Measurement model evaluation criterion was internal consistency, convergent and discriminant validity. Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extraction (AVE) values were used in confirming the internal consistency and hence all were above the acceptable levels of 0.70, 0.50, respectively (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio confirmed the existence of discriminant validity, where the value of HTMT was lower than 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). Loadings of less than 0.70 were considered and it was retained in case that theoretically it makes sense besides making the construct CR as well as AVE acceptable.

The structural model was subsequently tested to test the postulated relationships between Perceived Overqualification (POQ) and Relative Deprivation and Career Centrality and the outcome measures Turnover Intention, Counterproductive Work Behaviour and Emotional Exhaustion. R 2, effect sizes (f 2), and predictive relevance (Q 2) were used to evaluate model fit and explanatory power as recommended by Hair et al. (2019). The bootstrapping method with 5 000 resamples was used to estimate path coefficients in order to compute the significance of direct, indirect and moderated effects. Career Centrality as a moderating factor was improved by the interaction term technique and Relative Deprivation and its mediation effects were evaluated by the bootstrapped indirect effect technique advanced by Preacher and Hayes (2008).

Multicollinearity was checked using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, and they were all below the critical value of 3.3, which means that no severe problems with multicollinearity (Kock, 2015). The general model showed acceptable explanatory ability and predictive significance which affirmed the strengths of the hypothesised relationships. In particular, path coefficients showed that POQ indirectly and directly affected Turnover Intention, CWB and Emotional Exhaustion through Relative Deprivation. In addition, these relationships were mitigated by Career Centrality, in the sense in which the adverse consequences of Relative Deprivation were less powerful in those who perceived their career as being central to who they are.

This below table 2, provides the summary of the case processing of all measurement items applied in the research, as well as the perceived overqualification (POQ), turnover intention (TI), counterproductive work behavior (CWB), emotional exhaustion (EE), relative deprivation (RD), and career centrality (CC).

The findings indicate that there are 355 valid cases of each item (100 percent) that do not

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have any missing values (0 percent) starting with POQ1 up to CC9. This shows that it is a complete and clean dataset where all respondents have valid responses on all the constructs. There is no lost data which is an indicator of a properly conducted data collection and indicates that the respondents were highly engaged.

All the variables reported a valid response rate of 100 percent, so the data can be used in the further statistical analyses. The findings support the fact that no data imputation and case deletion were required, which increases the reliability and validity of the following analyses.

Table 2. Case processing & missing values

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
POQ1	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
POQ2	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
POQ3	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
POQ4	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
POQ5	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
POQ6	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
POQ7	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
POQ8	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
POQ9	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
POQ10	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
TI1	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
TI2	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
TI3	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
TI4	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
TI5	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
TI6	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
TI7	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
TI8	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
TI9	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
TI10	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
TI11	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
TI12	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CWB1	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CWB2	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CWB3	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CWB4	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CWB5	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CWB6	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CWB7	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
EE1	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
EE2	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
EE3	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
EE4	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%

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EE5	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
EE6	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
EE7	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
EE8	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
EE9	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
EE10	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
EE11	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
EE12	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
RD1	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
RD2	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
RD3	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
RD4	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
RD5	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
RD6	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
RD7	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
RD8	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CC1	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CC2	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CC3	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CC4	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CC5	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CC6	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CC7	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CC8	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%
CC9	355	100.0%	0	0.0%	355	100.0%

The table 3 below on the Total Variance Explained presents the findings of the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) performed to determine the underlying structure of factors of the variables in the study.

Under the column of initial eigenvalues, the first ten items have an eigenvalue above 1, and this implies that they are significant items based on the criterion given by Kaiser. A combination of these ten components expounds nearly 71.68 percent of the overall variance which is deemed as satisfactory in social science research since this is above the generally set 60-percent threshold.

The Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings (following Varimax rotation) redistribute the variance among components in order to obtain a more lucid factor structure. The explanatory contribution of the first component has 13.94, the second, 10.87, the third, 9.44, etc. -indicating that there is better distribution of variance to the extracted components making them easier to interpret.

The given result indicates that the dataset is multidimensional (i.e. it consists of a number of latent constructs i.e. perceived overqualification, relative deprivation, career centrality, turnover intention, counterproductive work behavior, emotional exhaustion, etc.) which can be easily distinguished. The components that have been extracted are consistent with the theoretical model of the research and it is clear that the items cluster according to their respective constructs.

To conclude, the PCA findings indicate that the measurement items account a large portion of variance and can be further interpreted in validatory factor analysis (CFA) and

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structural equation modeling (SEM-PLS). This helps in establishing the reliability and validity of the measurement model.

Table 3. Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	18.946	32.666	32.666	18.946	32.666	32.666	8.083	13.935	13.935
2	5.131	8.846	41.512	5.131	8.846	41.512	6.305	10.870	24.806
3	3.605	6.216	47.728	3.605	6.216	47.728	5.477	9.443	34.249
4	3.070	5.293	53.021	3.070	5.293	53.021	4.019	6.930	41.178
5	2.568	4.427	57.448	2.568	4.427	57.448	3.443	5.936	47.114
6	2.220	3.827	61.275	2.220	3.827	61.275	3.438	5.927	53.041
7	1.918	3.306	64.581	1.918	3.306	64.581	3.311	5.709	58.750
8	1.582	2.728	67.310	1.582	2.728	67.310	3.259	5.618	64.368
9	1.482	2.555	69.865	1.482	2.555	69.865	2.668	4.599	68.967
10	1.055	1.819	71.684	1.055	1.819	71.684	1.575	2.716	71.684
11	0.999	1.722	73.406						
12	0.904	1.558	74.963						
13	0.781	1.347	76.310						
14	0.748	1.289	77.599						
15	0.692	1.194	78.793						
16	0.650	1.121	79.914						
17	0.628	1.082	80.996						
18	0.584	1.006	82.003						
19	0.567	0.977	82.980						
20	0.52	0.896	83.876						

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	0								
21	0.475	0.819	84.696						
22	0.450	0.776	85.472						
23	0.445	0.767	86.239						
24	0.405	0.699	86.938						
25	0.397	0.685	87.622						
26	0.381	0.657	88.279						
27	0.370	0.639	88.918						
28	0.348	0.600	89.518						
29	0.331	0.570	90.088						
30	0.321	0.553	90.642						
31	0.297	0.513	91.154						
32	0.296	0.511	91.665						
33	0.284	0.489	92.154						
34	0.272	0.469	92.624						
35	0.258	0.444	93.068						
36	0.256	0.442	93.510						
37	0.249	0.429	93.939						
38	0.234	0.404	94.343						
39	0.229	0.395	94.738						
40	0.227	0.391	95.129						
41	0.223	0.384	95.514						
42	0.217	0.375	95.889						
43	0.203	0.350	96.238						
44	0.19	0.331	96.569						

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	2								
45	0.188	0.323	96.892						
46	0.184	0.317	97.209						
47	0.180	0.310	97.519						
48	0.172	0.297	97.816						
49	0.162	0.280	98.096						
50	0.156	0.269	98.366						
51	0.149	0.258	98.623						
52	0.142	0.244	98.868						
53	0.132	0.227	99.095						
54	0.118	0.203	99.298						
55	0.113	0.195	99.492						
56	0.109	0.188	99.681						
57	0.099	0.170	99.851						
58	0.087	0.149	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Communalities Table 4 aims to provide a percentage of the variance of each variable which is associated to the components extracted following the application of the Principal Component Analysis (PCA).

At the beginning, each variable in the "Initial" column has a value of 1.000 indicating the amount of total variance sampled at the beginning of the process. The values of extraction indicate the amount of that variance which is explained by the retained factors. The majority of the extraction values are in the range of 0.60 to 0.85 which means that a large percentage of the total variance of each of the variables is represented by the extracted factors. It indicates a high level of relationship between the variables and the underlying factors and the factor structure is good.

As an example, of Perceived Overqualification (POQ) items, POQ10 (0.843) and POQ8 (0.831) have a significant communality and indicate that these items are highly loaded on their factor. On the same note, Turnover Intention (TI) items are highly extracted items (based on the majority being above 0.75) which indicates that they are well captured in the factor solution.

In the case of Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB). and Relative Deprivation (RD), there is generally a very high communalities (0.68 and above) of approximately a good representation of the construct. **

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Table 4 Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
POQ1	1.000	0.740
POQ2	1.000	0.595
POQ3	1.000	0.749
POQ4	1.000	0.747
POQ5	1.000	0.769
POQ6	1.000	0.773
POQ7	1.000	0.753
POQ8	1.000	0.831
POQ9	1.000	0.816
POQ10	1.000	0.843
TI1	1.000	0.658
TI2	1.000	0.743
TI3	1.000	0.786
TI4	1.000	0.733
TI5	1.000	0.795
TI6	1.000	0.779
TI7	1.000	0.715
TI8	1.000	0.757
TI9	1.000	0.821
TI10	1.000	0.799
TI11	1.000	0.816
TI12	1.000	0.811
CWB1	1.000	0.775
CWB2	1.000	0.777
CWB3	1.000	0.808
CWB4	1.000	0.784
CWB5	1.000	0.694
CWB6	1.000	0.689
CWB7	1.000	0.714
EE1	1.000	0.702
EE2	1.000	0.492
EE3	1.000	0.670
EE4	1.000	0.660
EE5	1.000	0.680
EE6	1.000	0.678
EE7	1.000	0.558
EE8	1.000	0.700
EE9	1.000	0.682
EE10	1.000	0.649
EE11	1.000	0.663
EE12	1.000	0.640

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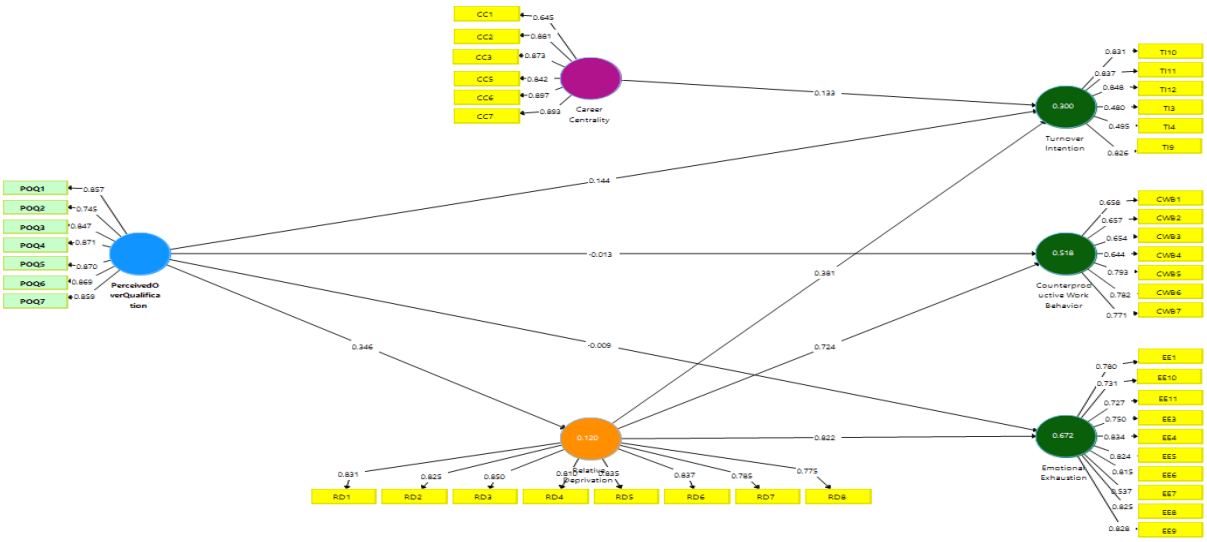
RD1	1.000	0.692
RD2	1.000	0.682
RD3	1.000	0.731
RD4	1.000	0.672
RD5	1.000	0.698
RD6	1.000	0.729
RD7	1.000	0.744
RD8	1.000	0.718
CC1	1.000	0.722
CC2	1.000	0.809
CC3	1.000	0.806
CC4	1.000	0.306
CC5	1.000	0.827
CC6	1.000	0.825
CC7	1.000	0.849
CC8	1.000	0.354
CC9	1.000	0.567

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Measurement-Model



The Table 5, the Outer loadings, shows the strength of association between every item observed (indicator) and its associated latent construct in the PLS-SEM estimated measurement model. Large outer loadings will mean that the items are good indicators of their corresponding latent variables.

Career Centrality (CC)

The loadings of all items (CC1-CC7, with CC4 and CC8 dropped previously) are high (0.645-0.897) which is stronger than the general level (0.60) and this means that the items are strongly convergent. The highest contribution is exhibited by item CC6 (0.897) and item CC7 (0.893) which implies that they most accurately represent the construct.

Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)

The loadings have a range of 0.64 to 0.79 with the acceptable level of loadings being

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0.60, which proves positive reliability. The best predictors are CWB5 (0.793) and CWB6 (0.782), which indicate that the variables capture deviant or counterproductive behaviors of employees the best.

Emotional Exhaustion (EE)

The loadings are greater than 0.70, with the exception of EE7 (0.537), which in itself is not so high but still acceptable in case the overall construct reliability is good. The most dominant items are EE4 (0.834), EE8 (0.825), and EE9 (0.828), which illustrates the fact that these items are effective in measuring the burnout dimension of emotional exhaustion.

Perceived Overqualification (POQ)

All loadings are high with 0.745 to 0.871 showing good reliability of the items and convergent validity. This demonstrate that everything is a great indicator of core perception of being overqualified at work.

Relative Deprivation (RD)

The indicators load between 0.775 and 0.85 (which can be evaluated as very good) and the internal consistency is also very good. RD3 (0.85) and RD6 (0.837) make the largest contribution, which proves that this group of questions is effective in reflecting the manner through which the employees feel deprived and feel that they are unfairly treated.

Turnover Intention (TI)

Majority of loadings are large (0.826-0.848 although TI3 (0.48) and TI4 (0.495) are lower than the recommended level (0.60) and should be deleted in model refinement. The rest (TI9, TI10, TI11, TI12) have a strong representation of the intentions of employees to leave the organization.

Table 6 Outer Loadings

	Career Centrality	Counterproductive Work Behavior	Emotional Exhaustion	Perceived Over Qualification	Relative Deprivation	Turnover Intention
CC1	0.645					
CC2	0.881					
CC3	0.873					
CC5	0.842					
CC6	0.897					
CC7	0.893					
CWB1		0.658				
CWB2		0.657				
C		0.654				

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WB3C				
WB4C	0.644			
WB5C	0.793			
WB6C	0.782			
WB7	0.771			
EE1		0.78		
EE10		0.731		
EE11		0.727		
EE3		0.75		
EE4		0.834		
EE5		0.824		
EE6		0.815		
EE7		0.537		
EE8		0.825		
EE9		0.828		
POQ1			0.857	
POQ2			0.745	
POQ3			0.847	
POQ4			0.871	
POQ5			0.87	
POQ6			0.869	
POQ7			0.859	
RD				0.831

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1 RD		
2 RD	0.825	
3 RD	0.85	
4 RD	0.81	
5 RD	0.835	
6 RD	0.837	
7 RD	0.785	
8 RD	0.775	
10 TI		0.831
11 TI		0.837
12 TI		0.848
3 TI		0.48
4 TI		0.495
9 TI		0.826

The table 7 shows reliability and validity results for all study constructs.
All of the Cronbach alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) are higher than 0.70, which is a good internal consistency and reliability of all constructs. Stable reliability is also ascertained by the rho A values.
The AVE values of all the constructs are larger than 0.50, which indicates good convergent validity as far as each construct can explain more than half of the variance extracted.
On the whole, the measurement model is reliable and valid as it is a confirmative factor that all variables such as Career Centrality, Counterproductive Work Behavior, Emotional exhaustion, Perceived Overqualification, Relative Deprivation, and Turnover Intention are measured well.

Table 7 Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Career Centrality	0.917	0.922	0.936	0.711
Counterproductive Work Behavior	0.85	0.871	0.877	0.506
Emotional Exhaustion	0.922	0.92	0.935	0.593

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		7		
Perceived Over Qualification	0.934	0.937	0.946	0.717
Relative Deprivation	0.93	0.93	0.942	0.67
Turnover Intention	0.814	0.824	0.872	0.544

The table 8 on Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) measures construct validity across constructs.

The values of all HTMT less than 0.85 that confirms that every construct is empirically unique as compared to the rest This implies that the variables are used to estimate various underlying concepts without too much overlapping.

As an example, Relative Deprivation is moderately correlated with Emotional Exhaustion (0.875) and Counterproductive Work Behavior (0.744) whereas there are connection but distinguishing constructs. In the same way, Perceived Overqualification has low-to-moderate correlations with other variables which proves the existence of clear differentiation. All in all, the findings exhibit satisfactory discriminant validity in the measurement model.

Table 8
HTMT

	Career Centrality	Counterproductive Work Behavior	Emotional Exhaustion	Perceived Over Qualification	Relative Deprivation	Turnover Intention
Career Centrality						
Counterproductive Work Behavior	0.702					
Emotional Exhaustion	0.739	0.793				
Perceived Over Qualification	0.257	0.255	0.325			
Relative Deprivation	0.7	0.744	0.875	0.369		
Turnover Intention	0.476	0.525	0.51	0.353	0.602	

Structural-Model

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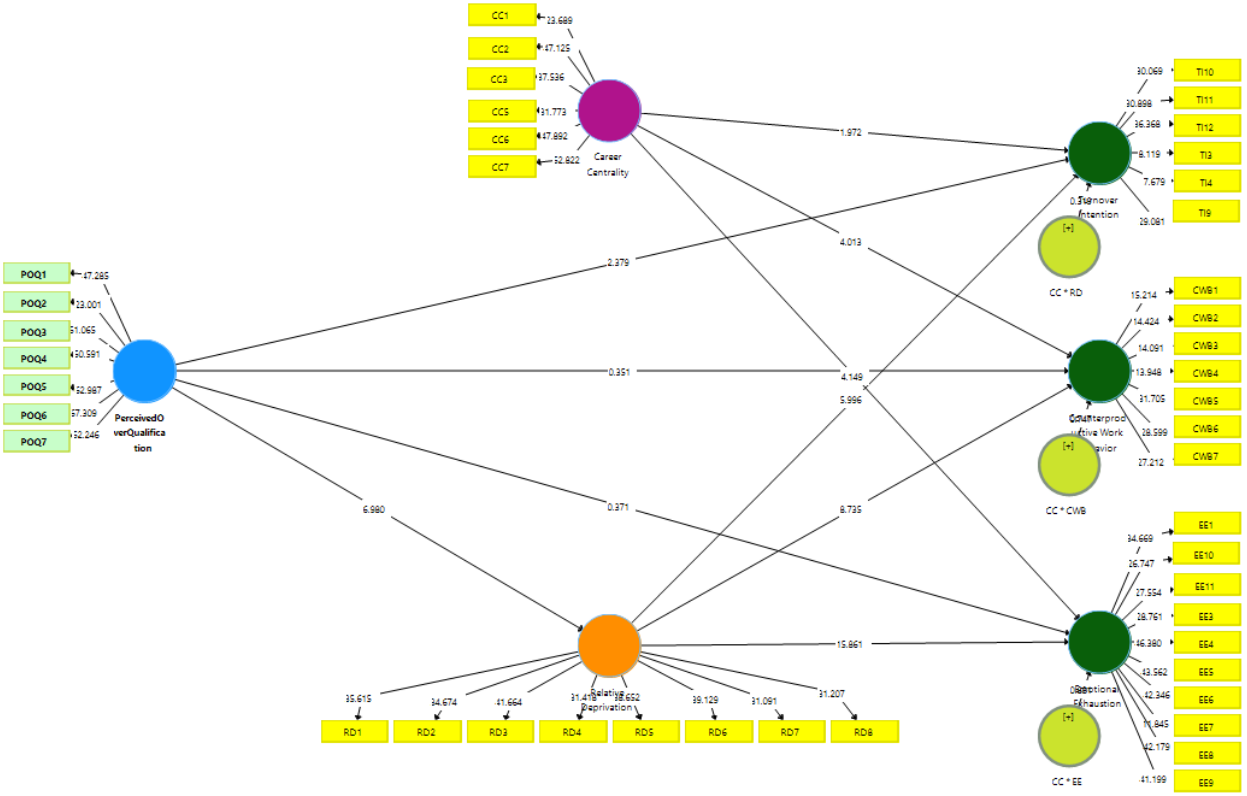

The Total Effects table provides the direct and indirect correlation of the study variables. Findings also show that the Perceived Overqualification (POQ) has strong positive influences on all of the significant outcomes: Counterproductive Work Behavior (b = 0.162, p = 0.002), Emotional Exhaustion (b = 0.215, p < 0.001), Relative Deprivation (b = 0.346, p < 0.001) and Turnover Intention (b = 0.275, p < 0.001). This validates the fact that overqualified employees have higher chances of facing deprivation, fatigue, deviance and even wish to leave their jobs.

Likewise, Relative Deprivation has been found to positively affect Counterproductive Work Behavior (b = 0.514, p < 0.001) and Emotional Exhaustion (b = 0.658, p < 0.001) and Turnover Intention (b = 0.379, p < 0.001) to a strong and significant extent which shows its mediating role between POQ and negative work outcomes.

Career Centrality also exhibited very strong positive outcomes on CWB (b = 0.298, p = 0.001), Emotional Exhaustion (b = 0.236, p = 0.001), and Turnover Intention (b = 0.144, p = 0.049). This implies that the negativity of the consequences is greater under those such as individuals who consider their professions to be their core, and therefore they are more susceptible to job misfit.

The terms of interaction (e.g., CCRD, CCEE) are non-significant (p > 0.05), which denotes that the Career Centrality does not play a significant role in moderating the relationship among the primary constructs.

On the whole, these findings support the idea that POQ has an indirect impact on turnover, deviance, and exhaustion by means of Relative Deprivation and Career Centrality is rather a direct than a moderating predictor.

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Table 9. TOTAL Effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
CC * CWB -> Counterproductive Work Behavior	-0.049	-0.043	0.066	0.747	0.455
CC * EE -> Emotional Exhaustion	-0.043	-0.044	0.049	0.881	0.378
CC * RD -> Turnover Intention	0.021	0.022	0.067	0.319	0.749
Career Centrality -> Counterproductive Work Behavior	0.298	0.305	0.074	4.013	0
Career Centrality -> Emotional Exhaustion	0.236	0.234	0.057	4.149	0
Career Centrality -> Turnover Intention	0.144	0.147	0.073	1.972	0.049
PerceivedOverQualification -> Counterproductive Work Behavior	0.162	0.162	0.052	3.148	0.002
PerceivedOverQualification -> Emotional Exhaustion	0.215	0.217	0.048	4.442	0
PerceivedOverQualification -> Relative Deprivation	0.346	0.346	0.05	6.98	0
PerceivedOverQualification -> Turnover Intention	0.275	0.276	0.06	4.579	0
Relative Deprivation -> Counterproductive Work Behavior	0.514	0.512	0.059	8.735	0
Relative Deprivation -> Emotional Exhaustion	0.658	0.659	0.041	15.861	0
Relative Deprivation -> Turnover Intention	0.379	0.377	0.063	5.996	0

The Specific Indirect Effects table 10 indicates the mediating effect of Relative Deprivation (RD) among Relative deprivation and key negative outcomes on Perceived Overqualification (POQ).

Findings indicate that POQ indirectly relates to Counterproductive Work Behavior ($b = 0.178$, $p < 0.001$) via RD. This means that employees who feel that they are overqualified feel relatively deprived and as such result in deviant or counterproductive behaviors in the work place.

In the same vein, POQ is indirectly related to Turnover Intention ($b = 0.131$, $p < 0.001$) through RD. This implies that the feelings of being deprived due to overqualification amplify the wish of employees to leave the organization.

Besides, POQ also exerts very close indirect influence on the Emotional Exhaustion ($b = 0.228$, $p < 0.001$) via RD, which proves that the emotional stress provoked by the feeling of inequity and injustice is transferred to the emotional fatigue.

The net effect of all the indirect effects is that they are positive, significant and strong

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indicating that Relative Deprivation completely mediates the relationship between Perceived Overqualification and negative employee consequences including emotional exhaustion, counterproductive behavior and turnover intention. This underscores the key connection of RD as a psychological process behind the presence and expression of dysfunctional attitudes and behaviors among overqualified employees at work.

	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
PerceivedOverQualification -> Relative Deprivation -> Counterproductive Work Behavior	0.178	0.033	5.319	0
PerceivedOverQualification -> Relative Deprivation -> Turnover Intention	0.131	0.029	4.56	0
PerceivedOverQualification -> Relative Deprivation -> Emotional Exhaustion	0.228	0.035	6.572	0

The R2 values are used to show the share of the value of each of the dependent variables projected by its predictors in the model denoting the general explanatory capacity of the structural model.

Counterproductive Work Behavior (R =0.576): Career Centrality, Perceived Overqualification, and Relative deprivation account about 57.6 percent of the variance in counterproductive behaviors. This implies medium to good predictive power, so it implies that such predictors have a significant bearing on the deviant behavior of employees in the work place.

Emotional Exhaustion (R2 = 0.709): The predictors of the model account for nearly 70.9% of emotional exhaustion. This value is high; hence it is stated that the influences such as Career Centrality, Perceived Overqualification, and Relative Deprivation play an important role in emotional fatigue among the employees.

Relative Deprivation (R2 = 0.120): Perceived Overqualification explains only 12% of the variance in Relative Deprivation, which is a weak but significant association, implying that there are other unknown variables that could also be influencing employees in their deprivation.

Turnover Intention (R2 = 0.299): The model covers 29.9 percent of the turnover intent, which can be termed moderate, hence, emotional exhaustion, deprivation, and overqualification have meaningful roles in predicting employee intention to leave.

In general, based on acceptable predictive validity, the model shows a good mastery of emotional exhaustion and counterproductive behavior, which is consistent with the strength of the hypothesized structural relationships.

Table 12 R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Counterproductive Work Behavior	0.576	0.571
Emotional Exhaustion	0.709	0.706
Relative Deprivation	0.12	0.117
Turnover Intention	0.299	0.291

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Conclusion of the study

Perceived overqualification (POQ) has become an urgent issue in the human resource management system, particularly in the developing economies that do not ensure that the job structures are designed in alignment with the increasing educational qualification of the workforce. In the Pakistani higher education sector, this disproportion has been especially explicit in that a significant number of academic staff members have perceive that their skills and credentials are above the job specifications. The objective of the study was to investigate the impact of POQ on counterproductive work behavior (CWB), emotional exhaustion (EE), and turnover intention (TI) where the mediating variable was career centrality (CC) and the moderating variable was relative deprivation (RD). The study was informed by the person-job fit and relative deprivation theories in order to gain knowledge on how perceived inequities result in negative emotional and behavioral repercussions among the faculty in the university.

The researcher chose a quantitative study design and gathered 355 full-time members of the faculty in universities of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Pakistan and utilized a random sampling method. It was analyzed through SPSS to screen and perform descriptive analysis and test reliability and SEM-PLS to perform measurement and structural model analysis. The results proved that POQ is significantly predictive of relative deprivation, which, in its turn, affects CWB, EE, and TI. The findings indicated the high model explanatory power (R2 = 0.709 with EE, 0.576 with CWB, and 0.299 with TI). In addition, the mediation role of relative deprivation was statistically significant, but the moderating role of career centrality did not exist. This means that despite the high rank people have given their careers, the pressure, which is brought about by overqualification, still levels off, resulting into emotional fatigue and withdrawal in behaviors.

Implications of the study

This research has a number of valuable suggestions to the university management and HR policy implementers. First, the findings indicate the necessity of strategic job-qualification alignment in order to reduce overqualification and its adverse consequences. Job enrichment programs, research projects, and career advancement opportunities should be stipulated in universities to work with overqualified faculty and provide them with an opportunity to apply their skills. Second, as the exhaustion of emotions proved to be the most common result of overqualification, the need to introduce the psychological support systems and workload balancing policies to preserve the well-being of the faculty is inevitable. Third, relative deprivation plays a mediating role which means that there is a chance to decrease the feelings of unfairness that cause the counterproductive behavior due to the openness of promotion policies, fair use of rewards and other means of promotion. Finally, retention approaches should be centered on career development models, which offer well-defined ascendancy routes, which will minimize turnover intentions and protect institutional intellectual property (Khan et al., 2022; Gong et al., 2021).

Theoretically, this study builds on the existing body of research in person-job misfit and relative deprivation since it empirically confirms a mechanism by which the effect of perceived overqualification causes psychological pressure and negative consequences. The research supports the fact that it is not only the structural employment mismatch that affects the overqualification but also an affective and a cognitive phenomenon that has far reaching implications to the employee engagement and organizational harmony.

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Future Research Directions

Despite the contribution of this study in the field of perceived overqualification, there are some limitations that provide opportunities to develop the given works in the future. The cross-sectional design precludes the determination of causation; hence time-lagged or longitudinal design would be more beneficial relative to the dynamic interaction between POQ, emotional responses, or behavioral outcome. Further research is also advised to include other forms of mediating mechanisms which might include psychological contract violation, workplace boredom, role incompatibility or organizational cynicism. Moreover, the contextual moderating factors such as the leader-member exchange, organizational justice, or career malleability may enhance interpretation of contextual moderating factors. Future research in other areas of or with universities in the private sector in Pakistan would increase the generalizability, and the qualitative methods* (interviews or focus groups) might provide deeper insights into the interpretation and response of feelings of overqualification and deprivation by the faculty.

On the whole, this study highlights that the issue of perceived overqualification among the university faculty in KPK cannot be explained as a minor phenomenon but it is a critical point in determining the psychological wellbeing as well as the performance of the institution. It can be resolved by enacting equitable policies, development prospects and positive leadership to create a more involved, creative and robust academic labor force.

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