Management Decision

The hidden costs of workplace inauthenticity: insights from facades of conformity

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Abstract

Purpose – This study investigates the impact of the facades of conformity (FOC) on burnout, turnover intention, moral disengagement and social loafing among banking professionals.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected by using a survey technique from 452 white-collar banking professionals in Istanbul, Turkey.

Findings – FOC is positively related to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, turnover intention, moral disengagement and social loafing. Emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, as the subdimensions of burnout, partially mediate the relationship between FOC and turnover intention. Further, moral disengagement partially mediates the link between FOC and social loafing.

Research limitations/implications – The study can be expanded to other countries to investigate how culture affects the dynamics of FOC on the concepts analyzed in this study.

Practical implications – FOC yields significant consequences for both individuals and organizations, regardless of whether employees stay or leave the organization. Consistently participating in such behaviors may eventually exhaust human psychological resources, resulting in burnout and heightened turnover intentions. Moreover, FOC can lead to cognitive erosion that may result in undesirable outcomes such as moral disengagement and social loafing. To reduce these outcomes, organizations should emphasize individuality, promote authenticity and embrace diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Originality/value – This is the first study to posit the undesirable consequences of FOC, regardless of whether employees intend to stay or have turnover intentions. This study connects FOC to burnout, turnover intention, moral disengagement and social loafing, while revealing crucial mediators, illuminating the hidden psychological and behavioral consequences of workplace inauthenticity. It highlights the ongoing dangers of FOC-oriented societies and emphasizes the need for authenticity, inclusivity and wellness within organizations.

Keywords Facades of conformity, Emotional exhaustion, Depersonalization, Turnover intention, Social loafing, Moral disengagement

Paper type Research article

1. Introduction

The alignment between employees' values and the organization's values is crucial for both employees' psychological well-being and the organization's overall performance (Gregory *et al.*, 2009). When the values of the organization and its employees are not in line or when divergence in values occurs, employees may suppress their value and create facades of conformity (FOC). FOC is defined as "false representations created by employees to appear as if they embrace organizational values" (Hewlin, 2003; Liang, 2022). This is emphasized as a negative job behavior (Liang, 2025). Displaying FOC can lead to undesirable consequences for both organizations and employees, such as cyberloafing, anxiety (Ye and Qian, 2023), intention to leave (Hewlin, 2009) and low-level task performance (Cheng *et al.*, 2023).

Although creating FOC has been associated with adverse psychological outcomes, such as psychological conflicts and frustration, emotional exhaustion (Hewlin *et al.*, 2017) and reduced job satisfaction (Cheng *et al.*, 2023; Hewlin, 2009), its consequences can also extend

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to the organization, such as work engagement (Hewlin *et al.*, 2017), employee voice (Chou *et al.*, 2020) and cyberloafing behaviors (Ye and Qian, 2023). When inauthentic behavior like FOC becomes normalized in the workplace, it can weaken team trust, reduce open communication and promote a culture of conformity that ultimately harms overall performance and psychological safety (Hewlin *et al.*, 2016, 2017). While the individual consequences of FOC are well established, its broader effects on organizational outputs remain little examined. At the individual level, FOC has been linked to employees' well-being (Akhtar *et al.*, 2023; Chou *et al.*, 2020). On the other hand, these behaviors also disrupt team dynamics, reduce collaboration and ultimately impair performance (Cheng *et al.*, 2023; Hewlin *et al.*, 2016, 2017).

When considering these effects, it is essential to explore the consequences of FOC for both employees and organizations. Such explorations are necessary to foster work environments that promote individuality, genuine self-expression, diversity and inclusion, thereby enhancing authenticity and psychological well-being in the workplace (Maunz and Glaser, 2023; Ostermeier *et al.*, 2022). In this regard, suppressing self-expression in the workplace can hinder inclusion, creativity and psychological safety (Kahn, 1990; Shore *et al.*, 2011). On the other hand, studies show that encouraging individuality, genuine expression and diversity has been shown to foster authenticity and engagement at work, ultimately enhancing organizational commitment and innovation (Cable *et al.*, 2013; Ely and Thomas, 2001).

Hewlin *et al.* (2016) emphasize the need for future research to explore how FOC influences employees' psychological aspects, ultimately affecting their attitudes and behaviors within organizations. Highlighting the limited research on the undesired behavioral effects of FOC, Ye and Qian (2023) examined how FOC leads to cyberloafing through anxiety. Given the destructive individual and organizational consequences of FOC, it is critically important to understand how such behavior leads to turnover intention and social loafing, particularly in high-stress industries such as banking. As Liang (2022) emphasized, bank employees play a critical role in the overall monetary systems of the countries, and their psychological well-being is vital for a sustainable financial system.

Recent management theories have considered factors affecting employee well-being not as discrete stressors but rather through the lens of identity-based resource dynamics (Dziedzic, 2024; Rovetta *et al.*, 2025). Building on this perspective, the conservation of resource (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) highlights that individuals' constant identity regulation and self-suppression create not only emotional setbacks but also a different form of psychological exhaustion and burnout that extends into behavioral areas. Extending this logic, research on ethical decision-making reveals how long-term identity inconsistencies can lead to ethical degeneration and moral disengagement, and how these behaviors unconsciously normalize dysfunctional behaviors over time (Moreno-Gata *et al.*, 2025; Ogunfowora *et al.*, 2022). Against this theoretical backdrop, FOC, accompanied by outcomes such as moral disengagement, burnout, withdrawal behavior and turnover intention, has become one of the highly significant issues in modern organizations (Demir *et al.*, 2025; Liang, 2024, 2025; Tumelo and Donald, 2025). Nevertheless, although recent literature highlights management issues such as authenticity (Radigan *et al.*, 2025; Xie and Yang, 2025), inclusivity (Demir *et al.*, 2025) and employee voice (Hu *et al.*, 2024; Shipton *et al.*, 2024), empirical studies on FOC, linked to various adverse outcomes, remain surprisingly limited. As a result, it has high psychological and ethical costs for individuals and organizations (Hewlin, 2009; Yang and Liang, 2025). Accordingly, by combining negative variables such as FOC, burnout, turnover intention, moral disengagement and social loafing within a single explanatory framework, this study fills this important gap in the literature. More specifically, it addresses insincere employee behaviors (e.g. FOC) arising from various causes and directly responds to contemporary calls (Hewlin *et al.*, 2016) for a more holistic and process-oriented explanation of the consequences caused by employee insincerity.

To effectively contextualize this gap, it is essential to analyze how previous research has philosophically addressed the FOC and which facets of this phenomenon have garnered

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primary focus. Research on FOC has drawn on multiple theoretical perspectives to explain why employees display surface-level compliance despite private misalignment with organizational values. From an impression management perspective, an attempt has been made to explain why employees create FOC by focusing on negative working conditions and emotional processes. Drawing on affective events theory, studies show that psychological contract breach and job insecurity cause emotional strain, leading employees to create FOC (Liang, 2025; Yang and Liang, 2025). Conservation of resources theory shows FOC is a resource-draining coping strategy triggered by ongoing stress, connecting it to emotional exhaustion, disengagement and well-being (Akhtar *et al.*, 2020; Chen *et al.*, 2024). Recent scholarship has also positioned FOC within the frameworks of impression management and ethical stress, underscoring its connection to emotional labor, surface acting and performative compliance when faced with illegitimate or value-incongruent demands (Yang and Liang, 2025). The literature has substantially advanced the understanding of the antecedents and affective consequences of FOC. However, despite these advances, prior research has largely overlooked the moral-cognitive mechanisms and behavioral outcomes through which prolonged FOC translates into withdrawal-related decisions and reduced collective effort. In particular, how FOC contributes to moral disengagement and subsequent social loafing remains insufficiently examined, leaving a critical gap regarding the broader organizational implications of sustained workplace inauthenticity.

Addressing this limitation, the present study investigates turnover intention and social loafing as two critical outcomes of FOC, through the mediating roles of burnout and moral disengagement mechanisms. By doing so, we aim to uncover the hidden psychological process linking individual inauthenticity to individual and organizational corruption. The results enhance both theoretical understanding and practical application by guiding strategies that foster authenticity, inclusiveness and employee well-being in conformity-oriented workplaces.

This study makes several important contributions to the literature on employee withdrawal and counterproductive behaviors. First, while previous research has mostly examined FOC in relation to impression management or organizational identification (Hewlin, 2009), we extend this construct into the domain of occupational strain and moral cognition by integrating it with burnout and moral disengagement mechanisms. In doing so, we respond to recent calls to explore the affective and ethical consequences of identity suppression at work (Hewlin *et al.*, 2020). Second, by examining emotional exhaustion and depersonalization as sequential responses to resource depletion caused by FOC, our study advances the COR theory in explaining how identity-related demands trigger withdrawal intentions (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). Third, we introduce moral disengagement as a novel cognitive mechanism linking FOC to social loafing, thereby expanding the scope of counterproductive behavior research by integrating self-regulation theory (Bandura, 1999) with impression management literature. This dual-pathway model contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how facade behaviors can erode both individual well-being and group functioning. Finally, our model simultaneously tests multiple mediating mechanisms, offering a more nuanced perspective on how FOC unfolds through distinct psychological routes to shape harmful workplace outcomes.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

The conceptual model of this study was developed by combining the COR theory and social cognitive theory. The COR theory explains the links between FOC, burnout and turnover intention, while the social cognitive theory explains the connections between FOC, moral disengagement and social loafing. Drawing on the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), we argue that individuals' efforts to maintain FOC will, over time, deplete their psychological resources and this process may lead to burnout and intention to leave. Employees who create FOC experience stress over time (Chou *et al.*, 2020; Hewlin, 2003; Ye and Qian, 2023). This is

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thought to be a result of a decrease or damage to individuals' resources, such as well-being (Halbesleben *et al*., 2014). The continuation of this stress causes employees to experience difficulties in both their in-role and out-of-role tasks and leads to a decrease in their creativity (McFarland and Hlubocky, 2021). Considering that one of the significant outcomes of stress is burnout (Gonçalves *et al*., 2019), we predict that employees who create FOC may experience burnout as an extension of stress and that employees may develop turnover intention as a form of coping strategy.

Simultaneously, based on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001), we propose that internal value conflict and self-regulatory dissonance may result in moral disengagement, hence increasing the probability of counterproductive behaviors such as social loafing. When employees experience a conflict between their personal values and the organization's values, they may suppress their own values and create the appearance that they fully embrace the organizational values (Hewlin, 2003). According to this theory, individuals seek a way out to resolve such cognitive dissonance and, in doing so, may rationalize unethical behaviors that lead to moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999). The internal conflict that begins with FOC and the activation of moral disengagement mechanisms may cause employees to engage in social loafing behavior.

By incorporating two theoretically distinct but functionally related outcomes – turnover intention and social loafing – we aim to capture both the intrapersonal withdrawal and interpersonal disengagement consequences of FOC. This dual-outcome framework offers a more comprehensive understanding of how suppressed authenticity undermines both individual commitment and collective performance in the workplace.

2.1 Facades of conformity, burnout and turnover intention

According to Maslach (Maslach *et al*., 2001), burnout is a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged and intense stress. Emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are considered the two main components of burnout (Schaufeli, 2003). Emotional exhaustion refers to the phenomenon of one's emotional resources being depleted. Depersonalization expresses a negative attitude toward other people or work (Fernet *et al*., 2010).

FOC involve suppressing personal values and pretending to adopt organizational values (Hewlin, 2003). Such inauthentic behavior by employees, along with the associated stress, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, may increase burnout (Chou *et al*., 2020; Hewlin, 2009). Employees who create FOC are psychologically and emotionally affected (Hewlin *et al*., 2016). These employees constantly hide their true thoughts and feelings, leading to the depletion of their resources (Hobfoll, 1989). This resource depletion leads to a state of emotional and physical exhaustion, known as emotional exhaustion, in the face of workload (Halbesleben *et al*., 2014). Employees' attempts to cope with inadequate resources and the depletion of their energy reserves lead to emotional exhaustion (Brotheridge and Lee, 2002; Hobfoll, 1989).

Depersonalization is the development of negative, indifferent and cynical attitudes and feelings toward coworkers due to the depletion of their emotional resources. Depersonalization represents the interpersonal context dimension of burnout (Maslach *et al*., 2001). Employees who create FOC experience stress, leading to a depletion of resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Over time, employees experiencing resource depletion may become depersonalized (Imam *et al*., 2022, p. 20). Empirical research supports this association. For instance, Taris *et al*. (2005) found that emotional exhaustion, a key manifestation of resource depletion, significantly predicts depersonalization among human service professionals. Similarly, Leiter and Maslach (2011) emphasized that resource loss – both emotional and cognitive – precedes the development of depersonalization in burnout progression (Leiter and Maslach, 2011). In another study, Enzmann *et al*. (1998) noted that prolonged demands without adequate resource recovery result in emotional distancing and cynicism, which are conceptually and operationally aligned with depersonalization (Schaufeli and Enzmann, 2020). These studies suggest that the erosion of

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personal resources due to chronic job stress plays a critical role in the emergence of depersonalization as a psychological defense mechanism.

Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1. FOC has a positive relationship to emotional exhaustion.

H2. FOC has a positive relationship to depersonalization.

Employees create FOC as a defense mechanism in the organization. To avoid potential negative evaluations or protect themselves in highly politicized organizational environments, employees suppress their true values by creating FOC (Anjum and Shah, 2017; Chen *et al.*, 2024). Although the employee initially perceives this mechanism as beneficial (Hewlin, 2003), creating FOC leads to stress and resource loss for the employee (Imam *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, the differences between organizational and employee values lead to role conflicts and eventually overload the employee (Hewlin, 2003). This will negatively affect the employee's well-being and performance (Cheng *et al.*, 2023). According to Hobfoll (1989), stress causes the slow depletion and use of resources that people value. Employees who maintain FOC for an extended period experience stress (Chau *et al.*, 2009). Sensing a shortage of resources, the employee resorts to defensive measures to safeguard the remaining resources (Halbesleben, 2010; Halbesleben and Bowler, 2007; Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2011). Empirical research supports this association. Hewlin *et al.* (2016) found that employees who engaged in FOC reported higher turnover intentions, while Ye and Qian (2023) demonstrated that FOC indirectly increases turnover intention through elevated anxiety. Likewise, person–organization value incongruence, which reflects FOC's underlying value misalignment, is positively associated with turnover intention (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005; O'Reilly *et al.*, 1991). Therefore, we expect that employees who create FOC will be more likely to consider leaving their jobs. We propose the following hypothesis.

H3. FOC has a positive relationship to turnover intention.

2.2 Facades of conformity, moral disengagement and social loafing

The relationship between FOC and social loafing has been examined within the framework of social cognitive theory. Suppressing their values and behaving as if they have adopted the organization's values (Hewlin, 2003), causes psychological and emotional distress (Hewlin *et al.*, 2017), which in turn leads to stress in individuals (Mickleburgh, 1992). Employees who cannot cope with stress may eventually resort to unethical behaviors over time (Folkman *et al.*, 1986). One of the unethical behaviors of employees who create FOC may be social loafing. Social loafing can be defined as a situation where employees' perception of individual responsibility decreases within a group, leading to a decline in their performance (Latané *et al.*, 1979). Individuals do not demonstrate the same level of performance in group tasks as they would in individual tasks due to their reduced social awareness in group settings (Liden *et al.*, 2004). In other words, social loafing is putting less effort into group work compared to working alone (Latané *et al.*, 1979; Ying *et al.*, 2014). Although empirical studies testing the FOC and social loafing link are limited, related constructs offer robust statistical support. Surface acting, which is another form of inauthentic self-presentation, is linked with diminished team performance and withdrawal behaviors (Grandey, 2003; Hülsheger and Schewe, 2011). If an employee does not intend to leave the job and chooses to stay with the organization, he or she may redirect their reduced resources toward minimal group effort. In other words, we predict that the employee may engage in unethical behaviors such as social loafing.

H4. FOC has a positive relationship to social loafing.

The theory of moral disengagement was developed as an extension of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). This theory aims to explain why some individuals may not feel discomfort

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when they behave unethically. Employees create FOC to be seen as embracing the organizational values, while they do not (Hewlin, 2003). The conflict between the employee's and the organization's values may trigger moral disengagement behavior over time. Creating FOC for long periods may lead to unethical behavior. To eliminate or reduce the discomfort due to unethical behaviors, employees use moral disengagement strategies such as "I have no other choice." or "Everybody does it." (Bandura, 1999; Moore, 2008). Even though the relationship between FOC and moral disengagement has not been investigated yet, value incongruence – a core antecedent of FOC – has been associated with moral disengagement in predicting counterproductive work behavior (Detert *et al.*, 2008). Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5. FOC has a positive relationship to moral disengagement.

Moral disengagement is the rationalization of behaviors by individuals when they deviate from moral principles. Individuals activate cognitive mechanisms to avoid being affected by the consequences of their unethical behavior (Bandura, 1999). Social loafing is when individuals feel less responsibility and reduce their contributions within a group compared to their efforts while working on an individual task (Latané *et al.*, 1979). According to social cognitive theory, using moral disengagement mechanisms to exhibit social loafing behaviors may be a result of observational learning and social modeling. These mechanisms are used by employees to ignore the ethical consequences of their behavior and justify poor performance within the group (Bandura, 1999; Moore, 2008). Although direct empirical studies linking moral disengagement to social loafing are limited, Ke *et al*. (2025) found that moral disengagement was positively associated with counterproductive work behaviors in group contexts, including reduced individual effort (Ke and Li, 2025). Therefore, we suggest that moral disengagement may facilitate social loafing by allowing individuals to rationalize diminished contributions in team settings.

H6. Moral disengagement has a positive relationship to social loafing.

2.3 Burnout as the mediator between facades of conformity and turnover intention

Employees create FOC to appear to adapt to the organization or to defend themselves, resulting in the waste of valuable resources, such as stress and compromised well-being. When employees cannot regain their valuable resources, they try to avoid situations that cause resource loss (Brotheridge and Lee, 2002). According to the COR theory, employees who create FOC experience internal conflict due to the obligation they feel to align their values with those of their organization. This internal conflict in employees leads to developing an intention to leave the job as a consequence of stress to preserve their psychological resources. Emotional exhaustion is the primary symptom of burnout (Maslach *et al.*, 2001) and negatively affects not only the physical and emotional health of employees but also their job performance (Simha *et al.*, 2014) and organizational commitment (Chen and Chen, 2018). This situation can be observed in employees as a loss of energy and an inability to cope with stress (Xiaoming *et al.*, 2014). Emotionally exhausted employees often feel that they lack adaptive resources and can no longer contribute to their work (Halbesleben and Buckley, 2004), leading them to consider leaving their jobs (Li and Zhou, 2013). Empirical research supports the link between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. Hewlin (2009) found that employees who experience emotional exhaustion due to suppressing their values and pretending to embrace organizational values are more likely to consider leaving their organization. Additionally, Halbesleben and Buckley (2004) found that emotionally exhausted employees often feel they lack adaptive resources, which leads them to disengage from work. Similarly, Li and Zhou (2013) and Taris *et al*. (2005) demonstrated that higher emotional exhaustion significantly predicts employees' intentions to quit. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

H7. Emotional exhaustion has a positive relationship to turnover intention.

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Emotionally exhausted individuals also limit their relationships with people around them. These individuals psychologically distance themselves from others, and depersonalization becomes evident (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Ashforth and others (Ashforth and Lee, 1990) argued that depersonalization is a form of defensive behavior defined as reactive and protective actions aimed at preventing an unwanted demand or reducing a perceived threat. This defensive behavior may increase the intention to leave the job. Similarly, Leiter and Maslach (2009) demonstrated that cynicism, a psychological withdrawal from work, where employees may feel disillusioned or lose their sense of purpose and connection to their role, was the critical predictor of turnover intentions among nurses (Leiter and Maslach, 2009). Additionally, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) reported that burnout was positively associated with turnover intention across multiple occupational groups (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

H8. Depersonalization has a positive relationship to turnover intention.

On the other hand, the direct relationship between FOC and TI (Hewlin, 2009; Hewlin *et al.*, 2016) may be the result of another psychological process such as burnout (Chou *et al.*, 2020). In other words, this direct relationship may also involve other psychological processes such as burnout. Employees who create FOC aim to protect their resources by being seen as conforming to the norms of the organization (Hobfoll, 1989). However, employees who continue these behaviors and see their resources being further depleted may feel a greater sense of resource deprivation (Brotheridge and Lee, 2002). In this case, it may increase their intention to leave the job. Hewlin (2009) found that emotional exhaustion fully mediates the relationship between FOC and turnover intention. This means the impact of creating FOC on turnover intention occurs through the emotional exhaustion experienced by employees. Similarly, Chou (2020) found that emotional exhaustion acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between the FOC and job satisfaction, further decreasing job satisfaction, which in turn leads to turnover intention (Bregenzer *et al.*, 2025). Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

H9. Emotional exhaustion mediates the direct relationship between FOC and turnover intention.

H10. Depersonalization mediates the direct relationship between FOC and turnover intention.

2.4 Moral disengagement as the mediator between facades of conformity and social loafing

Unethical behaviors, such as moral disengagement, may influence the direct link between FOC and social loafing. According to social cognitive theory, employees whose actions and thoughts conflict might use moral disengagement mechanisms to overlook these issues. The process of moral disengagement is crucial in how individuals justify their unethical actions. Social cognitive theory explains that people reframe or justify their behaviors ethically, which helps them display these behaviors (Bandura, 1999). Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

H11. Moral disengagement mediates the direct relationship between FOC and social loafing (Figure 1).

3. Methods

3.1 Sample and procedure

This study employed convenience sampling. Data were collected from 484 white-collar employees in the banking industry in Turkey, using personal contacts. Most participants completed surveys face-to-face at their offices during work hours, while a few, working remotely or with limited time, finished the questionnaires online.

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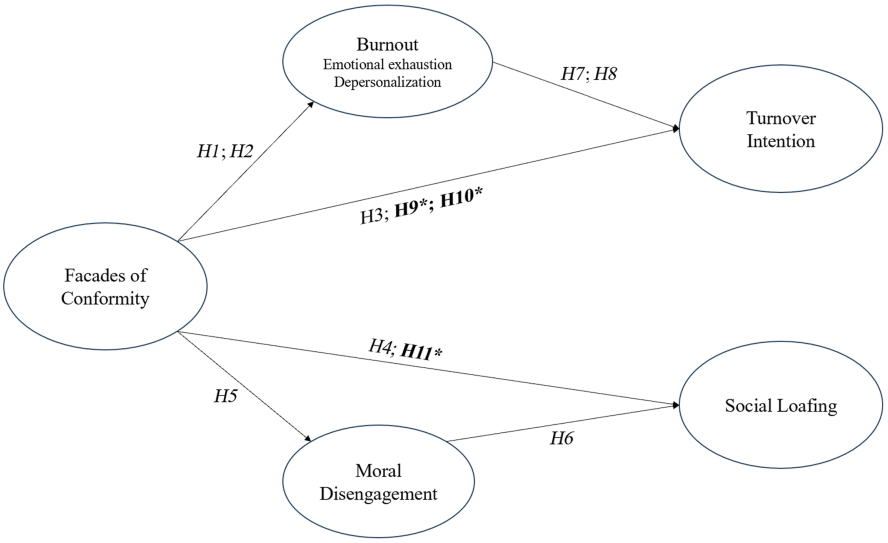


Figure 1. Research model. Source: Authors' own work

To ensure confidentiality and increase participation, the researchers personally visited the headquarters of several banks. Anonymous envelopes containing the survey were distributed to participants, and sealed drop boxes were placed in common areas so that participants could return completed surveys without revealing their identities. This procedure was explained to employees to assure them that their responses would remain anonymous and that no identifying information would be collected. These measures helped build trust and minimize social desirability bias in responses. The data were collected between August and September 2023. Both online and face-to-face surveys were conducted simultaneously during this period. To examine whether the data collected through online and face-to-face surveys could be combined, a measurement invariance test was conducted. The detailed results of this test are presented in Section 4.4.

3.2 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted before the main data collection to ensure the survey's clarity, reliability and feasibility. The pilot study aimed to identify issues in item wording or survey structure, estimate completion time and assess participants' understanding. A total of 32 participants, selected to reflect the demographic and occupational characteristics of the target population, took part in the pilot. The pilot version included all items related to the study variables: FOC, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, turnover intention, moral disengagement and social loafing. Reliability analyses were conducted using Cronbach's alpha, and all scales exceeded the acceptable threshold ($\alpha > 0.70$), demonstrating internal consistency. Feedback from participants led to minor language adjustments to improve clarity. Overall, the pilot study confirmed that the survey was comprehensible, of reasonable length and technically feasible for both online and face-to-face administration, thereby providing strong support for proceeding with full-scale data collection using the same instruments.

Among the participants, 92% completed the paper survey face-to-face and 8% completed the online version. All items in the survey except FOC have a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. FOC scale ranged from 1 = Never to 5 = Always. 71.5% of participants are men, 28.5% are women, 90% have a bachelor's degree

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or above, 43% are managers. Table 1 presents the demographic information of the study participants.

3.3 Control variables

Prior empirical research on FOC has emphasized that individual demographic characteristics may influence both the tendency to engage in such behavior and its associated outcomes (Hewlin, 2009; Hewlin *et al.*, 2016). Variables such as age, gender, marital status, educational attainment and job title have been frequently employed as control variables in this domain, as they may account for variance in employees' alignment behaviors that is not attributable to the focal constructs.

3.4 Measures

The English version of the survey measures was translated into Turkish. Native researchers analyzed the measures using a back-translation technique to ensure the equivalence of the Turkish and English versions (Brislin, 1980). Participants completed the survey in Turkish. This study was approved by the university's research ethics committee, ensuring the confidentiality of all participant responses. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS, AMOS and SPSS Process macro and R (version 4.5.2; R Core Team, 2025).

Facades of conformity (FOC). FOC measure developed by (Hewlin, 2009) has one dimension and a 6-item scale. Two sample items include, "I don't share certain things about myself in order to fit in at work." and "I play politics by pretending to embrace organizational values." The coefficient of Cronbach's alpha was 0.83.

Moral disengagement (MD). MD measure developed by (Moore *et al.*, 2012) has one dimension and an 8-item scale. Two sample items include, "It is okay to spread rumors to defend those you care about." and "Taking something without the owner's permission is okay as long as you're just borrowing it." The coefficient of Cronbach's alpha was 0.91.

Turnover intention (TI). TI measure developed by (Mobley *et al.*, 1979) has one dimension and a 3-item scale. Two sample items include, "I will leave this institution/firm at the first

Table 1. Demographic information of study participants

Variable	Attribute	Number	Percentage
Age	≤25	73	16.2
	26–30	92	20.4
	31–35	95	21.0
	36–40	117	25.9
	41–45	55	12.2
	≥46	20	4.4
Sex	Female	129	28.5
	Male	323	71.5
Marriage situation	Married	259	57.3
	Single	193	42.7
Education level	Elementary and Middle School	2	0.4
	High School	13	2.9
	Junior college	32	7.1
	Bachelor's	305	67.5
	Master's	92	20.4
	Doctor	8	1.8
Title	Employee	258	57.1
	Unit Manager	84	18.6
	Head of Department	97	21.5
	Assistant of General Manager	13	2.9

Source(s): Authors' own work

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opportunity." and "I frequently think about quitting this institution." The coefficient of Cronbach's alpha was 0.94.

Burnout (EE, DE). Burnout measures developed by (Maslach and Jackson, 1981) has two dimensions, emotional exhaustion (EE) has 9 items and depersonalization (DE) has 5 items. Two sample items include, "Working with people all day is really a strain for me." and "I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally". The coefficient of Cronbach's alpha was 0.92 for emotional exhaustion, 0.89 for depersonalization.

Social loafing (SL). SL measure developed by (Price *et al.*, 2006) has one dimension and a 4-item scale. Two sample items include, "I loafed by not doing my share of the tasks" and "by leaving work for others to do". The coefficient of Cronbach's alpha was 0.92.

Control variables. The control variables are age, gender, marital status, education, work experience in years and title. Age was an open-ended question and then categorized with SPSS software.

4. Analyses and results

4.1 Descriptive statistics and correlations

Preliminary data analyses were conducted prior to hypothesis testing. Skewness and kurtosis values are analyzed to check the normal distribution of the data. The mean values of all items range from 1.36 to 2.90, standard deviation values range from 0.68 to 1.426, skewness values range from 0.091 to 2.531 and kurtosis values range from −1.303 to 7.993. These indicate that there is no normal distribution problem in the data (Kline, 2011).

All average variance extracted (AVE) values are higher than 0.50 and range from 0.51 to 0.82. As a result, the findings established strong convergent validity. Also, the square root of AVE for each variable surpasses its correlation with other variables, indicating robust discriminant validity in the results (Hair *et al.*, 2014) as shown in Table 2.

4.2 Measurement model

First, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed using SPSS. EFA is used to examine the individual items' factor loadings, validity and reliability. The sixth item of FOC was removed from the study because its factor load was 0.455 (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Principal component analysis was utilized with varimax rotation for EFA. Results indicated the sampling adequacy for the analysis (Kaiser and Rice, 1974). According to Hair *et al.* (2014), the threshold value of Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) should 0.50. KMO value exceedingly surpasses the threshold in this study. KMO's value is between 0.742 and 0.906 as shown in Table 2.

To evaluate the measurement model, CFA were conducted with the SPSS AMOS 29 version. The goodness of fit values for structural equation modeling (SEM) were examined (Kline, 2023). The baseline model (including FOC, turnover intention, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, moral disengagement, social loafing) produced a better model fit (CMIN = 752.322, DF = 410, *p*-value = 0.000 CMIN/DF = 1.835, RMSEA = 0.043, CFI = 0.965 TLI = 0.961, GFI = 0.907) than other alternative models, as seen in Table 3. All items' factor loadings range from 0.545 to 0.953, they are above the standard level of 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The results indicate that the research model has a good fit index (Gefen *et al.*, 2000; Hair *et al.*, 2014; Hu and Bentler, 1998).

4.3 Common method bias

To assess potential common method bias, Harman's single-factor test was conducted (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). The EFA, performed without any rotation method, resulted in a single factor explaining 30% of the total variance. Given that this value falls below 50%, we can conclude that the findings are less susceptible to common method variance error.

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Table 2. Means, standard deviations, Cronbach's

Variable	*M*	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Facades of conformity	2.39	0.93	–									
2. Moral disengagement	1.66	0.72	0.254**	–								
3. Social loafing	1.39	0.63	0.236**	0.560**	–							
4. Emotional exhaustion	2.59	1.03	0.263**	0.171**	0.195**	–						
5. Depersonalization	1.99	0.93	0.311**	0.350**	0.391**	0.514**	–					
6. Turnover intention	2.13	1.08	0.254**	0.209**	0.269**	0.520**	0.391**	–				
7. Gender	1.71	0.45	0.111*	0.090	0.083	−0.010	0.065	0.019	–			
8. Age	33.57	7.31	−0.112*	−0.040	0.051	0.012	0.077	0.085	0.243**	–		
9. Education	4.10	0.70	−0.037	0.107*	0.075	−0.016	−0.054	0.019	0.060	0.185**	–	
10. Work experience	2.34	1.20	−0.115*	−0.051	0.039	−0.013	0.034	0.038	0.237**	0.859**	0.144**	–
Composite reliability (CR)	–	–	0.839	0.893	0.914	0.911	0.850	0.932	–	–	–	–
Average variance extracted (AVE)	–	–	51.64%	51.51%	72.86%	67.72%	58.81%	82.17%	–	–	–	–
Cronbach's alpha	–	–	0.826	0.906	0.917	0.921	0.889	0.936	–	–	–	–
KMO	–	–	0.821	0.889	0.883	0.906	0.828	0.742	–	–	–	–

Note(s) **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source(s): Authors' own work

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Table 3. Comparison of measurement models for crossover model

Model	Factors	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	GFI
Baseline model	Six factors: FOC, EE, DE, TI, MD, SL	1.835**	410	0.043	0.965	0.907
Alternative model 1	Five factors: FOC, SL, MD, TI, EE + DE	2.146**	415	0.050	0.952	0.885
Alternative model 2	Four factors: FOC, SL, MD, EE + DE + TI	2.214**	419	0.052	0.948	0.881
Alternative model 3	Three factors: FOC, SL, MD + EE + DE + TI	2.341**	419	0.055	0.943	0.873
Alternative model 4	Two factors: FOC, SL + MD + EE + DE + TI	2.419**	422	0.056	0.939	0.867
Alternative model 5	One factors: FOC + SL + MD + EE + DE + TI	2.499**	423	0.058	0.936	0.864

Note(s): Baseline model was compared with Models 1–5, respectively. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; GFI = The goodness-of-fit index

Source(s): Authors' own work

4.4 Measurement invariance test

We used a measurement invariance test to ensure there is no statistical drawback in terms of using online and face-to-face survey methods. The test was conducted in R (R Core Team, 2025), using the "measurement invariance" function from the semTools package (Jorgensen *et al.*, 2022), based on the measurement model specified in lavaan (Rosseel, 2012). A multi-group CFA was subsequently performed to assess whether the measurement model held consistently across different data collection formats–namely, online and face-to-face surveys. Four levels of invariance were examined: configural, metric, scalar and latent mean (Schmitt and Kuljanin, 2008; Van De Schoot *et al.*, 2015). The fit indices (CFI and RMSEA) remained within commonly accepted thresholds (ΔCFI $\leq$0.01; ΔRMSEA $\leq$0.015) throughout the model comparisons. Also, chi-square difference tests indicated that no significant difference at the scalar (p = 0.43) or latent mean (p = 0.48) levels. Findings demonstrated that similar constructs were measured across online and face-to-face participants, demonstrating that full measurement invariance was supported across both data collection methods; therefore, between-group mean comparisons are valid.

4.5 Main effects testing

After examining the measurement validity and reliability results, we tested the direct relationships in the research model. AMOS software was used to test the direct relationships. Mediation analyses were performed using Hayes' PROCESS Macro for SPSS (Model 4), which allowed us to assess both direct and indirect effects in our model. This tool was selected because it offers bootstrap confidence intervals for indirect effects, ensuring a more reliable evaluation of the hypothesized relationships.

The goodness-of-fit values of the research conceptual model are as follows; CMIN = 736.546, DF = 360, CMIN/DF = 2.046, p = 0.000, RMSEA = 0.048, CFI = 0.959, GFI = 0.900, NFI = 0.923. The research model has good fit indexes (Gefen *et al.*, 2000; Hair *et al.*, 2014). Table 4 presents the results of the SEM for direct effects. The findings indicate that all hypothesized direct effects are positive and statistically significant, thereby supporting H1–H8.

4.6 Mediation analysis

The mediation effect was examined using the SPSS Process Macro. It is used to ease the implementation of mediation, moderation and conditional process analysis of observed variables (Hayes, 2022).

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Table 4. Test results of structural equation modeling for direct effects

Main effects	β	SE	CR	*P*
H1: Facades of conformity → Emotional exhaustion	0.460	0.087	5.291	***
H2: Facades of conformity → Depersonalization	0.603	0.088	6.829	***
H3: Facades of conformity → Turnover intention	0.186	0.087	2.130	**
H4: Facades of conformity → Social loafing	0.106	0.045	2.341	**
H5: Facades of conformity → Moral disengagement	0.334	0.060	5.591	***
H6: Moral disengagement → Social loafing	0.535	0.053	10.014	***
H7: Emotional exhaustion → Turnover intention	0.477	0.050	9.598	***
H8: Depersonalization → Turnover intention	0.129	0.053	2.412	**

Note(s): $^{**}p < 0.05$ $^{***}p < 0.001$

Source(s): Authors' own work

Baron and Kenny (1986) suggested four conditions to test mediating effects. The first one is that the predictor variable (FOC) should have a direct effect on three dimensions of mediator variables (EE and DE/MD). The second one is that each mediating variable (EE and DE/MD) must have a significant effect on the criterion variable (TI/SL). As seen in Table 5, the first two criteria have been met. Thus, the six hypotheses, H1, H2, H7, H8, H5, H6, in our research have been supported. There is a positive association between FOC and EE, DE, MD (H1 FOC → EE: $\beta = 0.290$, $t = 5.784$, $p < 0.00$; H2 FOC→DE: $\beta = 0.309$, $t = 6.940$, $p < 0.00$; H5 FOC→MD: $\beta = 0.197$, $t = 5.567$, $p < 0.00$) and a positive association between EE, DE → TI and MD → SL (H7 EE→TI: $\beta = 0.487$, $t = 11.781$, $p < 0.00$; H8 DE→TI: $\beta = 0.402$, $t = 7.658$, $p < 0.00$; H6 MD→SL: $\beta = 0.466$, $t = 13.326$, $p < 0.00$).

The third criterion is that the predictor variable (FOC) must have a significant effect on the criterion variables (TI and SL). Thus, the two hypotheses H3 and H4 have been supported. There is a significant positive association between FOC and TI (H3: $\beta = 0.254$, $t = 5.568$, $p < 0.00$) and FOC and SL (H4: $\beta = 0.236$, $t = 5.148$, $p < 0.00$).

Table 5. Test of mediation

Relationship	Unstandardized path coefficient	Standardized path coefficient	SE	CR	*P*	LLCI	ULCI
Mediation relationship model 1: FoC → EE → TI							
FoC → EE (path a)	0.290	0.263	0.050	5.784	0.000	0.192	0.389
EE → TI (path b)	0.487	0.511	0.043	11.781	0.000	0.425	0.596
FoC → T.I (path c' indirect)	0.126	0.145	0.048	3.040	0.003	0.051	0.239
FoC → TI (direct)	0.254	0.294	0.053	5.568	0.000	0.190	0.397
Mediation relationship model 2: FoC → DE → TI							
FoC → DE (path a)	0.309	0.311	0.045	6.940	0.000	0.222	0.397
DE → TI (path b)	0.402	0.346	0.052	7.658	0.000	0.299	0.505
FoC → TI (path c' indirect)	0.146	0.169	0.052	3.239	0.001	0.067	0.272
FoC → TI (direct)	0.254	0.294	0.053	5.568	0.000	0.190	0.397
Mediation relationship model 3: FoC → MD → SL							
FoC → MD (path a)	0.197	0.254	0.035	5.567	0.000	0.128	0.267
MD → SL (path b)	0.466	0.535	0.035	13.326	0.000	0.397	0.534
FoC → SL (path c' indirect)	0.068	0.100	0.027	2.493	0.013	0.014	0.121
FoC → SL (direct)	0.236	0.160	0.031	5.148	0.000	0.099	0.221

Note(s): FOC: facades of conformity; MD: moral disengagement; TI: turnover intention; EE: emotional exhaustion; DE: depersonalization; SL: social loafing and SE: standard error

Source(s): Authors' own work

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The fourth condition is that the effect of the predictor variable (FOC) on criterion variables (TI and SL) is reduced (or eliminated) when mediator variables (EE, DE and MD) are included. As shown in Tables 5 and 6, the fourth condition has also been met. In Table 5, it is observed that burnout (EE, DE) has a partial mediating effect in the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable (β value reducing from 0.254 to 0.126 in FOC → EE→TI; β value reducing from 0.254 to 0.146 in FOC → DE→TI). Also, moral disengagement (MD) has a partial mediating effect in the relationship between FOC and SL (β value reducing from 0.236 to 0.068 in FOC → MD→SL). As observed in Table 6, the indirect estimates of (1) FOC through EE to TI (βindirect = 0.148, $p < 0.00$), (2) FOC through DE to TI (βindirect = 0.124, $p < 0.00$), and (3) FOC through MD to SL (βindirect = 0.092, $p < 0.01$) are all significant. Thus, all conditions of the Baron and Kenney (1986) approach were met. Therefore, hypotheses H9, H10 and H11 are supported. As a result, all hypotheses in this study are supported, as seen in Table 7.

5. Discussion

In this study, we have focused on the effect of employees' FOC on turnover intention and social loafing. Our findings demonstrate that FOC significantly predict burnout – both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization – which in turn lead to turnover intention. These results are consistent with earlier studies linking inauthentic behavior to emotional strain

Table 6. Estimate of indirect effect

Relationship	Estimate (βindirect)	SE	LP	UP	Sig.
FoC → EE → TI (1)	0.148	0.032	0.089	0.213	0.000
FoC → DE → TI (2)	0.124	0.029	0.070	0.186	0.000
FoC → MD → SL (3)	0.092	0.029	0.043	0.155	0.000

Note(s): FOC: facades of conformity; MD: moral disengagement; TI: turnover intention; EE: emotional exhaustion; DE: depersonalization; SL: social loafing; SE: standard error; LP: lower percentile; UP: upper percentile; and Sig.: significance

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 7. The results of the research hypotheses testing

# Hypothesis	Contents	Result
H1	Facades of conformity have a positive relationship to emotional exhaustion	Supported
H2	Facades of conformity have a positive relationship to depersonalization	Supported
H3	Facades of conformity have a positive relationship to turnover intention	Supported
H4	Facades of conformity have a positive relationship to social loafing	Supported
H5	Facades of conformity have a positive relationship to moral disengagement	Supported
H6	Moral disengagement has a positive relationship to social loafing	Supported
H7	Emotional exhaustion has a positive relationship to turnover intention	Supported
H8	Depersonalization has a positive relationship to turnover intention	Supported
H9	Emotional exhaustion mediates the direct relationship between facades of conformity and turnover intention	Supported
H10	Depersonalization mediates the direct relationship between facades of conformity and turnover intention	Supported
H11	Moral disengagement mediates the direct relationship between facades of conformity and social loafing	Supported

Source(s): Authors' own work

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(Cheng *et al.*, 2023; Hewlin, 2009) and burnout to withdrawal outcomes (Gonçalves *et al.*, 2019; Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). For instance, Cheng *et al.* (2023) emphasized that employees who consistently hide their values experience psychological fatigue and distancing from work, a pattern that mirrors our findings. Similarly, Halbesleben and colleagues (2014) found that emotional exhaustion undermines individuals' coping abilities and enhances their intention to leave. In the Turkish banking sector – characterized by strict hierarchical structures and performance pressures – this relationship may be even more pronounced, as maintaining facades becomes a chronic emotional burden. Thus, our findings extend the application of the COR theory by showing that the sustained need to appear aligned with organizational values contributes to burnout and subsequent withdrawal, especially in high-demand service industries.

The finding that moral disengagement significantly predicts social loafing aligns with the theoretical propositions of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1999) which suggests that individuals use moral justification mechanisms to disengage from internal moral standards and thus to rationalize counterproductive behaviors. When employees activate mechanisms such as diffusion of responsibility or advantageous comparison, they are more likely to reduce their individual effort in group settings without experiencing guilt or shame. This result is consistent with previous research showing that moral disengagement is a key psychological antecedent of workplace deviance, including withdrawal and reduced task engagement (Christian and Ellis, 2011; Moore, 2008). Our study extends these findings by applying them to social loafing, a specific and often overlooked form of counterproductive behavior that is especially prevalent in team-based and collectivist work environments, such as the Turkish banking sector. In such contexts, strong group orientation can obscure individual accountability, making it easier for morally disengaged employees to conceal reduced effort. This finding underscores the importance of ethical climate and supervisory control in buffering the effects of moral disengagement, particularly in high-stakes, target-driven sectors. Hence, the study contributes to the literature by empirically demonstrating that moral disengagement is not only associated with severe misconduct but also with more subtle yet damaging forms of organizational behavior, such as social loafing.

The results show that creating FOC acts as a consistent drain and consumes employees' resources, leading to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and eventually causes withdrawal behavior such as turnover intention. By clarifying how identity-related strain translates into withdrawal decisions, this study advances the COR theory. More specifically, it identifies inauthenticity as a prominent and persistent cause of resource depletion, along with the current evolution in management theory that examines well-being via the framework of identity-based resource dynamics.

Also, these results expand the social cognitive theory by showing that moral disengagement not only explains overt unethical behavior but also underlies more subtle forms of disengagement (e.g. social loafing) that undermine collective performance. This finding reveals that FOC leads to cognitive erosion, which not only damages the employee's moral mechanisms but also psychologically distances them from organizational goals and objectives.

From a management practice perspective, these findings highlight that organizations depending on implicit conformity pressures may unintentionally contribute to burnout and reduced team performance. Managers are encouraged to go deeper than just superficially aligning on values. Instead, they should focus on fostering an environment where psychological safety, ethical leadership and authenticity are warmly supported. This genuine approach helps prevent the often unseen psychological and behavioral strain that can come with merely maintaining appearances of conformity.

5.1 Theoretical implications

In our research, we investigated the consequences of FOC and variables that mediate these consequences. Our study expands on the research conducted on FOC by examining employees'

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psychological and behavioral outcomes. Previous studies were focused on the performance of employees creating FOC in the organization (Cheng *et al.*, 2023; Hewlin *et al.*, 2016, 2017; Ye and Qian, 2023), individual creativity (Ma *et al.*, 2023) and their commitment to the organization (Cheng *et al.*, 2023; Hewlin *et al.*, 2016, 2017). In our study, the impact of the FOC on employees' negative behaviors and decision-making processes, such as turnover intention and social loafing, has been examined. Thus, the study also responds to the suggestion made by Hewlin and colleagues (Hewlin *et al.*, 2016) to investigate the effects of FOC on employees' negative behaviors.

The relationship between FOC, moral disengagement and social loafing shows us a new perspective on how employees cognitively justify and rationalize unethical or inefficient behaviors. This supports Bandura's (Bandura, 1986) social cognitive theory, which suggests that individuals rationalize their behaviors through mechanisms such as moral disengagement. Employees who create FOC may distance themselves from moral standards to manage the conflict between their values and organizational values. Kalyanamitra and Sriyakul (Kalyanamitra and Sriyakul (2020) suggested that FOC may lead to unethical behavior. Our research confirmed such a prediction, expanding the literature on moral disengagement by linking previous literature to workplace compliance.

This study investigated the relationship between FOC and turnover intention in the workplace, using Maslach's burnout dimensions of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization as mediating variables. To the best of our knowledge, this study is among the first to examine the depersonalization dimension of burnout in the relationship between FOC and turnover intention. Other studies only focused on the emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout in analyzing the relation between FOC and turnover intention (Hewlin, 2009). We discovered that employees creating FOC experience emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, increasing their intention to leave the organization. The results show that the psychological burden of creating FOC can lead to severe burnout symptoms such as depersonalization.

Finally, this study has shown how moral disengagement behavior, which mediates the relationship between FOC and social loafing, rationalizes undesirable behaviors in the organization by FOC. Previous studies have examined the phenomenon of social loafing as a factor arising from the influence of factors such as group size (Alnuaimi *et al.*, 2009; Ying *et al.*, 2014), the performance of other employees (Yildiz *et al.*, 2023) or lack of motivation (Karau and Williams, 1993; Latané *et al.*, 1979). However, this study demonstrates that moral disengagement is a cognitive process that allows employees to create FOC to justify their decrease in performance. This suggests that social loafing can be partly explained by employees becoming indifferent to ethical behaviors.

In summary, this research study contributed to the literature by examining the effects of the FOC on burnout, turnover intention, moral disengagement and social loafing. Employees who create FOC either experienced an increase in their turnover intention due to resource depletion or revealed negative behaviors they consciously engaged in to compensate for the discrepancy between their thoughts and actions. These findings particularly pave the way for future research to understand how organizations can mitigate the negative consequences of FOC and create environments that promote employee engagement.

5.2 Practical implications

The findings of this study provide valuable implications for human resource managers and executives on how to enhance their employees' well-being and improve the organization's performance. FOC may become an implicit cultural norm, especially in hierarchical and risk-averse workplaces, leading to burnout, disengagement and moral detachment. Bank managers should be aware that employees may feel compelled to conform even when doing so undermines their well-being. Therefore, human resource policies should encourage open communication, psychological safety and value alignment, especially during onboarding,

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performance reviews and internal promotions. Ethical leadership, inclusive climate and autonomy-supportive management styles may reduce employees' perceived need to create facades. Training programs focused on authentic communication, stress management and ethical reflection may also mitigate the negative effects of FOC in high-pressure banking environments.

Employees develop strategies to be successful or sometimes just to survive in the workplace. If there are conflicts between the employee's beliefs and values and those of the organization, the employee may create FOC (Hewlin, 2003). Having FOC over a period may result in burnout and eventually lead to the intention to leave the job. Employee turnover negatively affects organizational performance, productivity, product/service quality and the morale of remaining employees (Yue *et al.*, 2023). To avoid such consequences, organizations should foster an environment that encourages individuality, genuine expression, diversity and inclusion, ultimately promoting authenticity in the workplace.

Organizations should promote authenticity among employees by fostering a culture that values individuality and genuine expression. This can eliminate or reduce creating FOC, ultimately diminishing turnover intentions. Implementing support systems, including mentorship programs and employee assistance efforts, helps employees cope with stress, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Based on our findings, FOC increase social loafing, with moral disengagement acting as a mediator. To reduce moral disengagement and social loafing, organizations should create open-discussion work environments to help employees be more connected to their tasks. Furthermore, defining key performance indicators (KPIs) and what is expected from employees will help to reduce moral disengagement and social loafing.

According to the OECD reports, Companies in Turkey encounter challenges in recruiting highly talented employees necessary for their operations (OECD, 2025). This difficulty is often attributed to a mismatch between the available talent pool and the evolving demands of the labor market, especially in high-skill industries. Therefore, in Turkey's competitive banking sector, organizations often prioritize technical skills over value alignment when hiring new talent. Although this approach helps companies find highly qualified candidates for key roles, it can also cause alignment issues among employees. Technically competent workers who don't align with organizational values may feel compelled to conceal their true selves to remain in the company and create FOC. Over time, this psychological pressure may diminish employees' emotional resources, potentially leading to burnout, disengagement or turnover. As a result, employee well-being, organizational performance and commitment may be affected. Employees who are highly talented but not aligned with the organization may create FOC, especially in countries with high unemployment rates, such as Turkey, to avoid losing their position. Since studies show that employees who align with the organization are not likely to create FOC (Demir *et al.*, 2025), HR managers should focus on candidates' values as much as their hard skills.

Also, Turkey is a country with high power distance (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). This means banking employees may interact more cautiously with their superiors and avoid openly expressing their thoughts or values. Employees may feel compelled to outwardly align with organizational values they do not truly embrace and suppress their own values. To avoid this consequence, managers and leaders in the banking sector should encourage an inclusive leadership style (Demir *et al.*, 2025). Managers and/or leaders should foster a psychological safety environment where employees feel free to share their ideas without fear of negative consequences. Such a leadership approach not only reduces FOC but also helps prevent emotional exhaustion and unethical behaviors in the workplace.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Aside from its theoretical and practical contributions, this study has limitations and needs to be further explored in future studies. First, this research explores the effects of FOC on turnover intention and social loafing via burnout and moral disengagement. Future researchers may extend this research by investigating additional factors, such as leadership styles,

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organizational culture and ethical climate, which may further explain or moderate these relationships.

Second, the data were obtained from white-collar employees in the banking sector. This sector was chosen due to its formal hierarchical structures, high job security concerns and strong norms surrounding professional appearance, which are particularly likely to lead to the development of FOC. In future research studies, data may be collected from other types of workers, such as blue-collar or gray-collar workers in other industries, who may not experience the same level of value-expression pressures or hierarchical rigidity.

Given this context, our findings may be particularly salient for industries where conformity and impression management are institutionalized expectations. Furthermore, the experiences of blue-collar employees within banking institutions – such as security personnel – may differ due to role expectations, power asymmetries or reduced exposure to client-facing and regulatory pressures. Future research could compare how FOC manifests across hierarchical levels or occupational groups within the same sector (e.g. white-collar vs blue-collar banking staff), or extend the investigation to other sectors (e.g. manufacturing, healthcare) where authenticity norms, identity regulation and resource depletion dynamics may operate differently.

Third, the data used in this study were obtained from employees in a particular geographic location, such as Turkey. The study may be expanded to other countries to investigate how cultures affect the dynamics of FOC with respect to the concepts analyzed in this study.

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