Research Article

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Bullying Toward Individuals with Mild Intellectual Disabilities in the Saudi Arabia Workplace

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the association between bullying in the workplace toward people with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia and demographic factors (i.e., variables such as age, education levels, gender, years of work experience, and the employment positions of assistant supervisor, assistant manager, area manager, and co-worker). This study utilized the Workplace Psychologically Violent Behaviors tool, and multiple regression analysis. Results found a significant relation between high school and lower bullying levels among three dimensions: isolation, attack on professional status, and attack on personality. Also, the study found that 11 to 15 years of work experience was associated with high levels of bullying among three dimensions: isolation, attack on professional status, and attack on personality. The variable of age (18 to 43) was associated with a high level of bullying among three dimensions: isolation, attack on professional status, and direct negative behaviors in the workplace toward people with intellectual disabilities. In addition, findings showed that three employment positions (i.e., assistant manager, area manager, and co-workers) were related to bullying against workers with intellectual disabilities. These findings prompt the recommendation that human resources personnel pay attention to work policies on bullying prevention, and that every workplace hire specialists to assist companies in supporting workers with disabilities.

Keywords: *bullying, employment, intellectual disabilities, workplace, Saudi Arabia*

1. Introduction

Employment is vital for financial stability in the lives of all people, and when it comes to people with disabilities it becomes even more essential to increase job quality to ensure their financial stability. In particular, bullying might become an issue for people with mild intellectual disabilities as they interact with supervisors and fellow employees in the workplace. Espelage and Swearer (2003) defined bullying as physical and verbal aggression that happens repeatedly from individuals or groups to achieve a goal. The issue of bullying in the workplace for workers with disabilities is rarely discussed in Saudi Arabian empirical studies. Therefore, the needs of people with disabilities in the workplace must be addressed to increase overall workplace quality.

In 2000, the Saudi government enacted the *Disability Welfare Law* which supports people with disabilities in all life aspects, including employment services to find jobs with their typically developing peers (Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers, 2000). This law guarantees the basic rights of people with disabilities to protect and increase their quality of life. Also, the United States (US) of America passed the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (1990) to protect the rights of people with disabilities in all aspects of life. This law prevents discrimination against people with disabilities in all activities of life; it also ensures that people with disabilities have the same access and opportunities as their typically developing peers in areas such as employment and services (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1990). These laws clearly affirm that people with disabilities need protection of their rights in everyday activities just as the rights of their typically developing peers are protected. Thus, people with disabilities need more attention not only regarding their employment rights but also their right to a safe environment in their workplaces. This involves a clear policy and more awareness about workplace bullying and how employees are protected.

The current study focused on the variables of age, education level, gender, years of work experience, and the employment positions of assistant supervisor, assistant manager, area manager, and co-worker. These variables are important since age, education level, and years of work experience could determine why some workers with intellectual disabilities have faced bullying or not. Education level is also important because workers with intellectual disabilities with less education might face more bullying. It is also important to find out how gender affects levels of bullying in the workplace. I also included important employment position variables (i.e., assistant supervisor, assistant manager, area manager, and co-worker) to determine the extent to which these variables are linked with bullying, and, therefore, limiting workplace quality for workers with intellectual disabilities.

Løvvik et al. (2022) conducted a study about bullying in the workplace and found that 36% of their participantsw experienced workplace bullying. Thus, it is important to study this issue among people with intellectual disabilities to potentially improve the quality of workplace for these individuals. Vickers (2015) noted that not many studies have addressed the issue of bullying for people with disabilities compared to studies of bullying issues for typical people. Thus, bullying is a critical issue for any organization, and it becomes more of a concern to people with disabilities in their workplaces as they might be unable to defend their rights or even recognize bullying when it occurs.

There are few studies on bullying against people with intellectual disabilities in the field to help stakeholders improve workplace quality for people with disabilities and learn how to prevent workplace bullying. The objective of this study was to determine which groups have had more experience with bullying based on demographic variables to assist stakeholders in improving workplace quality by decreasing bullying incidents that might occur for people with intellectual disabilities. This study's hypothesis was that there is an association between the variables identified in this study and workplace bullying of people with intellectual disabilities. This study is essential for the field of disabilities as we strive to support people with disabilities by preventing in workplace bullying.

2. Workplace Bullying in Related Fields

Bullying is an issue that people with disabilities face in the workplace. Jones et al. (2018) studied workplace discrimination and harassment among workers with disabilities and found that 18.4% of the sample reported harassment in the past 2 years in their jobs; workers with disabilities faced higher levels of harassment compared with workers without disabilities. Also, women with disabilities experienced higher levels of workplace harassment than men; and younger workers faced lower levels of harassment than older workers. Jones and his colleagues found that about 8% of their sample with disabilities had faced discrimination in the workplace in the past 2 years. Also, workers with disabilities faced higher levels of discrimination than workers without disabilities, workplace

discrimination levels were similar for men and women, and discrimination levels were lower for younger workers than for older ones. These results imply that people with disabilities face more workplace discrimination than their typically developing peers because of their disabilities. Another study by Gardner et al. (2016) indicated that 15% of their sample had experienced bullying in New Zealand workplaces and 2.8% faced cyberbullying in the workplace; women experienced more workplace bullying than men, and women had worse physical health, more emotional strain, and more destructive leadership and team conflicts in the workplace. This study showed that people faced bullying of different types and at different levels in all workplaces, that women might experience more workplace bullying than men, and that workplace bullying might occur more frequently for workers with disabilities than for their typically developing peers. Also, organization strategies were less effective in the workplace. Gardner et al.'s participants self-identified workplace bullying vs. cyberbullying, and 16.79% indicated they experienced bullying either as workplace bullying or cyberbullying; 1.7% of the sample said they faced bullying several times a week or even daily, and 31% of the sample experienced bullying from supervisors, employers, or managers; 48% experienced bullying from their peers, 17% experienced bullying from subordinates, and 17% mentioned they experienced bullying from clients.

Workplace bullying is an issue in any workplace. Etienne (2014) stated that 48% of nurse participants experienced bullying in their workplaces, and the most bullying acts they faced involved being ignored or excluded in their workplaces. In another study report discussing bullying in Saudi Arabia, Basfr et al. (2019) noted that 90.3% of nurses in Saudi Arabia experienced bullying in their workplaces and 57.7% faced physical and verbal abuse; the majority of them attributed the stress or anxiety resulting from that bullying to lack of support for these nurses in their workplaces. Also, Islam and Chaudhary (2022) found that bullying in the workplace was related to emotional exhaustion and workers' knowledge hiding in the health sector; they also found that friendship in the workplace was key to reducing bullying and knowledge hiding. Workplaces should attempt to prevent bullying by improving their organization systems and training their staff members (Etienne, 2014; Gardner et al., 2016). However, Ekici and Beder (2014) studied workplace bullying among nurses and found that 82% of nurses and 74% of physicians had faced workplace bullying at least once in the past year, and 12% of nurses and 11% of physicians had experienced intentional bullying at least once in the past year; the most common type of bullying among them was aggression related to their professional positions and their personalities. Islam and his colleagues (2021) studied the impact of workplace bullying among health care workers and found that the negative impact of workplace bullying caused burnout in nurses, and that passive avoidant leadership was one of the variables that reinforced workplace bullying and the resulting burnout. These findings show that bullying occurs in many workplaces at different levels. Based on these findings, we need more interventions to establish healthier and more stable work environments for people with disabilities.

In addition, Sveinsdttir et al. (2018) indicated that 66% of their participants experienced bullying, 39% faced violence, and 53% cited psychological distress as common health issues. Women had more mental health and physical issues than men. Bullying is a serious issue in all places, especially in workplaces, because bullying may cause serious health issues over time. Lindsay and McPherson (2012) studied bullying and exclusion among students with disabilities, and their results indicated that teachers' attitudes impacted social exclusion and that social exclusion of and bullying toward students with disabilities appeared to be verbal and physical.

Marraccini et al. (2015) also studied bullying at the college level, and found that 51% of their participants had witnessed other students being bullied by staff members at least once; 18% of their sample had experienced bullying by staff members at least once, 44% had experienced bullying in high, middle, or elementary school, most of sample (64%) had witnessed bullying by their peers in college at least once, and 33% had faced bullying by their peers in college. Marraccini et al. also reported that 47% of their female participants indicated that they had been bullied by teachers before they entered college, and 34% of their male participants mentioned that they had faced bullying by teachers; 21% of the female students had experienced bullying by staff members at least once; 9% of

the male students had also faced bullying by staff members; 75% of students with disabilities indicated that they had faced bullying by teachers before they entered college, compared to the 42% of students without disabilities; and 50% of students with disabilities were bullied by staff members in college compared to 16% of students without disabilities. The studies discussed here stated clearly that bullying occurred verbally and physically, that females were more likely to experience bullying than males, and that students with disabilities faced bullying more than their typically developing peers did. Bullying might occur more often for individuals with disabilities because of lack of awareness and effective policy in the workplace.

Robert (2018) found that bullying in the workplace had no impact on job stress and job performance. However, bullying might cause serious physical and health issues among workers who are impacted by bullying (Robert, 2018; Sveinsdttir et al., 2018). However, Khubchandani and Price (2015) studied harassment and morbidity in the workplace among U.S. adults, and results indicated that 8.1% of their participants had experienced harassment in the workplace in the past year, and women reported higher levels of harassment, especially those women who were divorced or separated compared to their nondivorced or nonseparated peers. Khubchandani and Price also reported that workers who worked with local government on night shifts or who were paid by the hour for their work were more likely to face harassment in the workplace compared to other working peers. Also, individuals who reported harassment had more health issues, less sleep, more asthma attacks, and smoked every day.

Fattori and his colleagues (2015) also studied workplace bullying and their results showed that 16.3% of their participants were victims of bullying in the workplace, and that older participants were more experienced with bullying. Also, 30% of their participants mentioned that they had experienced depression after bullying occurred, and there was a strong relation between sick leave and workplace bullying. Fattori et al. also indicated that worse health-related quality of life was linked with workplace bullying and those who already had medical conditions were more adversely affected by bullying. Workers who have experienced bullying in the workplace may experience health issues and other medical conditions (Fattori et al., 2015; Khubchandani & Price, 2015; Robert, 2018; Sveinsdttir et al., 2018). As noted, previous studies have indicated that bullying may cause physical or health issues or depression, which emphasizes the importance of the current study because without studying bullying which might cause other health issues, we cannot develop interventions and policies that could prevent workplace bullying and thus enhance the work environment. Ahmad and his colleagues (2023) studied how to provide a new perspective on how to limit bullying in workplace, and they found that perceived servant leadership assists in reducing the number of workers experiencing bullying in the workplace by supporting them with compassion. Chaudhary and Islam (2022) studied how despotic leadership affects workers' psychological suffering as bullying was a mediating mechanism; they found that despotic leadership (with bullying behavior) might impact workers' psychological suffering. These studies emphasize the notion that some leadership styles might be contributing causes of bullying as some leaders do not take on their roles to decrease and ensure by effective policies how to manage and prevent bullying behavior in their workplaces.

3. Workplace Bullying Toward People With Disabilities

People with disabilities face bullying in the workplace which often causes them to quit their jobs. Chiu and Chan (2007) found discriminatory behavior against people with mental illness in the health care, employment, and family domains. Thus, discrimination and bullying may occur intentionally or unintentionally in any workplace toward people with health issues or people with disabilities. Gunderson and Lee (2016) found that people with disabilities were paid 10% less than their peer workers without disabilities. These results imply that even if physical or verbal bullying does not occur in a workplace, it might be perpetrated by administrators using policies and other authorities to not pay or respect the workplace rights of employees with disabilities as they do those of workers without disabilities. Mann and Wittenburg (2015) also stated that workplaces need intervention to

improve the employability and wages of people with disabilities. Thus, workplaces need to be inclusive of people with disabilities, and decisionmakers need to be aware of bullying that might occur in the workplace and find ways to improve the workplace for all workers with disabilities. Mitra and Kruse (2016) found that people with disabilities of both genders in the US were more likely to be replaced than people without disabilities by 75 to 89%, and they were more likely to lose their jobs involuntarily compared to people without disabilities. These findings show how interventions can be implemented by using laws to enhance and improve the workplace for employees with disabilities, prompting the exercise of their rights as others without disabilities exercise theirs.

Fevre et al. (2013) found that workers with disabilities and other long-term health conditions are most likely to experience and suffer from ill treatment in the workplace. Their results also showed that workers with disabilities blamed for their ill treatment as why they believed the ill treatment happened in workplace. This means that workplace bullying might occur toward people with disabilities and other health issues as these individuals appear weak to speak about their rights as workers. They may be afraid to lose their jobs if they speak out, and they need to work to live. Also, their managers might exert more control over them, seeing them as workers with disabilities who are weak and lacking power. In another study, Maroto and Pettinicchio (2014) found that people with disabilities faced work segregation which limited their earning capacity, and workers with disabilities also worked in workplaces that required fewer skills and fewer chances to access education and experiences to improve their skills. In other words, these people with disabilities were neglected because the people in charge didn't give them a chance to improve their skills needed for other jobs that suited their abilities by training and educating them like their typically developing peers. Also, Snyder et al. (2010) stated that workers with disabilities experienced higher levels of discrimination overtly and subtlety, targeting people with disabilities with low job satisfaction levels. In summary, employees with disabilities experience more workplace bullying through injustice and ill treatment compared to their typically developing peers (Fevre et al., 2013; Mitra & Kruse, 2016; Snyder et al., 2010).

4. Statement of the Problem

I have witnessed bullying during my work in the field as a researcher working with people with disabilities to rehabilitate them to be able to work in keeping with their abilities and needs. This experience has prompted me to conduct research about the bullying issue in my country. Few studies have addressed the issue of bullying toward people with mild intellectual disabilities. Bullying is a pervasive issue that workers with disabilities face and experience, and its effects might cause serious health issues (Fattori et al., 2015; Khubchandani & Price, 2015; Robert, 2018; Sveinsdttir et al., 2018). This study addresses this issue and supports decisionmakers in increasing the quality of workplaces for individuals with disabilities as they need more attention not only regarding their employment rights but also their right to safe work environments and to clear and effective policies that build more awareness about workplace bullying and how to be protected from it. There are not many existing studies about bullying against people with intellectual disabilities that can help stakeholders improve the quality of workplaces for people with disabilities and learn how to prevent workplace bullying. This study is also important for the workplaces that people with disabilities work in it as employers need to be aware that bullying might be occurring intentionally and unintentionally in their workplaces toward people with disabilities. This study's results may also prompt decisionmakers to improve workplaces for people with disabilities by preventing bullying. This study might also bring attention to the phenomenon of bullying to protect people with disabilities from it.

5. Method

5.1 Sample and Procedure

Employees with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia comprised this study's sample, believed to be appropriate survey respondents to share their opinions about workplace bullying. Several factors affected my investigation into this group of people as respondents to the *Workplace Psychologically Violent Behaviors* (WPVB; Dilek & Aytolan, 2008) instrument, sharing their views and opinions to contribute to this study (Creswell, 2012). This population of employees with disabilities could help policymakers at the government level, company level, or other workplaces to improve workplace conditions for all employees with disabilities. The ethics committee at Qassim University approved the study (number 22-09-01). I based the sample selection on eligibility of having mild intellectual disabilities and 1 year of work experience, and used a random sample technique to provide equal opportunity to the whole sample. I obtained email addresses of companies who had workers with mild intellectual disabilities, and then sent the survey's link through the companies' email. The employers then sent my invitation to participate in this study to about 350 workers with mild intellectual disabilities. The invitation included an informed consent letter with an explanation of participants' rights and assurance that participants would remain anonymous. Participants had 2 weeks to complete the survey. The response rate was roughly 40% of the sample.

5.2 Measures

This study was designed to determine the relation between the independent variables (IVs) and the dependent variable using a quantitative research approach with multiple regression (Mertler & Reinhart, 2017). I also used descriptive statistics for each dimension of the WPVB to collect means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis data to estimate the normality of distribution. The IVs were age, education level, gender, and years of work experience. The dependent variable was workplace bullying toward people with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia across four dimensions (i.e., attack on personality, attack on professional status, isolation, and direct negative behaviors) to determine which of the IVs might predict bullying against workers with mild intellectual disabilities in their workplaces. I also used work positions of assistant supervisor, assistant manager, area manager, and co-worker as independent variables and the WPVB dimensions as dependent variables to determine which of these variables might predict bullying against workers with mild intellectual disabilities in their workplaces.

I conducted multiple regression analysis to reveal the correlation between variables to predict the best group of two or more independent variables by using dummy coding of variables and how that affected the dependent variables. Specifically, this study identifies factors associated with workplace bullying toward people with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia to address the research question that guided this study: *What work factors are associated with workplace bullying toward people with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia?*

With permission from the authors, I used the WPVB (Dilek & Aytolan, 2008) to collect data from the participating workers with disabilities. The first part of the data collection tool was a researcher-developed demographic questionnaire designed to gather information about the sample on the variables of age, education level, gender, years of work experience, and the positions of assistant supervisor, assistant manager, area manager, and co-worker. The second part was the WPVB instrument used to collect data from the participants with mild intellectual disabilities who worked currently or previously. The WPVB includes 33 items with four categories: attack on personality (9 items), attack on professional status (9 items), isolation (11 items), and direct negative behaviors (4 items). The WPVB uses a six-point rating scale: *I have never faced, I have faced once, I face this sometimes, I have faced several times, I frequently face this, I constantly face this.* Dilek and Aytolan (2008) reported that the WPVB has a high reliability measurement (0.93) by Cronbach's alpha

internal consistency value. Also, the Cronbach's alpha (.97) of the Arabic version of the WPVB indicated high reliability.

5.3 Pilot Study

The pilot for this study was conducted in two phases. First, I translated the WPVB survey from English to Arabic after obtaining permission from the original authors, and then gave it to another colleague in the field of special education who holds a PhD degree to backtranslate the survey from Arabic to English to ensure accuracy. Next, I asked 10 faculty members to review the survey and provide comments and feedback to ensure the survey was ready for collecting data from the target sample.

6. Results

This part of this study report is organized according to descriptive statistics as well as multiple regression analysis results relevant to workplace bullying toward workers with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

6.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The demographic characteristics of this study's sample include gender, education level, years of work experience, and age. See Table 1.

Table 1: Demographics of the Study Participants

Variables	Frequency (N = 134)	Percentage
Gender		
Male	88	65.7
Female	46	34.3
Years of Work Experience		
1–5	70	52.2
6–10	34	25.4
11–15	16	11.9
More than 15	14	10.5
Education Level		
High school	54	40.3
Certification	22	16.4
Diploma	42	31.3
Other	16	12.0
Age		
18–25	42	31.3
26–33	46	34.3
34–43	36	26.9
44 and above	10	7.5

6.2 Descriptive Statistics

I collected means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis data on four measures of each dimension of the WPVB as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, Normality Indices (N = 134)

Model	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Isolation	18.19	15.692	3.035	0.084
Attack on Professional Status	15.00	12.916	2.081	-1.239
Attack on Personality	13.92	11.680	3.791	1.377
Direct Negative Behaviors	4.44	5.738	4.544	1.062

6.3 Multiple Linear Regression Results

This study used multiple linear regression analysis to predict bullying toward workers with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia workplaces with the IVs of age, education level, gender, and years of work experience. Results of the linear regression analysis include a model summary of coefficients for each independent variable and each of the four dimensions of the WPVB (i.e., attack on personality, attack on professional status, isolation, and direct negative behaviors) as presented in Tables 3-6. Additionally, with the WPVB dimensions as the dependent variables, I used the work positions of assistant supervisor, assistant manager, area manager, and co-worker to determine which of these variables might predict bullying against workers with mild intellectual disabilities in their workplaces. Results of this analysis are presented in Table 7.

The results of regression analyses show that the dimension of isolation explains 26% of variance ($F = 3.615$; $p < 0.001$) and the best predictors were High school ($\beta = -15.785$, $t = 6.758$; $p < .05$), Diploma ($\beta = -12.150$, $t = 5.978$; $p < .05$), Years of Work Experience from 11 to 15 ($\beta = 15.907$, $t = -6.659$; $p < .05$), Age from 18 to 25 ($\beta = 17.379$, $t = -7.475$; $p < .05$), and Age from 26 to 33 ($\beta = 22.123$, $t = -7.594$; $p < .05$). The coefficient of the High school variable was -15.7, indicating that workers with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia who held high school diplomas showed lower levels of workplace bullying on the isolation dimension by 15.7 points. Also, the coefficient of the Diploma variable was -12.1, indicating that workers with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia who held diplomas showed lower levels of workplace bullying on the isolation dimension by 12.1 points. The coefficients of the Years of Work Experience from 11 to 15, Age from 18 to 25, and Age from 26 to 33 variables were 15.7, 17.3, and 22.2, respectively, indicating that workers with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia who had 11–15 years of work experience or were 18–25 or 26–33 years old showed higher levels of workplace bullying on the isolation dimension, by 15.7, 17.3 , and 22.2 points, respectively. See Table 3 for a summary of the model.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Isolation (N = 134)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	*t*	sig.
	B	Std. Error			
High school	-15.785	6.785	-.468	-2.326	.023
Certification	-12.128	7.570	-.291	-1.602	.114
Diploma	-12.150	5.978	-.386	-2.032	.046
1–5 years of work experience	-8.029	6.961	-.258	-1.153	.253
6–10 years of work experience	7.322	6.378	.187	1.148	.255
11–15 years of work experience	15.709	6.659	.350	2.359	.022
18–25 years old	17.379	7.475	.502	2.325	.023
26–33 years old	22.123	7.594	.672	2.913	.005
34–43 years old	6.893	6.060	.199	1.137	.260
Gender	-3.857	3.814	-.119	-1.011	.316

Note. Adjusted *R* Square = .269. Reference group for Education level is other, Reference group for Years of Work Experience is more than 16 years. Reference group for Age is older than 44 years. The Gender coding is male = 1 and female = 2.

Regression analyses results show that the dimension of attack on professional status explained 29% of variance ($F = 4.034$; $p < 0.001$) and the best predictors were High school (β = –17.222, $t = 5.490$; $p < .05$), 11–15 Years of work experience (β = 12.156, $t = 5.388$; $p < .05$), Age from 26 to 33 (β = 12.746, $t = 6.144$; $p < .05$), and Age from 34 to 43 (β = 9.900, $t = 4.904$; $p < .05$). The coefficient of the High school variable was -17.2, indicating that workers with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia who had completed high school showed lower levels of workplace bullying on the attack on professional status dimension by 17.2 points. Also, the coefficients of the 11–15 Years of work experience, Age from 26 to 33 years, and Age from 34 to 43 years variables were 12.1, 12.7, and 9.9, respectively, indicating that workers with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia with 11–15 years of work experience, age 26 to 33 years, and age 34 to 43 years showed higher levels of workplace bullying on the attack on professional status dimension by 12.1, 12.7, and 9.9 points, respectively. See Table 4 for a summary of the model.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Attack on Professional Status (N = 134)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	*t*	sig.
	B	Std. Error			
High school	-17.222	5.490	-.619	-3.137	.003
Certification	-9.382	6.125	-.273	-1.532	.131
Diploma	-9.072	4.837	-.349	-1.876	.066
1–5 years of work experience	-.258	5.633	-.010	-.046	.964
6–10 years of work experience	7.327	5.160	.226	1.420	.161
11–15 years of work experience	12.156	5.388	.328	2.256	.028
18–25 years old	10.794	6.048	.377	1.785	.079
26–33 years old	12.746	6.144	.468	2.075	.042
34–43 years old	9.900	4.904	.346	2.019	.048
Gender	-1.658	3.086	-.062	-.537	.593

Note. Adjusted *R* Square = .299. Reference group for Education level is Other, Reference group for Years of work experience is more than 15 years. Reference group for Age is older than 44 years. The gender coding is male = 1 and female = 2.

The results of regression analyses show that the dimension of attack on personality explained 26% of variance ($F = 3.552$; $p < 0.001$) and the best predictors were High school (β = –11.360, $t = 5.087$; $p < .05$) and 11–15 Years of work experience (β = 10.740, $t = 4.992$; $p < .05$). The coefficient of the High school variable was -11.3, indicating that workers with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia who had completed high school showed lower levels of workplace bullying on the attack on personality dimension by 11.3 points. Also, results show that Saudi Arabia workers with mild intellectual disabilities who had 11–15 years of work experience showed higher levels of workplace bullying on the attack on personality dimension, by 10.7 points. See Table 5 for a summary of the model.

Table 5: Regression Analysis of Attack on Personality (N = 134)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	*t*	sig.
	B	Std. Error			
High school	-11.360	5.087	-.451	-2.233	.029
Certification	-4.202	5.675	-.135	-.740	.462
Diploma	-7.505	4.482	-.319	-1.675	.099
1–5 years of work experience	-3.057	5.219	-.132	-.586	.560
6–10 years of work experience	-1.926	4.781	-.066	-.403	.688
11–15 years of work experience	10.740	4.992	.320	2.151	.035
18–25 years old	4.586	5.604	.177	.818	.416
26–33 years old	10.727	5.544	.436	1.884	.064
34–43 years old	7.594	4.544	.293	1.671	.100
Gender	-1.681	2.859	-.070	-.588	.559

Note. Adjusted *R* Square = .264. Reference group for Education level is other, Reference group for Years of work experience is more than 15 years. Reference group for Age is older than 44 years. The gender coding is male = 1 and female = 2.

Regression analyses results show that the dimension of direct negative behaviors explained 7.1% of variance ($F = 1.545$; $p > 0.146$) and the best predictor was Age from 26 to 33 years ($\beta = 6.413$, $t = 3.143$; $p < .05$). The coefficient of the Age from 26 to 33 years variable was 6.4, indicating that workers with intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia who were 26–33 years old showed higher levels of workplace bullying on the direct negative behaviors dimension by 6.4 points. See Table 6 for a summary of the model.

Table 6: Regression Analysis of Direct Negative Behaviors (N = 134)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	*t*	sig.
	B	Std. Error			
High school	-1.980	2.808	-.160	-.705	.483
Certification	-1.831	3.133	-.120	-.584	.561
Diploma	-2.542	2.474	-.220	-1.027	.308
1–5 years of work experience	-4.477	2.881	-.392	-1.554	.125
6–10 years of work experience	-2.624	2.640	-.182	-.994	.324
11–15 years of work experience	4.186	2.756	.254	1.519	.134
18–25 years old	5.698	3.094	.448	1.842	.070
26–33 years old	6.413	3.143	.531	2.041	.046
34–43 years old	1.913	2.508	.150	.763	.449
Gender	-1.164	1.578	-.098	-.738	.463

Note. Adjusted *R* Square = .071. Reference group for Education level is Other, Reference group for Years of work experience is more than 15 years. Reference group for Age is older than 44 years. The gender coding is male = 1 and female = 2.

The results of regression analyses show that the WPVB dimensions explained 47% of variance ($F = 16.765$; $p < 0.001$) and the best predictors of workplace bullying were the positions of Assistant manager ($\beta = 23.224$, $t = 9.232$; $p < .05$), Area manager ($\beta = 35.568$, $t = 10.795$; $p < .05$), and Co-workers ($\beta = 34.179$, $t = 8.487$; $p < .05$). The coefficient of the Assistant manager, Area manager, and Co-workers variables were 23.2, 35.5, and 34.1, respectively, indicating that workplace bullying toward workers with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia occurred at higher levels of frequency by assistant managers, area managers, and co-workers by 23.2, 35.5, and 34.1 points, respectively. See Table 7 for a summary of the model.

Table 7: Regression Analysis of Positions (N = 134)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	*t*	sig.
	B	Std. Error			
Assistant supervisor	9.518	8.392	.110	1.134	.261
Assistant manager	23.224	9.232	.251	2.516	.014
Area manager	35.568	10.795	.331	3.295	.002
Co-worker	34.179	8.487	.386	4.027	.001

Note. Adjusted *R* Square = .470.

7. Discussion and Interpretation

This study focused on predicting the relation between a group of independent variables and bullying toward workers with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia workplaces. Results showed an association between high school completion and three dimensions of the WPVB: isolation, attack on professional status, and attack on personality, which means participants who had completed high school experienced lower levels of bullying on three dimensions: isolation, attack on professional status, and attack on personality. This might be because these workers who had only completed high

school and had mild intellectual disabilities might not have known the meaning of bullying or been able to recognize its occurrence in their workplaces because their mild intellectual disabilities may have limited their ability to recognize workplace bullying; thus they reported low levels of bullying experience. This finding opposes that of Marraccini et al. (2015) who found that 51% of their participating students had witnessed other students being bullied by staff members, and 18% of their sample had experienced bullying by staff members at least once. Also, the current study revealed that holding a diploma was associated only with the isolation dimension and lower levels of bullying. This result differs from Fattori and colleagues' (2015) finding that 16.3% of their participants were victims of workplace bullying, and that older participants were more experienced with bullying. Thus, the current study's finding of low bullying levels in workers with intellectual disabilities who finished high school or held dip lomas might be due to their unwillingness to admit to experiencing bullying so as not to negatively impact their work and for fear that their managers might fire them. Islam and Chaudhary (2022) found that workplace bullying was related toemotional exhaustion and knowledge hiding in workers in the health sector. Thus, workplace bullying occurs, and workers with intellectual disabilities might not be aware of the resulting emotional exhaustion and knowledge hiding and are not reporting the workplace bullying that might be happening to them.

The current study on workplace bullying toward workers with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia found that the variable of 11 to 15 years of work experience was associated with high levels of bullying on three dimensions: isolation, attack on professional status, and attack on personality. This study's results are supported by Sveinsdttir et al. (2018) who indicated that 66% of their participants experienced bullying, 39% faced violence, and 53% cited psychological distress as a common health issue among them. Also, Etienne's (2014) results were similar to the current findings as Etienne reported that 48% of nurse participants experienced bullying in their workplaces, and that most bullying acts they faced involved being ignored or excluded in their workplaces. In the current study, workers with mild intellectual disabilities experienced bullying in the workplace on the dimensions of isolation, attack on professional status, and attack on personality by other workers in the workplace. This finding is supported by Maroto and Pettinicchio (2014) who found that people with disabilities faced work segregation which limited their earning capacity. Workers with disabilities also worked in workplaces that required fewer skills and afforded them fewer chances to access education and experiences to improve their skills. In the current study, workers with mild intellectual disabilities who had more than 10 years of work experience faced higher levels of bullying in the workplace as they became more familiar with bullying and could recognize when it happened to them. Another study that supported the current study's results was conducted by Løvvik et al. (2022) who found that 36% of their participants experienced bullying in their workplaces.

The current study found that higher levels of workplace bullying toward workers with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia were related to workers aged between 18 and 43 years across three dimensions: isolation, attack on professional status, and direct negative behaviors. This finding aligns that of Jones and colleagues (2018) who found that younger workers experienced lower rates of discrimination compared to older workers. Thus, it might be that workers with mild intellectual disabilities experience higher levels or different types of bullying as they get older and become more aware that bullying might occur against them in the workplace. Another study (Fattori et al., 2015) supported the current results as that study found that 16.3% of their participants were victims of bullying in the workplace, and that older participants were more experienced with bullying. Thus, as workers get older, they may become more aware that bullying might happen in their workplaces. Also, Islam and his colleagues (2021) found that workplace bullying had a negative impact on nurses, and this negative impact caused burnout in their workplaces. Likewise, the current study's workers with mild intellectual disabilities might experience the negative impact of bullying in their workplaces with potential resulting burnout.

The current study also found that bullying toward workers with mild intellectual disabilities in the workplace is associated with various work positions (i.e., assistant supervisor, assistant manager, area manager, and co-worker). This study found three positions (i.e., assistant manager, area

manager, and co-worker) were related to higher levels of workplace bullying against workers with mild intellectual disabilities. This result is supported by Gardner et al. (2016) who found that 31% of their participants experienced bullying by their supervisors, employers, or managers; 48% experienced bullying by their typically developing peers; and 17% experienced bullying by subordinates. Thus, workers with mild intellectual disabilities may face workplace bullying by their managers and typically developing peer workers; this type of bullying might target individuals with disabilities because the bullies assume they cannot defend themselves. This finding is supported by Snyder et al. (2010) who stated that workers with disabilities experienced higher levels of discrimination overtly and subtlety targeting people with disabilities. Chaudhary and Islam (2022) found that despotic leadership might impact workers' psychological suffering through bullying behavior. Thus, leadership styles might negatively affect workers as they face bullying behavior without their managers preventing or reducing it in the workplace. The current study revealed that workers with mild intellectual disabilities faced bullying by their managers, which may imply that leadership style plays a major role in increasing or decreasing workplace bullying.

8. Implications and Recommendations

Based on this study's results, I recommend including more disabilities specialists when hiring people with disabilities in any workplace in order to determine the appropriate jobs for them based on their needs and skills. Moreover, I recommend that each workplace with workers with disabilities have a clear policy on bullying and explicit procedures on how to report it. I also recommend more workshops and training sessions about disabilities as intervention for managers and co-workers to teach them how to support their employees and peers with disabilities. Also, people with disabilities should attend workshops and training sessions with their families as effective intervention in their first week of work so that they know their rights in the workplace and the meaning and types of bullying behaviors that might occur, and so they can be aware of the employer's policy on bullying and the procedures to follow for reporting bullying. Lastly, I recommend that each workplace encourage their department of human resources to improve their policy on bullying prevention, and to hire staff members who have degrees in the field of disabilities to assist employers in supporting people with disabilities in all aspects of the workplace, enhancing and improving the workplace environment.

9. Conclusion

Employees with disabilities face workplace bullying, and this study examined the relations among factors (i.e., age, education level, gender, years of work experience, and the position of assistant supervisor, assistant manager, area manager, and co-worker) that might predict bullying on specific dimensions of the WPVB tool. This study found an association between workers with mild intellectual disabilities who had completed high school and lower levels of workplace bullying across three dimensions: isolation, attack on professional status, attack on personality; workers who held diplomas were associated with lower levels of workplace bullying only on the isolation dimension. The current study found that years of work experience from 11 to 15 were associated with higher levels of workplace bullying toward people with mild intellectual disabilities across three dimensions: isolation, attack on professional status, and attack on personality. The variable of age between 18 to 43 was associated with higher levels of workplace bullying toward people with mild intellectual disabilities across three dimensions: isolation, attack on professional status, and direct negative behaviors. The current study also found that three work positions (i.e., assistant manager, area manager, and co-worker) were related to higher levels of workplace bullying against workers with mild intellectual disabilities. This finding is supported by several studies concluding that worker with disabilities faced more bullying and unjust treatment compared to their typically developing peers (Fevre et al., 2013; Maroto & Pettinicchio, 2014; Mitra & Kruse, 2016; Snyder et al., 2010). One

limitation of this study was that some of the participants had problems understanding some questions because they had mild intellectual disabilities, and, therefore, required some help from family members who explained the questions to them so that they were able to accurately answer questions based on their experience. Future research might consider other variables which could also influence bullying behaviors: the size of the company, cultural background, training and mentoring assistant in workplace, families' support, cyberbullying, and types of co-workers such as local workers and international workers.

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