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**Understanding Burnout: Does the Perception of  
Organizational Dehumanization Mediate the Impact of  
Workload and Work Control on Burnout?**

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### Abstract

The link between organizational dehumanization, burnout and organizational factors has not yet been thoroughly explored. The study's aim was to evaluate the relationship between burnout, organizational factors such as workload and work control, and organizational dehumanization in Germany's private sector. The present study used a quantitative approach and included translating a newly established scale capturing organizational dehumanization into German. Following participant collection, regression and mediation analyses were conducted ( $N = 117$ ). Organizational dehumanization acted as a mediator between the relationship of workload, work control, and burnout. The results of the mediation analysis showed a partial mediation effect between both organizational factors, burnout, and organizational dehumanization. Further, results indicated an association between organizational dehumanization and burnout emphasizing the significance of acknowledging the link between both concepts, especially regarding the burnout subdimension of cynicism. The partially mediated effect between workload/work control and burnout, highlighted the need for further investigation into other potential mediating variables. Furthermore, the results suggested that addressing organizational dehumanization through enhanced workplace cooperation and support could potentially mitigate burnout risks. Future research could further evaluate organizational dehumanization and thus, ensure and encourage the promotion of creating appropriate interventions at the workplace.

*Keywords:* burnout, organizational dehumanization, workload, work control, private sector, workplace

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### **Understanding Burnout: Does the Perception of Organizational Dehumanization Mediate the Impact of Workload and Work Control on Burnout?**

Research on working life and organizations has been a longstanding component of psychology, contributing various analytical perspectives to understand the ever-changing differences in workplaces. Different factors, external, as well as internal, play a part in how employees perceive their work and workplace. Burnout is a widely studied subject in research that still holds its importance today (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). A recent data analysis of the German population shows that the prevalence of days of absence from work due to burnout disorders increased from 2004 to 2022 by almost 50% (Burn-out - Arbeitsunfähigkeitstage in Deutschland | Statista, 2024). Two dimensions have been identified to be influential of poorer well-being and potential burnout (Beheshtifar & Omidvar, 2013). Situational and organizational predictors, as well as individual predictors (such as age, gender etc.) influence the employees' perception of burnout. Given that it has been identified that there are several risk factors contributing to a decline in mental well-being it is vital to extend current literature. This includes the assessment of employee mental health (Chan et al., 2022). Chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors at the workplace could potentially promote a decrease in employee well-being and increase perceived burnout symptoms (Beheshtifar & Omidvar, 2013). When diving into different occupational professions varying risk factors were found that lead to an increase in ill-health among employees (Chan et al., 2022). The two most prominent predictors of employee burnout and poorer mental health are workload and work control (Chan et al., 2020). Usually, a high amount of workload and a low amount of work control contribute to an increased perception of burnout in employees (Van Den Broeck et al., 2017). Nonetheless, it has also been identified that these could be mediated by resources that an employee is provided with (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

Moreover, *organizational dehumanization* as a newly introduced concept, has increased in prevalence in research within work and organizational psychology due to its association with negative consequences for employees and to some extent their organizations (Brison et al., 2022; Brison & Casesns, 2023). It is defined as an individual feeling treated as a tool for organizational success and denied human characteristics (Brison et al., n.d.; Väyrynen & Laari-Salmela, 2018). With the advent of the fourth industrial wave, and the emergence of artificial intelligence, organizational dehumanization becomes more prominent, potentially affecting employee well-being (Oosthuizen, 2022). Employees can be

severely affected by organizational dehumanization due to its impact on mental as well as physical health and its relation to different outcomes in that area such as job satisfaction or absenteeism (Brison et al. 2022). Additionally, if the workplace fosters a hostile environment within the employee-organization relationship, it could worsen negative perceptions, potentially heightening the likelihood of burnout (Brison et al. 2022). The present study addresses a gap in the literature by focusing on the interplay between organizational factors such as work control, workload, and burnout, with organizational dehumanization as a mediator. A greater overview will drive forward education of the occupational field on this topic and further lead to creating a healthier environment for employees at work. Therefore, the first part of the presented study includes background on burnout, workload, work control, and organizational dehumanization.

### **Burnout of Employees**

Despite high prevalence of burnout globally, it has only recently been regarded as an occupational phenomenon by the WHO in 2018 (World Health Organization: WHO, 2019). Being described as rather a syndrome that occurs in the workplace due to chronic work stress, burnout is not classified as a medical condition in the ICD-11<sup>1</sup> (Drayton, 2021). However, suffering from burnout as a consequence of chronic work stress could lead to other medical conditions that manifest themselves either physically (e.g. fatigue); or psychologically (e.g. anxiety disorder or depression) (Bang & Reio, 2017; Seidler et al., 2014).

Associated with the workplace, burnout has been the subject of research since the early 1970s, with studies delving into its various aspects (Drayton, 2021; Söderfeldt, 1997). It was first regarded in a clinical context by Freudenberger (Söderfeldt, 1997). This was soon superseded by Maslach's multidimensional conceptual idea of burnout. Maslach developed the idea around burnout in the context of human care workers (Söderfeldt, 1997). Nowadays, burnout is recognized not only within a clinical framework but also within a social context, fostering a broader understanding where it is acknowledged that individuals across various occupational backgrounds and fields can experience burnout (Drayton, 2021; Söderfeldt, 1997). Nevertheless, different concepts around burnout exist, which further complicates comparisons, as concept ideas tend to appear similar but do not always align with each other's definitions (Kuświk, 2012; Seidler et al., 2014). With the publication of the ICD-11 in 2019, the definition of burnout is more specific than in its predecessor (Drayton, 2021).

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<sup>1</sup> ICD-11 is the short term for *International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision* and is the diagnostic standard for classifying diseases internationally (ICD-11, 05.03.2024).

Burnout is defined as a concept that consists of three different dimensions: *emotional exhaustion*, *cynicism*, and *professional inefficacy*. Only recently the interplay between those three components has been regarded as crucial in terms of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). This implies that the experience of burnout goes beyond just emotional or physical exhaustion. It encompasses the dynamic interaction between these three dimensions and the absence of sufficient coping resources, all contributing to the overall experience of burnout in the workplace (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

### ***Emotional Exhaustion***

Exhaustion is defined as feeling emotionally and/or physically drained of resources that help cope with daily stress (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Usually defined as the “core” of feeling burnt out, emotional exhaustion manifests as the stress dimension of burnout (Seidler et al., 2014; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). However, not being able to partake in day-to-day activities, lack of self-care, and emotional exhaustion could be indicators of a severe mental disorder that go beyond burnout; for example, depression (Seidler et al., 2014). Different factors play into employee’s feelings of emotional exhaustion. Psychological and psychosocial demands that are identified at work, such as increased job demand and job effort, are in association with increased feelings of burnout including emotional and physical exhaustion (Thapa et al., 2022).

### ***Cynicism***

When individuals at work start responding to their work in a negative, detached, and hostile way, it is indicative of cynicism (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The loss of idealism and an overload of emotional exhaustion could be interpreted as a more self-protective way of dealing with stress at work and serve as an emotional buffer. However, if applied in a more long-term perspective it could turn into detachment from an individual's workplace and feelings of dehumanization (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Reciprocating those feelings, employees might proceed to project them onto their workplace and their colleagues (Abraham, 2000). It is further suggested that cynical behavior in employees is an indicator of a coping strategy that follows the experience of emotional exhaustion and professional inefficacy (Bang & Reio, 2017). Feeling cynical towards one's workplace might affect task performance which then could further affect an individual’s productivity, leading to the perception of professional inefficacy (Abraham, 2000; Bang & Reio, 2017; Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

### ***Professional Inefficacy***

Individuals dealing with burnout from their occupational requirements might also be confronted with the additional feeling of declining competence and productivity at the workplace (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Usually, experiencing imposter syndrome<sup>2</sup> will be part of this and eventually lead to self-imposed failure causing more distress in the workplace. Additionally, professional inefficacy usually develops over time, parallel to emotional exhaustion and cynicism due to a lack of adequate resources used to overcome specific work tasks or workload (Bang & Reio, 2017).

When confronted with a consistent level of intensity across these three aspects of burnout, individuals tend to develop coping mechanisms in response (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). As a result, individuals recover due to different resources being presented and applied. However, if it is not possible for the individual to get access to resources and relaxation at work or at home, the symptoms could reach a critical state and lead to the overall phenomenon of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Examining data from Germany, absenteeism has increased over the past few years in different occupations (Burn-out - Arbeitsunfähigkeitstage in Deutschland | Statista, 2024). It is related to long-term sick leave in employees and has shown to be stable in prevalence in the years between 2012 to 2022 (Kostev et al., 2024). This, in turn, not only affects the well-being of the employee but could further impact the employee-organization relationship. Hence, it could have an indirect effect on the organization (Baldissarri & Andrighetto, 2021; Lagios et al., 2023). Given that burnout symptoms immensely affect not only the individual at work, but also privately and the company itself, it is important to further examine the factors that influence work-related burnout.

### ***Differences between the private and public sector***

Thus far, there has been minimal research exploring distinctions between the public and private sectors. This is particularly true concerning burnout and its organizational antecedents, as well as organizational dehumanization. Most research on burnout or organizational dehumanization focuses on the public or healthcare sector, lacking investigations in the private sector (Brison et al., 2022; Van Den Broeck et al., 2017). The public sector is defined as businesses or organizations being owned and controlled by governmental force (*The Public Sector*, 2024). This means that guidelines and operational

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<sup>2</sup>Imposter syndrome refers to high-achieving individuals who fail to internalize accomplishments and get more anxious about their work, regardless of objective success (Bravata et al., 2019).

procedures are commonly standardized and more fit to a bureaucratic manner (Yeh et al., 2018). On the other hand, the private sector refers to companies or organizations owned and controlled privately and not owned by the government (*The Private Sector*, 2024). Corporate organizations are hence more profit-oriented; making them more flexible and allowing for rapid adjustment to an ever-changing market and competitive environment (Yeh et al., 2018). These differences also manifest in varying organizational factors and psychological outcomes. The limited research on burnout shows a prevalence of higher burnout cases in the private sector than the public sector (Van Den Broeck et al., 2017; Yeh et al., 2018). These differences can be attributed to higher workload and other prevailing job characteristics associated with burnout (Van Den Broeck et al., 2017). However, inconclusive, and contradictory results in recent research between the private and public sectors show a need for further investigation; especially due to differences in working conditions such as workload and work control (Taris et al., 2005; Van Den Broeck et al., 2017; Yeh et al., 2018).

### **The Job-Demand Control Model**

In work and organizational psychology, workload and work control have been introduced through different frameworks, including the area of work-life domain and the *Job Demand-Control Model* (Karasek, 1979; Leiter & Maslach, 2003). First introduced by Karasek (1979), the model addresses not only mental strain influenced by organizational factors but also physical health conditions, including cardiovascular diseases (Karasek et al., 1981). These terms are essential components of models exploring burnout or well-being outcomes, given their recognized impact as risk factors for employee distress in both public and private sectors (Chan et al., 2020).

#### ***Workload and work control as part of the JDC-model***

Workload is defined as the emerging demand of occupational work. Furthermore, it is linked to a lack of resources to fulfill the work demand and too little time, resulting in an individual's incapability to cope with the workload (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). This in turn leads to increased exhaustion, one of three burnout dimensions, manifesting itself in physical or affective symptoms such as fatigue (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). When work overload persists over a longer amount of time and the chance to recover either at home or at work is limited, it can have harmful consequences for the individual.

Work control refers to employees' perceived capacity to have an impact on decision-making that affects their work, autonomy, and taking advantage of resources required for a successful workflow (Leiter & Maslach, 2003; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). When perceived work control is low and employees are unable to decide over their work responsibilities it can



lead to lower efficacy and exhaustion. Being unable to engage with the work environment that is consistent with the individual's value can also be counted into lower job control. Lower work control results in an employee's dissatisfaction with work and has negative mental and physical health associations (Padmanabhan, 2021). High work control is associated with overall feelings of better well-being, and job autonomy and thus, increased job satisfaction and lower burnout results (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). However, it has been suggested that in certain settings employees might not benefit from increased levels of work control (Kubicek et al., 2014), leading to inconsistent results in research.

As previously mentioned, both terms come together in the *Job Demand-Control model*, short *JDC-model*, which is one of the most utilized models explaining burnout symptoms among workers (Wu et al., 2023). The model states that high job demand and low job control increase exhaustion symptoms among workers due to increased work strain (Wu et al., 2023). Therefore, both factors are deemed potential risk factors for reduced well-being and increased burnout symptoms in employees (Harvey et al., 2017).

So far, organizational dehumanization has not been analyzed within the context of the JDC-model and burnout. Previous research has focused on employee well-being or emotional exhaustion as part of the burnout scale (Caesens et al., 2017; Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2019; Cheung, 2024). These have shown an association between declined well-being in employees within their psychological and physiological needs (Brison et al., 2022). However, investigating whether organizational dehumanization acts as a mediator for some of the effects between workload, work control, and burnout would be an essential step in understanding and highlighting the interrelation of these concepts. This study aims to investigate the association between burnout in a non-clinical, working population in Germany. Further, it explores the perception of organizational dehumanization within the private sector, distinct from the public sector. Specifically, investigating whether individuals exclusively employed in the private sector exhibit comparable or heightened outcomes on the organizational dehumanization dimension.

### **What is Organizational Dehumanization?**

Organizational dehumanization has only recently been investigated (Baldissarri & Fourie, 2023; Casens & Stinglhamber, 2019). The concept of dehumanization emerged from Haslam's (2007) model of dehumanization, claiming that there are two types of dehumanization - animalistic and mechanistic. In terms of social psychology, animalistic dehumanization describes the denial of humanness in other human beings by reducing their traits to animal-like characteristics (Brison et al., 2022; Christof, 2014). Animalistic

dehumanization is often used and described in political contexts; however mechanistic dehumanization is more likely to occur in an everyday context - especially when relating it to the organizational world and workplace (Baldissarri & Fourie, 2023; Brison et al., 2022). Working objectification sometimes gets confused with perceived organizational dehumanization; both concepts incorporate objectifying behavior toward an individual at the workplace (Brison et al., 2022). Nevertheless, working objectification arises from concrete sources such as a specific person or specific work task, whereas organizational dehumanization encompasses the negative side of the employee-organization relationship from an employee's point of view (Brison et al., 2022). When looking at organizational dehumanization, the term refers more to mechanistic dehumanizing practices at the workplace (Brison et al., 2022). It is defined as the experience of an individual at work feeling objectified by their organization or workplace and made to feel like a tool or instrument by denying human characteristics and human nature for the sole purpose of the organization's success (Brison et al., n.d.; Väyrynen & Laari-Salmela, 2018). Organizational dehumanization is its own discussed nomological concept and shows to have different triggers and factors that influence it and lead to various outcomes that need to be further investigated (Brison et al., 2022; Lagios et al., 2024).

### ***Conditions and Consequences of Organizational Dehumanization***

Recent research shows that several factors can lead to the perception of organizational dehumanization (Chan et al., 2020; Sainz, Delgado & Moriano, 2021). The experience of feeling dehumanized as an employee is not only influenced by the quality or type of work but also by factors such as workload and work control (Baldissarri & Andrighetto, 2021; Muhammad & Sarwar, 2021). Described as an energetic health impairment process, individuals experiencing higher levels of job demands may encounter energy depletion and resource-draining, potentially resulting in mental health issues and diminished overall well-being (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2019). Additionally, when individuals start feeling active suppression or constraint of their psychological needs from their company or colleagues (i.e. loss of autonomy or decreased control over work tasks), it could cause a greater experience of perceived organizational dehumanization (Baldissarri & Andrighetto, 2021; Lagios et al., 2022). Being denied human characteristics at work could further result in employees engaging in a more negative attitude towards themselves and their workplace (Lagios et al., 2022). When an employee's competence is at risk due to their negative attitude, it creates a hostile environment where employees might further reciprocate those negative attitudes and

engage in cynical behavior towards their workplace. This further consolidates the perception of organizational dehumanization and results in employees' increased burnout.

Moreover, organizational dehumanization has an impact on employee well-being and has been shown to have a positive effect on the decrease of work strain (Casens & Stinglhamber, 2019). Insufficient control over one's work, marked by a lack of decision-making authority, unequal distribution of tasks, and heightened work demands such as excessive workload and fatigue from repetitive tasks, can contribute to heightened stress and emotional exhaustion among employees (Baldissarri & Andrighetto, 2021; Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2019). When these factors are a consistent presence, regardless of receiving satisfactory compensation, individuals will still experience the feelings of being dehumanized by their organization (Brison et al., 2022). This dynamic could lead to increased strain on employees leading to emotional distress driven by the fear of being easily replaceable and perceived merely as a tool for instrumental purposes (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2019; Väyrynen & Laari-Salmela, 2018). Emotional exhaustion is positively associated with organizational dehumanization, further directly affecting psychological strains and physical complaints (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2019). All these factors influence the perception of the employee-organization relationship and the resulting outcomes in terms of employee burnout and the positive association with one's workplace. Nonetheless, so far, the consequences of organizational dehumanization have not been researched while accounting for employee burnout, due to the term only being introduced recently. Understanding the association between those variables could be crucial for further research regarding employee burnout and workplaces. Creating an increased awareness will lead to less conflict and a safer work environment for employees (Baldissarri & Fourie, 2023).

To sum up, even though workplaces have in the past acknowledged the importance of the interplay between organizational factors such as workload and work control and employee burnout, it is crucial to further investigate how organizational dehumanization might impact that relationship. This is important, to create appropriate interventions that will support the employee and the organization.

### **Current Study**

To the authors current knowledge there has been no prior research examining the mediating effect of organizational dehumanization on the relationship between work control, workload, and burnout. Thus, this study is providing a novel perspective to the ongoing studies on burnout. Furthermore, the current study investigates the association between organizational factors such as workload and work control and their prediction of burnout in

private sector employees in Germany. Besides, the focus lies on how organizational dehumanization plays a role in predicting burnout based on its association with workload and work control.

Referring to the JDC-model, two hypotheses were established:

1. The higher the perceived work demands, the higher the scores for burnout are predicted.
2. The lower the perceived work control, the higher the scores for burnout are predicted.

In addition, based on previous findings, modifiable organizational factors such as job demand or more precisely workload, and job control are thought to be predictors of organizational dehumanization and burnout. This raises further hypotheses:

3. Organizational dehumanization mediates the association between workload and burnout.
4. Organizational dehumanization mediates the association between work control and burnout.

Beyond the above, it is hypothesized that the dimensions within the burnout scale e.g. cynicism, emotional exhaustion, and professional inefficacy are related to organizational dehumanization in the workplace. This brings forward another final hypothesis:

5. Higher organizational dehumanization is associated with higher scores on burnout and each dimension of burnout.

To answer the hypotheses, a study was conducted, described in the following sections of this thesis.

## **Method**

### **Design**

This study took a quantitative approach, using an online questionnaire, serving as a momentary representation for each participant involved. The cross-sectional design allowed for a broad use that is time and cost-effective in research and is often employed in the occupational health psychology field (Spector, 2019; Taris et al., 2021). The survey included scales that were taken from various validated questionnaires. Scales were chosen to get generalizable results that are applicable across different types of sectors. This approach strengthens the generalizability of findings and supports further research in the private sector, contributing to existing and ongoing research on burnout (Brison et al., 2022).

### **Participants**

The study sample comprised employees with different supervisory statuses among various professions across the private sector in Germany such as marketing or the automotive

industry. Data from 117 participants was collected. No participants were filtered out from the final sample, since screening questions limited unsuitable participants from continuing with the questionnaire. The final sample comprised 67 participants identifying as female (57.3%) and 50 participants identifying as male (42.7%). No participant identified as diverse. The mean age of the sample was 39.74 years old ( $SD = 13.18$ ). Most participants' educational level showed to be a university degree of some sort with 60.7% having this as their highest educational level ( $n = 71$ ). Moreover, 113 participants (96.6%) worked for their company for longer than six months. Additionally, 74 participants had a non-supervisory status (63.2%), 25 had a supervisory status (21.4%) and 18 participants were in a managerial position (15.4%). The average working time was 36.91 hours per week ( $SD = 10.00$ ). One participant gave a range of working hours (40-50 working hours per week). In order not to lose the participant data points, the median working hour was used in the analysis (45 working hours per week). The frequency table, as well as descriptive statistics for demographic variables, can be found in the appendix (see Table 4, Table 5).

### ***Inclusion Criteria***

Participant inclusion criteria encompassed a specific age range set to the general and mean working age in Germany i.e. 18 years old up to 65 years old (Deutsche Rentenversicherung, n.d.). The survey was completed in German, requiring participants to comprehend a fluent level of German. Additionally, participants had to be working in Germany to avoid differences in cultural guidelines and varying laws in industry.

Furthermore, this study specifically targeted the private sector rather than the public sector hence participants were asked the question "Do you work in the private or public sector?" to filter out workers in the public sector. This step was implemented to make the data collection more efficient by excluding participants that were not suited for the given study's aim upfront and thus, saving time on both sides, participants, and researcher.

### **Material**

The questionnaire (specification below) was divided into four different parts. The first part measured demographic variables following Becker's et al. (2016) recommendation for organizational researchers, encouraging an open and controlled use of investigating control variables that could potentially be included in statistical analysis. It included demographic variables such as age, gender, level of education, number of hours worked per week, supervisory status, length of employment, and type of industry. An additional filter question was included to ensure participants were currently employed in the German private sector. The second part of the questionnaire included items assessing workload and work control.

The third part assessed all of the three dimensions of burnout i.e. emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional inefficacy. The fourth and final part measured organizational dehumanization. To prevent survey biases such as question order bias or agreement bias, the items within each scale (excluding demographic variables) were presented in randomized orders for each participant.

### ***Workload and Work Control***

Workload, and work control, were measured using items taken from the German version of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire COPSQ III (Nübling et al., 2006). The inventory has been designed to assess the psychosocial environment of Danish employees and was translated and adapted into various languages for international use (Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSQ-II) - English Version, n.d.). This questionnaire was selected based on its extensive applicability over two decades and its widespread application across various occupational settings (Pejtersen et al., 2009). The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of the German version of the COPSQ III amounts to  $> .7$  which indicated good internal consistency and scale reliability (Nübling et al., 2006). Moreover, generalizability was tested in different occupational subgroups, without or with minor differences between professions meaning that the applicability is not restricted to one specific occupational group (Lincke et al., 2021).

Workload was assessed using four items e.g. "Do you have enough time for your work tasks?" with answer options on a 5-Point-Likert frequency response scale ranging from (1) Always to (5) Never/Hardly ever with distinctions in between. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the scale was .82 which indicates satisfying internal consistency.

Work control was also measured using four items (e.g. "Can you influence the amount of work assigned to you?") examined by the same 5-Point Likert Scale as for the dimension of workload. Items produced a good internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .75$ ).

### ***Burnout***

Burnout was assessed using the German Version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (Maslach et al., 1996), which captures three different dimensions: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy. As one of the most widely employed assessments for measuring burnout in occupational environments, this inventory has demonstrated its applicability across diverse contexts and professions, underscoring its generalizability (Bakker et al., 2002; Schaufeli et al., 2001). Studies across different fields consistently reported high internal consistency and scale reliability, with Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values ranging from .70 to .86, indicating satisfactory reliability and validity (Bakker et al., 2002;

Schaufeli et al., 2001). Each dimension is assessed using different items and evaluated using a 7-point Likert scale frequency response scale ranging from (1) Never to (7) Every Day.

Emotional exhaustion was measured using nine items e.g. “I feel emotionally drained from my work.”. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  for the scale was .92 which indicates very good internal consistency.

Cynicism was assessed using five items such as for example “I doubt the significance of my work.”. Items produced a good internal consistency (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .84$ ).

Lastly, professional efficacy was measured using eight items e.g. “I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.”. High internal consistency was produced with a Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  of .85. Evaluating the scale with each of its sub-scales, the Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  for the whole burnout scale was .92, indicating very good internal consistency.

### ***Organizational Dehumanization***

Moreover, perceived organizational dehumanization was measured using an 11-item scale that was created by Casens et al. (2017). It encapsulates perceived organizational dehumanization based on mechanistic dehumanizing practices that employees encounter at the workplace. The scale created by Casens et al. (2017) is the most used in studies investigating organizational dehumanization and is so far only available in English and Spanish (Ariño-Mateo et al., 2022; Lagios et al., 2024).

The scale was translated into German. It was checked and reviewed by two native and fluent speakers of both languages, German and English. The scale included items such as “My organization considers me as a tool to use for its ends” or “My organization would not hesitate to replace me if it enabled the company to make more profit”. It is evaluated on a 7-point Likert agreement scale ranging from (1) Strongly disagree to (7) Strongly agree. The Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  was .94 which indicates very good internal consistency.

### **Procedure**

The questionnaire was developed using Lund University's *SUNET Survey* platform for creating online surveys (see appendix). Since participants were recruited in Germany, the questionnaire was developed in German as the primary language of the targeted population recruited for the study. An online link to the questionnaire was generated and distributed alongside an informative post detailing the study's purpose, participation criteria, and ethical considerations. Additionally, a QR code linked to the questionnaire was provided for easier access. The online questionnaire was open for participation from the 8th of February to the 18th of March of 2024.

Data collection was conducted through various social media platforms such as Instagram, LinkedIn, and XING<sup>3</sup>. In addition to social media outreach, participants were encouraged to distribute the survey to their friends and family, who could further share the questionnaire with their networks using the provided post.<sup>4</sup> When accessing the link or scanning the QR code, participants encountered an introductory page outlining the study's objectives, participation requirements, and details about its conduct. This page also provided information on ethical considerations and data collection procedures. Participants were required to confirm their understanding of these instructions, provide consent, and verify that they were over 18 years old before proceeding. After giving their consent, the participants were forwarded to the questionnaire. At the end of the survey, a closing page thanked them for their participation and input.

### **Analysis**

The study design is cross-sectional where data is only collected at one point at a time in a specific population. The processing and analysis of the data were conducted in Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29.0.2.0). Before uploading the data for statistical analysis, it was processed and coded. All items were assessed using a Likert-type scale. Further, the data was checked for outliers. As certain items required reversed scoring, where the numerical score needed to be flipped to run in the opposite direction, adjustments were made to ensure consistency. Thus, scores were reversed as necessary to accommodate this requirement.

First, an item and scale analysis was conducted to determine Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for each scale used in the online questionnaire. Then the assumptions for the multiple linear regression were checked. To ensure a normal distribution, the Shapiro-Wilk test and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were conducted, and the calculation of the variance inflation factor (VIF) was performed to check for multicollinearity between variables. The VIF factors were both at 1.04, arguing that there is no multicollinearity between variables (Thompson et al., 2017). The data met independence of errors (Durbin-Watson value = 1.9) meaning no variable correlates with itself at any other point in time. Further, linearity and homoscedasticity were confirmed by scatterplots of standardized residuals revealing a linear trend. After the assumptions were met, the analysis was conducted. Descriptive statistics were calculated to

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<sup>3</sup> Leading online jobs network for German-speaking countries (*What Is XING? | XING FAQ*, n.d.).

<sup>4</sup> Also known as the snowball method in collecting quantitative data (Leighton et al., 2021).

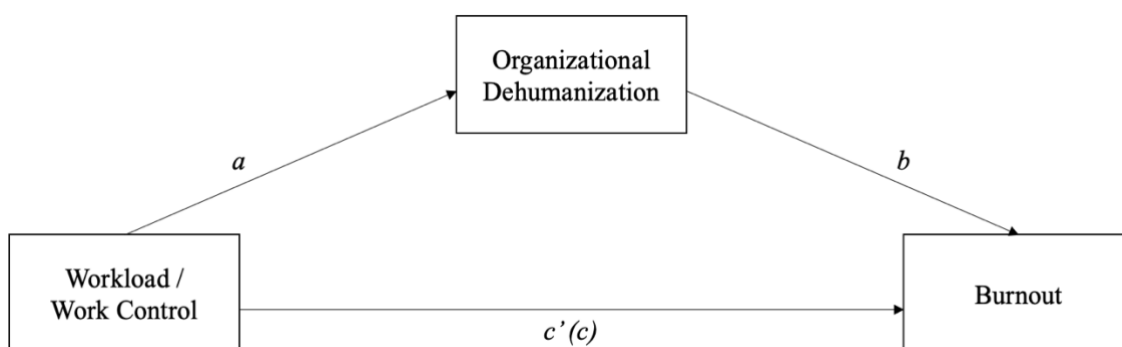


check for mean, median, and standard deviation scores of each variable. Following that, a correlation matrix was carried out to analyze the relationship between demographic variables and dependent variables. In addition, multiple regression models and a mediation analysis (see Figure 1) were calculated to shed light on the relations between independent variables and dependent variables better and thus, have a better overview of associations. Hypotheses one and two were examined using multiple regression analysis. Moreover, hypotheses three and four were looked at using mediation analysis. The correlation matrix was calculated to address the fifth hypothesis.

Mediation analysis is commonly used and includes the concepts developed by Baron and Kenny (1986). However, due to the limitations of the present study, which is a cross-sectional study and not an experimental study, only statistical mediation can be investigated. To overcome limitations regarding the concepts developed by Baron and Kenny (1986), a complementary method proposed by Zhao et al. (2010) was applied. With this method, both complete and partial mediations can be investigated, using regression models, and bootstrapping for a more comprehensive analysis, emphasizing the importance of indirect effects. To assess a mediation, bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals are used. If the interval includes zero, the effect is considered not significant (Zhao et al., 2010). A mediation can still be found regardless of whether the direct effect is significant or not leading to a more nuanced interpretation of findings in the mediation analysis.

### Figure 1

*Organizational Dehumanization mediates the relationship between workload/ work control and burnout.*



### Ethical consideration

The proposed research strictly complies with the guidelines of the Swedish Research Council and follows the ethical considerations set in the Swedish Ethical Review Act (SFS

2003:460), as well as other relevant European Research Councils to keep participants' integrity.

Recruiting participants, both through social media posts and in the online questionnaire itself, participants were made aware that their data was processed anonymously. All participants were informed of their right to terminate the study and withdraw their consent at any time, without the need for further explanation or consequences. As this questionnaire required the supervisory status of each participant, this sensitive data was stored anonymously with restricted access. All personal information that was collected could not be linked to individual participants. To maintain participant anonymity and prevent any association with their respective employers, participants did not disclose any company names.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

At first, descriptive statistics that include the mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation for scale measurements were calculated (see Table 1). The mean was computed by calculating all scores on the variables for each scale for each participant. A bivariate correlation analysis was calculated between all scale variables as shown in Table 2.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics for Scale Measurements (N = 117)*

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	SD
WL	3.25	1.80	5.00	.76
WC	2.37	1.00	4.20	.72
OD	3.49	1.00	7.00	1.54
Burnout	3.05	1.27	5.68	1.04
EE_B	3.11	1.00	7.00	1.35
C_B	2.15	1.00	6.20	1.23
PI_B	3.54	1.00	6.25	1.16

*Note.* WL = Workload, WC = Work control, OD = Organizational Dehumanization, B = Burnout, EE\_B = Emotional Exhaustion (Burnout), C\_B = Cynicism (Burnout), PI\_B = Professional Inefficacy (Burnout), SD = Standard Deviation.

**Table 2***Correlation Matrix between Variables (N = 117)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. WL	1						
2. WC	.19*	1					
3. OD	.32**	.46**	1				
4. Burnout	.47**	.48**	.54**	1			
5. EE_B	.56*	.46**	.46**	.91**	1		
6. C_B	.41**	.32**	.53**	.80**	.72**	1	
7. PI_B	.15	.42**	.37**	.74**	.45**	.34**	1

*Note.* WL = Workload, WC = Work control, OD = Organizational Dehumanization, B = Burnout, EE\_B = Emotional Exhaustion (Burnout), C\_B = Cynicism (Burnout), PI\_B = Professional Inefficacy (Burnout), \* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Hypothesis 1 and 2: Prediction of Employee Burnout**

A multiple linear regression was conducted to test whether workload and work control predict employee burnout (see Table 3). After the assumptions were met, the analysis was conducted. The regression model was significant,  $F(2,114) = 34.27, p < .001$ , indicating that both workload and work control were predictors of burnout, thus supporting hypotheses one and two. The model explains around 36.4% of the variance within burnout, with an adjusted  $R^2$  of .36.

Workload demonstrated a positive association with burnout with ( $\beta = .39$ , see Table 3), indicating that a higher score on workload relates to a higher score on burnout. The most impactful predictor of burnout scores in this regression model was work control ( $\beta = .41$ , see Table 3). The positive relationship suggests that lower scores on work control are associated with higher scores on burnout.

**Table 3***Multiple Regression Analysis with Workload and Work Control as Predictors for Burnout (N = 117)*

Predictor	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p	95%CI		R	$\Delta R^2$	p
						LL	UL			
1								.61	.36	<.001
WL	.53	.10	.39	5.156	<.001	.328	.738			
WC	.58	.11	.41	5.360	<.001	.368	.800			

*Note.* WL = workload, WC = work control, B = unstandardized coefficient, SE = standard error,  $\beta$  = standardized coefficient, t = t-Test, p = significance level, CI = confidence interval, LL = lower limit, UL = upper limit, R = correlation coefficient,  $\Delta R^2$  = adjusted R square.

### **Hypothesis 3 and 4: Organizational Dehumanization as Mediator**

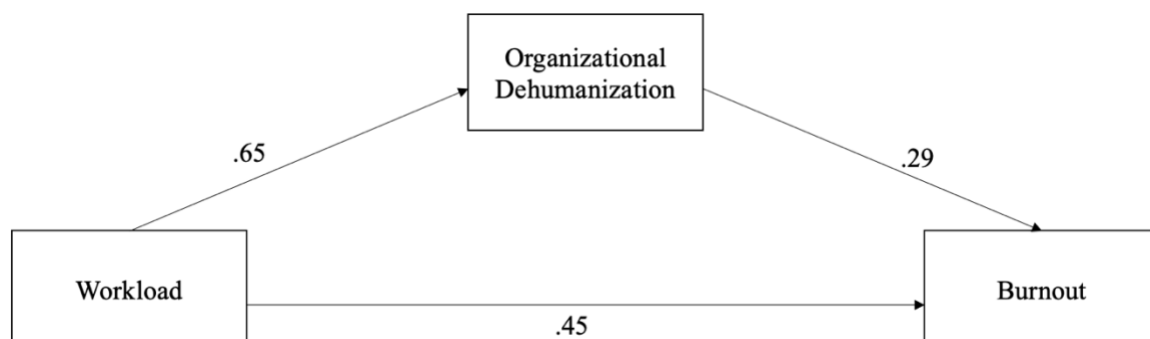
Two mediation analyses were conducted using the PROCESS Makro by Hayes (2022) as an extension in SPSS which calculates linear, quadratic regressions with bootstrapping to determine the mediation's direct, indirect, and total effects. The aim was to identify whether organizational dehumanization mediates the relationship between workload and burnout, as well as work control and burnout (see Figure 1). The analysis was based on bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals ( $k = 5000$  bootstraps) to generalize the sample.

#### ***Workload and Burnout mediated by Organizational Dehumanization***

Analyzing the association between workload and burnout and whether a mediation persists by organizational dehumanization, the first mediation was analyzed (see appendix, Table 6). A total effect between workload and burnout was observed with  $B = .64, p < .001$ . Both pathways, a (i.e. workload on organizational dehumanization;  $B = .65, p < .001$ ) and b (i.e. organizational dehumanization on burnout;  $B = .29, p < .001$ ), were significant. After entering organizational dehumanization into the association between workload and burnout, the direct effect ( $B = .45, p < .001$ ) was significant. Additionally, a significant indirect effect ( $B = .19, p < .001, 95\%-CI [.08, .35]$ ) was found. Thus, organizational dehumanization partially mediates the association between workload and burnout, providing partial support for hypothesis three (see Figure 2).

### **Figure 2**

*Organizational Dehumanization Mediating Workload and Burnout (Hypothesis 3).*



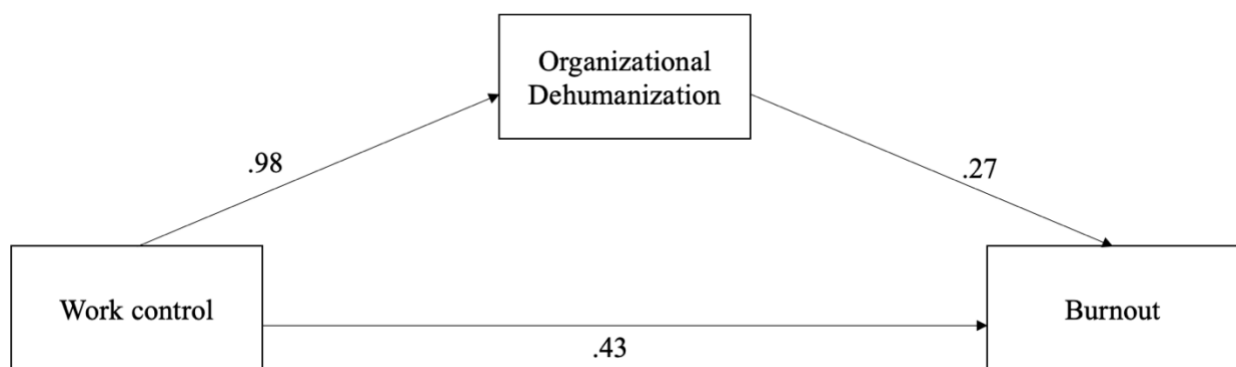
#### ***Work control and Burnout mediated by Organizational Dehumanization***

A second mediation analysis was conducted to examine the association between work control and burnout and investigate the impact of organizational dehumanization (see

appendix, Table 7). A total effect between work control and burnout was observed with  $B = .69, p < .001$ . Both pathways, a (i.e. work control on organizational dehumanization;  $B = .98, p < .001$ ) and b (i.e. organizational dehumanization on burnout;  $B = .27, p < .001$ ), were significant. After entering organizational dehumanization into the association between work control and burnout, the direct effect ( $B = .43, p < .001$ ) was significant. Additionally, a significant indirect effect ( $B = .27, p < .001, 95\%-CI [.13, .44]$ ) was found. Thus, organizational dehumanization partially mediates the association between work control and burnout, providing partial support for hypothesis four (see Figure 3).

### Figure 3

*Organizational Dehumanization Mediating Workload and Burnout (Hypothesis 4).*



### Hypothesis 5: The Relationship between Organizational Dehumanization and Burnout

As shown in Table 4, all variables correlate with the other, indicating an association between workload, work control, burnout, and its dimensions of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional inefficacy. Although most variables correlated with burnout, workload did not significantly correlate with professional inefficacy ( $r = .15, p = .115$ ), as a subdimension of burnout. Nonetheless, organizational dehumanization significantly and positively correlated with burnout and all its dimensions, supporting hypothesis five.

### Discussion

The presented study investigated whether organizational dehumanization is mediating the effect between organizational factors such as workload and work control and its negative consequences i.e. burnout in the private sector in Germany. Five hypotheses were established to examine the association between those variables.

#### Workload, Work Control, and Burnout

The first two hypotheses considered whether high workload and low work control predict higher scores for burnout aligning with the JDC-model. In line with the hypotheses, a higher workload predicted higher burnout scores, and lower work control predicted higher burnout scores. The results suggested that organizational factors such as workload and work

control predicted burnout scores continuously within the private sector in Germany. In line with previous research, it is indicated that workload primarily has an association with the exhaustion subdimension of burnout leading to the assumption that high job demand is a predictor of occupational burnout (Chan et al., 2020; Leiter & Maslach, 2004). This suggests that work overload poses the highest health risk for emotional exhaustion which could manifest itself in different symptoms such as fatigue. Additionally, workload showed an association with cynicism which goes together with previous findings in research (Ariza-Montes et al., 2018; Kubicek et al., 2014; Portoghese et al., 2020). Cynical attitudes at the workplace are shown to be a response to longer persisting emotional exhaustion which could at first be regarded as an act of protecting oneself and one's capability to cope with long-term stress at the workplace (Leiter & Maslach, 2016; Wu et al., 2023). Cynical attitudes can affect the work quality of an individual, leading to reduced effort on work tasks due to a sense of detachment from the workplace (Leiter & Maslach, 2016).

Nonetheless, the results showed no association between professional inefficacy and workload. This might suggest that workload, as an organizational factor, impacted the perception of burnout only to some extent. While emotional exhaustion and cynicism are central outcomes of burnout concerning workload, professional inefficacy is minimized. Research indicates that emotional exhaustion and cynicism are crucial contributors to burnout, while job inefficacy is seen as a consequence of situational and individual factors such as instrumental/social support or personality traits (Lubbadeh, 2020; Wu et al., 2023).

When examining the strength of which organizational factor (workload or work control) predicts burnout better, results suggested that work control predicts burnout stronger than workload. Furthermore, the results indicated that workload does not correlate with professional inefficacy, indicating a slightly weaker association with burnout compared to work control. In contrast, work control had a moderate correlation with professional inefficacy, suggesting a slightly stronger link to overall burnout. These results demonstrate the importance of work control concerning the experience of burnout. Being able to influence one's work tasks and exert professional autonomy is a key component of fostering a healthy work environment, adding to the workload and how it is manageable (Ariza-Montes et al., 2018). Previous research has shown that work control acts as a buffer between workload and perceived burnout meaning that the extent to which a person can control their environment and work tasks will in turn lower or increase their perceived workload (Ariza-Montes et al., 2018, Chan et al., 2020; Drayton, 2021). This is further supported by the assumption that higher burnout levels that are not necessarily attributed to high work demands, can be found

in employees due to the lower levels or lack of autonomy - this, however, was the case for employees in the industrial sector (Van Den Broeck et al., 2017).

### **Organizational Dehumanization as a Mediator**

Hypotheses three and four concerned the association between workload, work control, and burnout, assuming that organizational dehumanization mediates the relationship. The results of the mediation analysis for both hypotheses demonstrated a partially mediating association between these variables. This means that the mediating effect is accounting for more than just organizational dehumanization. Due to the direct, significant association between organizational dehumanization and burnout, another variable could also impact the mediating effect. Although previous research has not specifically investigated organizational dehumanization as a mediator between organizational factors and burnout, it should be noted that the results of the present study show a strong association between these variables giving an insight into previously hypothesized constructs (Brison et al., 2022; Caesens et al., 2017; Caesens and Stinglhamber, 2019; Lagios et al., 2022). Previous research has shown that interpersonal factors could impact the perception of organizational dehumanization and further encourage the experience of it. Since organizational dehumanization is a multifactorial construct, a partial mediating effect has been found between workload/work control and burnout. Therefore, an omitted variable that could further explain the relationship between these variables could explain the results in the current study. For example, a lack of organizational support or abusive supervision could foster perceived organizational dehumanization among employees (Brison et al., 2022; Sainz & Baldissarri, 2021). Thus, it remains unclear to what extent organizational dehumanization accounts for burnout.

### **Organizational Dehumanization and Burnout**

Lastly, the fifth hypothesis considered the association between organizational dehumanization and burnout, including all subdimensions. The results suggested that higher perceived organizational dehumanization is associated with higher levels of burnout and each of its dimensions. These results align with previous studies wherein organizational dehumanization had an association with psychological and physical complaints of employees such as emotional exhaustion (Baldissarri & Fourie, 2023; Brison et al., 2022; Cheung, 2024).

However, the dimension of burnout with the strongest association with organizational dehumanization was found to be cynicism. This result emphasized the link between the impact of negative attitudes towards the workplace and dehumanization. Similar outcomes have been investigated previously showing a link between cynical behavior and

organizational dehumanization (Stinglhamber et al., 2022). These results implicated that based on the social exchange theory, employees tend to reciprocate what they seem to perceive towards themselves by their environment. Hence, once an employee feels dehumanized, they will reciprocate those feelings, creating a negative attitude toward their workplace. This also heightens the risk for burnout (Lagios et al., 2022; Stinglhamber et al., 2022). Reciprocating those negative feelings is an impactful factor between organizational dehumanization and burnout and is observable in the present results. It is worth considering that previous research has suggested that employees' perception of organizational dehumanization is linked to emotional exhaustion (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2019; Stinglhamber et al., 2022). Hence, it could be further assumed that the relationship between organizational dehumanization and cynicism is mediated by emotional exhaustion. Another plausible explanation could be that a negative attitude and cynical behavior result from coping with poor workplace management.

This study revealed that based on the bivariate correlation results organizational dehumanization shows the strongest association with burnout. This might raise concerns regarding the management of organizational dehumanization within the workplace. Addressing these issues requires promoting self-awareness about the phenomenon and emphasizing the significance of knowledge surrounding it. Adding organizational dehumanization to the JDC-model has shown that it does have an impact on experiencing burnout. However, as previous research suggests, organizational dehumanization should be treated as its nomological, multifactorial framework and thus, requires future investigation (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2019).

### **Practical Implications**

Employees in the private sector experience the perception of organizational dehumanization. Especially across different job outcomes, it becomes clear that it does not matter in what occupation or what title an employee holds. The perception of organizational dehumanization is persistent across varying professions within the present sample. Showing the mediated link between organizational dehumanization and burnout implies an opportunity for change within each workplace. The first step towards this is creating awareness about the topic itself. Although the concept of dehumanization is widely known in social psychology, the recent introduction in work psychology requires more attention.

Furthermore, creating a sense of cooperation between managerial positioned employees, management and employees could further lead to a closeness within the organization. When employees feel more solidarity with one another, it creates a sense of



belonging and a mutual understanding, which encourages insight into another individual's mental state (Väyrynen & Laari-Salmela, 2015). This could further lead to a less negative attitude towards the workplace and decrease cynical behavior. Implementing different workshops, coordinating work breaks, and providing space for social interaction with other employees might decrease social distance and create a sense of homogeneity. This could lead to a decrease in the gap between management and employees and foster a healthier employee-organization relationship.

### **Methodological Limitations**

Although this study presents results that support the established hypotheses, it has limitations. First, it should be noted that the study used a cross-sectional design, which allows for a varied perspective but only reviews data at a single point in time. Due to this reasoning, the association between the independent and dependent variables cannot be causally interpreted, leaving room for speculation of the actual direction of the association between variables. Furthermore, the outcomes of the study rely on a self-report questionnaire. As this study has a cross-sectional design, responses to the questionnaire could have been affected by situational factors. Some participants stated working over 40 hours a week, which could potentially cause some individuals to feel mentally or physically stressed and exhausted. In turn, this could limit their capacity to provide accurate responses. Participants' state of mind while responding to the questionnaire could also have affected their responses, presenting a risk that could further affect the outcome of the study. It is also unclear if participants feel dehumanized by their organization or if there were other situational factors leading to the perception of dehumanization.

Second, participants have been derived from different areas of the private sector. Although this shows an overall implication of perceived dehumanization in the private sector in Germany, it must be noted that each profession's sample size is rather small and thus only allows for a limited statement to be drawn. Expanding this perspective, companies could vary greatly in their guidelines and values greatly leading to inconclusive or restricted results due to differences between professional, and company guidelines and values. Working with a single organization would have been challenging, as companies might be unlikely to willingly acknowledge their dehumanizing treatment of employees and subsequently, agree to unethical behavior. A company's insight into potential issues would likely not be recognized in an environment that might already suffer from organizational dehumanization. Thus, the presented sample might have limited representative power.

Despite its contribution and a found partial mediated effect, there has been controversy surrounding mediation analysis (Agler & De Boeck, 2017). Despite adopting a complementary approach by Zhao et al. (2010) that expands the viewpoint of Baron and Kenny's (1986) method, there is an increasing number of what embodies a mediation and how to interpret the statistical mediation analysis. Although the present results have identified organizational dehumanization as partly a mediator, there is some variance left that is unknown and could further be explored using a different statistical analysis.

Moreover, all employees might not be affected by organizational dehumanization in the same way. How an individual perceives organizational dehumanization and its consequences, could depend on other external factors such as personality traits or individual differences (Brison et al., 2022; Drayton, 2021). Additionally, the consequences of organizational dehumanization are still not researched enough. This study may show implications of the association it has on experiencing burnout symptoms. Nonetheless, other consequences such as excessive work demand and differences in personal vulnerability and personality traits could impact the perception of organizational dehumanization and its manifestation in burnout symptoms.

### **Future Research**

The current study adds to a relatively new field of research exploring the link between organizational factors, organizational dehumanization, and burnout. Particularly noteworthy is the translation into German of the organizational dehumanization scale. This novel contribution enables German researchers to study organizational dehumanization across various sectors, thereby potentially addressing a gap in this area of research. Conversely, it is essential to acknowledge that a more precise and thorough validation of the translated scale is required which could be valuable for future research purposes.

Building upon the present study, future research could delve into differences between different sectors within Germany. While this study showed the emerging importance of organizational dehumanization within the private sector in Germany, it would be interesting to compare public and private sector workers within one study and examine the differences between both.

Furthermore, the results demonstrated that organizational dehumanization is positively related to burnout; nonetheless, it remains unclear how other organizational factors such as workplace resources or organizational support might play into it and decrease the level of perceived organizational dehumanization. Thus, to extend the findings of this study, it would be interesting to further explore the direction of organizational dehumanization and

when and how employees might perceive dehumanization at the workplace, within a qualitative framework. This raises the question of whether future research should explore not just mechanistic dehumanization in the workplace, but also animalistic dehumanization. However, this would require the development of a new scale to assess employees' perceptions of being subjected to animalistic dehumanization.

Finally, to overcome the limitations of a cross-sectional study, future research should use a longitudinal, multi-wave design. This approach reduces errors and enhances the reliability of the results, allowing for a more accurate interpretation of relationships between variables and might even heighten the level of causality. Ultimately, this leads to a deeper understanding of the subject which will help in developing accurate, preventative interventions.

### **Conclusion**

As burnout becomes increasingly prevalent in German society (Burn-out - Arbeitsunfähigkeitstage in Deutschland | Statista, 2024), it is crucial to understand how varying causes such as workload or work control might be associated with organizational dehumanization and its effect on burnout among employees. This study established that organizational burnout is significantly associated with workload, work control and organizational dehumanization. Work control has been demonstrated to be a more influential predictor of burnout than workload. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the predictive power difference was small. There is evidence of partial mediation between the organizational factors, burnout, and organizational dehumanization. This suggests that some of the variability in this relationship can be attributed to organizational dehumanization. Furthermore, the results reveal a novel finding which is the direct association between organizational dehumanization and burnout. When examining the association between the subdimensions of burnout, organizational dehumanization shows the strongest association with cynicism. The presented findings contribute to understanding the relationship between burnout and organizational factors, especially regarding organizational dehumanization. Awareness is the first, initial step towards change. Contributing to the emerging but existing body of research can drive the development of effective interventions that support health-promoting practices and guidelines in the workplace.

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### Appendix

**Table 4**

*Frequency Table for demographic variables*

Demographic variables	Full sample (N = 117)	
	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	67	57.3
Male	50	42.7
<b>Educational level</b>		
Completed apprenticeship	19	16.2
Master school or technical college degree	20	17.1
University (Bachelor, Master, Diploma etc.)	71	60.7
Promotion / PhD	2	1.7
No degree	5	4.3
<b>Length of Employment</b>		
Less than 3 months	2	1.7
3 to 6 months	2	1.7
Longer than 6 months	113	96.6
<b>Supervisory Status</b>		
Non-supervisory status	74	63.2
Supervisory status	25	21.4
Managerial status	18	15.4

**Table 5**

*Descriptive Statistics for Age and Working Hours per Week (N = 117)*

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	SD
Age	39.74	18	65	13.18
Hours per week	36.91	6	65	10.00

*Note.* SD = Standard Deviation.

**Table 6**

*Mediation Analysis - Model 1 (N = 117)*

Antecedent		M (OD)				Y (Burnout)				
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	
X (WL)	<i>a</i>	.65	.18	<.001	.32	<i>c'</i>	.45	.11	<.001	.33
M (OD)		-	-	-	-	<i>b</i>	.29	.05	<.001	.44
$R^2 = .10$					$R^2 = .39$					
$F(1,115) = 12.876, p < .001$					$F(2,114) = 36.811, p < .001$					

*Note.* WL = Workload, OD = Organizational Dehumanization, *B* = unstandardized coefficient, *SE* = standard error,  $\beta$  = standardized coefficient, *p* = significance level,  $R^2$  = R Square.

**Table 7**

*Mediation Analysis – Model 2 (N = 117)*

Antecedent		M (OD)				Y (Burnout)				
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	
X (WC)	<i>a</i>	.98	.19	<.001	.46	<i>c'</i>	.43	.12	<.001	.30
M (OD)						<i>b</i>	.27	.06	<.001	.41
$R^2 = .21$					$R^2 = .36$					
$F(1,115) = 27.461, p < .001$					$F(2,114) = 31.551, p < .001$					

*Note.* WC = Work control, OD = Organizational Dehumanization, *B* = unstandardized coefficient, *SE* = standard error,  $\beta$  = standardized coefficient, *p* = significance level,  $R^2$  = R Square.

## German Questionnaire Used for Data Collection



Wir laden Personen, die in **Deutschland** und im **Privatsektor\*arbeiten**, im Alter von **18 bis 65 Jahren** und mit mindestens drei Monaten Berufserfahrung in ihrem Unternehmen, zur Teilnahme an unserer Umfrage ein.

Die Umfrage befasst sich mit Aspekten Ihrer Arbeitserfahrung und Ihrem Wohlbefinden am Arbeitsplatz. Sie wird anonym und digital durchgeführt und nimmt etwa **10-15 Minuten** Ihrer Zeit in Anspruch. Für weitere Informationen zur Studie kontaktieren Sie bitte [ju5378wo-s@student.lu.se](mailto:ju5378wo-s@student.lu.se). Durch das Ausfüllen des Fragebogens erklären Sie sich mit der anonymen Teilnahme und Datensammlung einverstanden. Sie können Ihre Teilnahme jederzeit ohne Angabe von Gründen oder negativen Konsequenzen zurückziehen oder abbrechen.

Als Forscherin und Psychologiestudentin mit umfangreicher Erfahrung in der Arbeitsplatzforschung führe ich diese Studie im Rahmen meiner Masterarbeit durch. Die Studie wurde von der schwedischen Ethikprüfungsbehörde genehmigt und ist mit der Universität Lund verbunden.

Bei Fragen zur Studie können Sie sich gerne direkt an die Forscherin wenden:

E-Mail: [ju5378wo-s@student.lu.se](mailto:ju5378wo-s@student.lu.se)

Julia Wojdat

\*Unternehmen welche von Einzelpersonen oder privaten Institutionen finanziert und kontrolliert werden.

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### Anleitung zur Beantwortung von Schriftlichen Umfragen

Bei der Auswahl von Antwortmöglichkeiten gilt zur korrekten Markierung der Kontrollkästchen Folgendes:

- Die Antwortmöglichkeit wurde korrekt markiert.
- Die Antwortmöglichkeit wurde nicht korrekt markiert, das Kreuz muss sich in der Mitte des Kästchens befinden.
- Die Antwortmöglichkeit wurde nicht korrekt markiert, das Kreuz ist zu dick.
- Antwortänderung, die Antwortmöglichkeit wird als nicht markiert angesehen.

**Ich bin 18 Jahre alt oder älter, habe die Informationen zur Befragung gelesen und stimme einer freiwilligen und anonymen Teilnahme und Datenerhebung hiermit zu.**

- Ja
- Nein

**Wie alt sind Sie? Bitte geben Sie Ihr Alter in Jahren an.**



SVorname\$ SNachname\$

**Ihr Geschlecht**

- weiblich  
 männlich  
 divers

**Welche abgeschlossene(n) Berufsausbildung(en) haben Sie?**

- Abgeschlossene Lehre  
 Meisterschule oder Abschluss einer Fachschule  
 Universität (Bachelor, Master, Diplom etc.)  
 Promotion / PhD  
 Kein Abschluss

**In welchem Sektor arbeiten Sie?**

- Privat  
 Öffentlich

**Wie lange sind Sie schon bei Ihrem jetzigen Unternehmen angestellt?**

- Weniger als 3 Monate  
 3 bis 6 Monate  
 Länger als 6 Monate

**In welcher Branche sind Sie berufstätig?****Welche Position nehmen Sie an Ihrem Arbeitsplatz ein?**

- Mitarbeiter ohne Vorgesetztenfunktion  
 Mitarbeiter mit Vorgesetztenfunktion  
 Führungskraft

**Wie viele Stunden pro Woche arbeiten Sie?**



SVorname\$ SNachname\$

**Die folgenden Fragen betreffen die Anforderungen bei Ihrer Arbeit.**

	Immer	Oft	Manchmal	Selten	Nie
1. Müssen Sie sehr schnell arbeiten?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Arbeiten Sie den ganzen Tag mit hohem Tempo?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Wie oft kommt es vor, dass Sie nicht genügend Zeit haben, alle Ihre Aufgaben zu erledigen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Kommen Sie mit Ihrer Arbeit in Rückstand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Müssen Sie Überstunden machen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Die folgenden Fragen betreffen Ihre Einflussmöglichkeiten und Ihren Spielraum bei der Arbeit.**

	Immer	Oft	Manchmal	Selten	Nie
1. Haben Sie großen Einfluss auf Entscheidungen, die Ihre Arbeit betreffen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Haben Sie Einfluss auf die Menge der Arbeit, die Ihnen übertragen wird?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Haben Sie Einfluss darauf, was Sie bei Ihrer Arbeit tun?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Können Sie selbst bestimmen, wann Sie eine Pause machen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Können Sie mehr oder weniger frei entscheiden, wann Sie Urlaub machen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Fragen zur beruflichen Erschöpfung. Bitte beantworten Sie die Fragen im zeitlichen Sinne, wie oft Sie daran denken oder sich so fühlen.

	Nie	Mindes- tens ein paar Mal im Jahr	Mindes- tens ein Mal im Monat	Einige Male pro Monat	Ein Mal pro Woche	Mehrm- als pro Woche	Jeden Tag
1. Ich fühle mich durch meine Arbeit emotional erschöpft.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Ich fühle mich am Ende eines Arbeitstages verbraucht.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Ich fühle mich bereits ermüdet, wenn ich morgens aufstehe und einen neuen Arbeitstag vor mir liegen sehe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Den ganzen Tag mit Menschen zu arbeiten, strengt mich an.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Ich fühle mich durch meine Arbeit ausgebrannt.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Ich fühle mich durch meine Arbeit frustriert.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Ich habe das Gefühl, zu verbissen zu arbeiten.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Bei der Arbeit in direktem Kontakt zu Menschen zu stehen, stresst mich zu sehr.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Ich habe das Gefühl, am Ende meiner Weisheit zu sein.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Fragen zur beruflichen Umständen. Bitte beantworten Sie die Fragen im zeitlichen Sinne, wie oft Sie daran denken oder sich so fühlen.

	Nie	Mindes- tens ein paar Mal im Jahr	Mindes- tens ein Mal im Monat	Einige Male pro Monat	Ein Mal pro Woche	Mehrm- als pro Woche	Jeden Tag
1. Ich habe das Gefühl, manche Klienten/Kollegen unpersönlich zu behandeln, als wären sie Objekte.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Seit ich diese Arbeit ausübe, bin ich Menschen gegenüber gleichgültiger geworden.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Ich befürchte, dass mich meine Arbeit emotional verhärtet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Es interessiert mich nicht wirklich, was mit manchen meiner Kollegen geschieht.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Ich habe das Gefühl, dass mir meine Kollegen/Mitarbeitenden für manche ihrer Probleme die Schuld geben.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>







SVorname\$ SNachname\$

Fragen zur eigenen Leistungseinschätzung. Bitte beantworten Sie die Fragen im zeitlichen Sinne, wie oft Sie daran denken oder sich so fühlen.

	Nie	Mindes- tens ein paar Mal im Jahr	Mindes- tens ein Mal im Monat	Einige Male pro Monat	Ein Mal pro Woche	Mehrm- als pro Woche	Jeden Tag
1. Ich kann leicht nachvollziehen, was in meinen Kollegen/Vorgesetzten vorgeht.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Ich gehe erfolgreich mit den Problemen anderer Menschen um.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Ich habe das Gefühl, durch meine Arbeit andere Menschen positiv zu beeinflussen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Mir fällt es leicht, in meinem Arbeitsumfeld eine entspannte Atmosphäre zu schaffen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Ich fühle mich angeregt, wenn ich eng mit meinen Kollegen zusammengearbeitet habe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Ich habe viele lohnende Ziele bei meiner Arbeit erreicht.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Bei meiner Arbeit gehe ich mit emotionalen Problemen sehr gelassen um.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Ich fühle mich voller Energie.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



	Stimme absolut nicht zu	Stimme nicht zu	Stimme eher nicht zu	Stimme weder zu noch lehne ich ab	Stimme eher zu	Stimme zu	Stimme absolut zu
1. Meine Organisation gibt mir das Gefühl, dass ein Mitarbeitender so gut ist wie jeder andere Mitarbeitende.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Meine Organisation würde nicht zögern mich zu ersetzen, wenn das Unternehmen in der Lage wäre mehr Gewinn zu erzielen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Wenn meine Arbeit von einer Maschine oder einem Roboter ausgeführt werden könnte, würde meine Organisation nicht zögern, mich durch diese neue Technologie zu ersetzen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Meine Organisation betrachtet mich als ein Werkzeug, das es für seine eigenen Zwecke einsetzen kann.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Meine Organisation betrachtet mich als ein Werkzeug, das für den Organisationserfolg eingesetzt wird.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Meine Organisation gibt mir das Gefühl, dass meine einzige Relevanz meine Arbeitsleistung ist.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Meine Organisation ist nur an mir interessiert, wenn sie mich braucht.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Das Einzige, was für meine Organisation zählt, ist das, was ich zur Organisation beitragen kann.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Meine Organisation behandelt mich, als wäre ich ein Roboter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





	Stimme absolut nicht zu	Stimme nicht zu	Stimme eher nicht zu	Stimme weder zu noch lehne ich ab	Stimme eher zu	Stimme zu	Stimme absolut zu
10. Meine Organisation betrachtet mich als eine Nummer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Meine Organisation behandelt mich, als wäre ich ein Objekt.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

