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WORKPLACE BULLYING A TOPIC TO BE PONDERED: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Bullies in the workplace, those who insult, degrade, and threaten their co-workers, cost businesses billions of dollars every year. Although it is thought that 55 million people experience emotional abuse at work annually, U.S. businesses are still unable to identify and address this issue. Organizations have a duty to safeguard their employees from the psychological harassment of a workplace bully; hence workplace bullying needs to be thoroughly researched. Corporate leaders that actively combat this social issue will more successfully achieve their organisational goals because workplace bullying has a detrimental influence on a company's profitability. This study is an attempt to understand the concept of workplace bullying and its impact on organisation productivity as well as employee performance. The concept has been discussed widely along with few significant suggestions which the organisations can implement to get better productivity and greater employee performance.

Keywords: workplace bullying, harassing, work environment, employee productivity etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

The idea of harassing (a casualty is socially rejected, tortured, prodded, and bothered working) was presented in the mid-1980s by Norwegian and Swedish authoritative analysts (Leymann, 1986; Matthiesen, Raknes and Røkkum, 1989; Kile, 1990). Worldwide exploration began in the mid-1990s (Zapf and Leymann, 1996; Sheehan, Barker and Rayner, 1999; Hoel, Rayner and Cooper, 1999; Zapf and Einarsen, 2001; Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper, 2003) (Einarsen et al.: 2).

Leyman (1990) fostered the idea of "work environment harassing" which was a harmful way of behaving. He (1990) analysed damaged specialists' brain science. He (1990) understood that workers who were embarrassed, prohibited or rebuffed by aggregate ways of behaving of their associates had extreme harms. Namie (2000) adds that working environment harassing which is reshaped threatening and forceful way of behaving focusing on specific representatives in an orderly way causes them feel bothered, insulted and embarrassed. He (2007) states that work

environment tormenting is a peculiarity where a representative sees himself as/herself as a helpless casualty of the negative activities of at least one colleague. Vartia (1996) and Hoel and Cooper (2000) accept that work environment harassing is tireless and rehashed negative way of behaving because of force irregularity and causes threatening climate. Vartia 1996, and Hoel & Cooper 2000 add that the casualty can't guard himself/herself or fight back similarly. Einarsen et al. (1994) recognize that working environment tormenting is a negative treatment against a casualty, makes him/her vibe mediocre in an addressed circumstance and may concern both business related and non-business related issues (Öztürk, 2011: 2-3).

Over the past ten years, workplace bullying has drawn more scholarly attention, and this attention seems to be well-deserved. This situation not only hurts individual workers but also costs American businesses billions of dollars annually (Gardner & Johnson, 2001; Sypher, 2004). Bullying is also not a unique or infrequent occurrence. 37 percent of all U.S. employees have been the victims of workplace bullies, according to The Workplace Bullying Institute's (U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey). Unluckily, organisational leaders either fail to notice the negative effects of bullying at work or lack the skills necessary to effectively intervene (Salin, 2003). Bullies carry on their reign of terror as a result, and targets become fearful of the bully, lose faith in the business, or quit their jobs.

Organizations have a duty to safeguard their workers from the psychological harassment of a workplace bully, hence workplace bullying needs to be well researched (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003). Organizational leaders that actively combat workplace bullying will also more successfully achieve their organisational goals because it negatively affects a company's profitability (Keashly & Jagatic, 2003). Increased understanding of the activities and behaviours of workplace bullies is another advantage of workplace bullying study. Organizational leaders will be better able to ensure a secure and healthy working environment for all workers if they have a deeper understanding of workplace bullying. In fact, if workplace bullying is recognised as a social issue, incidents may start to decline in businesses.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the various ill effects of workplace bullying.

2. To examine how workplace bullying impacts employee productivity.
3. To analyse the influence of workplace bullying on employee performance.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Workplace bullying is normally considered as an undesirable thing which makes the work environment hampered. It is considered as one such behavior which normally an individual shows to his/her colleague a negative kind of attitude. There are such individual employees in organisations who do purposely and with an intention to hurt someone. This behavior has got its own ill effects in any organization. Bullying in the organisation would damage employee productivity and employee performance in the long run. Such behaviour needs a check and once missed it would lead to the overall growth of the organisation.

3.1. Scope of the study

Identifying the nature and scope of the issue in India and facilitating cross-cultural comparisons across nations using uniform standardized measures are some of the goals of filling in the gaps that have developed in the literature regarding a reliable and valid measure of workplace bullying (D'Cruz & Rayner, 2015). The majority of international studies on workplace bullying have used a single criterion to separate targets from no targets based on an objective assessment (Nielsen et al., 2011), leaving little room to account for variations in the level of exposure to bullying. Bullying at work is characterised as an on-going cycle (Einarsen et al., 2011). The scope of this study is to understand the various bad effects of workplace bullying. Bullying in course of time impacts the employee productivity negatively. Employee performance comes down as he/she is not happy with the work environment, feels frustrated and irritated due to organization bullying.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Workplace bullying costs American organizations billions of dollars a year, and this bully inflicted trauma is emerging as a more deleterious problem for both individuals and organizations than all other occupational stresses combined (Adams & Crawford, 1992). A 2007 study commissioned by The Workplace Bullying Institute estimated that fifty-four million people have been bullied at

work (U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey). With all the laws, policies, and regulations designed to protect workers from harassment, asking how bullying can happen is a paramount question. One contributing factor is that bullying behavior is often ignored, tolerated, misinterpreted, or even instigated by the organization's management as a deliberate management strategy (Sheehan, 1999).

Although workplace bullying should be a serious concern for organizations, it often goes unreported because the targets feel humiliated and shamed (Baron & Neuman, 1998). Moreover, employers exacerbate the problem by ignoring or discounting complaints. Many targets suffer silently; some quit their jobs. For others, the stress is so unbearable it contributes to heart attacks or other stress-related physical ailments (Gardner & Johnson, 2001; Stress, 1999). In extreme cases, either the bully or the target resorts to homicide or suicide (Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003; Namie & Namie, 2003; Workplace Violence, 2001). These overwhelming feelings of stress can impact not only the target but other workers who witness the bullying. Lutgen-Sandvik (2006) reports that the stress and desire to quit also translate to witnesses of workplace bullying. Her finding means that workplace bullying is not a problem isolated to the target and the bully but is a systemic problem. Lutgen-Sandvik's findings are supported by Vartia (2001) and Mikkelsen & Einarsen (2001, 2002) who found similar results in international studies.

Glendinning (2001) says workplace bullying is akin to a cancer in the workplace; and, if measures are not taken to cure it, both the organization and individual employees will become increasingly unhealthy. Targets of workplace bullying often report increased fear, anxiety, helplessness, and anger. Although the source of these feelings is emotional abuse at work, the targets often carry the negative effects into their personal lives (Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003). In addition, targets report reducing their efforts, taking time off to avoid the bully, or leaving the organization. As a result, productivity and profits diminish (Harvey, Heames & Richey, 2006). As the public's awareness of workplace bullying increases, targets will become more vocal and conciliatory remedies will be necessary. Some people believe this matter is best resolved by organizational awareness and training programs (Glendinning, 2001; Salin, 2003; Sheehan, 1999). However, proponents of legislative changes posit that power imbalances, evidenced by the fact that seventy-two percent of the bullies are supervisors and the organizational culture contribute to the problem (Keashly, 2002;

U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey). In their opinions, companies will continue the status quo until mandated to change (Davenport, Schwartz & Elliott, 2002; Namie & Namie, 2003).

Aquino and Bradfield (2000) identified the following elements as impacting victimization and workplace bullying: aggression, negative affectivity, and hierarchy as a result of multiple factor analyses. Aquino and Bradfield (2000), and Bowling and Beehr (2006) examined from the viewpoint of bullying victims discovering that harassment and bullying might be sparked by a victim's unique characteristics as well as surrounding circumstances, which could result in disputes. In addition to concentrating on factor discussion, Einarsen et al. (2009) carried out the factor structure analysis using the data for the UK sample of 5288 employees. They revealed that because the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R) focuses on aspects including work-related bullying, personal bullying, and physical bullying, it is a suitable tool for assessing exposure to workplace bullying.

In addition to tormenting related factors, there are likewise unambiguous stressors that are related with working environment bullying. Hauge et al. (2010) directed a quantitative report with an emphasis on the example addressing workers in Norwegian organizations. They presumed that working environment bullying is a significant social stressor making discouragement and tension in laborers and driving diminished work fulfilment and higher turnover expectation rates. Hauge et al. (2011) alluded to a bigger example including 10,000 representatives and expressed that job stressors and incapable initiative methodologies and practices could impact the improvement of work environment harassing. Consequently, assuming work places are negative and initiative is incapable, these stressors can provoke bullying.

Vukelić et al. (2019) led a quantitative report including 329 specialists in Serbia, and they found that harassing straightforwardly prompts diminished work accomplishment, establishing an unseemly environment in the work environment. Naseem and Ahmed (2020), indicating to the information from 2250 representatives, found an immediate connection between work environment bullying and expanded depletion, close to home issues, and presenteeism. Park et al. (2020) got similar outcomes, zeroing in on the encounters of informants who revealed tormenting on account of trouble and nervousness. Glambek et al. (2020) found an expanded gamble of openness to working environment bullying for bunch individuals that varied from the gathering model. Hence, working environment bullying is related with critical pessimistic ramifications for representatives' close to home state and efficiency.

Most of the existing research on workplace bullying has been conducted outside of the United States, in countries including Sweden, Australia, France, Britain, Finland, Italy, and Germany. Although bullying is endemic in American organizations, the United States has lagged behind other countries in studying this phenomenon. As American companies expand into global markets, they will need to understand and address the problems associated with workplace bullying.

5. DISCUSSION

There have been numerous researches on the causes of bullying at work, and they have come to the conclusion that there is no one reason in particular why people bully (Einarsen, 1999; Zapf, 1999). According to Salin (2003), Skogstad, Matthiesen, and Einarsen (2007), and Zapf & Einarsen (2003), the root causes encompass both organisational and individual elements, and there are multiple causal layers of antecedents within each of those categories. The causes of workplace bullying can also be seen from the viewpoint of both the target and the aggressor, depending on the individual. For instance, three key causes of bullying are listed by Zapf and Einarsen (2003). They are first trying to preserve their self-esteem. A boss may bully a subordinate in order to enhance their own self-worth or because they are jealous of them.

Because people do not comprehend the intentions and acts of those who are viewed as different, differences in age, race, gender, ethnicity, and educational attainment may exacerbate disagreements and promote bullying behaviours (Baron & Neuman, 1998; Harvey et al., 2006; Keashly, 1998; Zapf and Einarsen, 2003). Additionally, people who lack self-assurance or adequate dispute resolution abilities are more likely to become the objects of bullying at work (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007). Additionally, because the bully may feel threatened by the target's skill, overachievers may become targets of workplace bullying (Zapf & Einarsen, 2003). Additionally, the prevalence of bullying practises is frequently influenced by organizational changes, cultures, and leadership approaches (Davenport, et al., 2002; Hoel & Salin, 2003; Namie & Namie, 2003; Skogstad et al., 2007). For instance, restructuring, downsizing, and mergers frequently require individuals to accomplish more with less (Hoel & Salin, 2003; Lutgen-Sandvik & McDermott, 2008).

Managers may adopt a more autocratic leadership style as the span of power widens, endangering their employment. According to Hoel and Salin (2003), these changes may generate tensions and resentment, which could result in stressful working situations that could result in workplace bullying (Rayner, 1997). Finally, workplace bullying is a result of the state of the economy. Because of the 9.5% unemployment rate (Cohen, 2010, p. 2), targets are unable to simply quit their jobs, and bullies are cognizant of the financial leverage they possess over the target (Cohen, 2010). Some companies create internal reward systems that promote competitiveness in order to embed enabling structures into the workplace. These business CEOs frequently prioritise profits over people (Lutgen-Sandvik & McDermott, 2008). Organizational structures, according to Lutgen-Sandvik and McDermott (2008), may enable bullying by enacting "anti-employee rules" and laissez-faire management methods (Hauge, et al. 2007; Lutgen-Sandvik & McDermott, 2008). Progressive disciplinary procedures and at-will employment practises, which can lead to job termination for no apparent cause, are examples of anti-employee policies. It's interesting to note that laissez-faire management, which is a hands-off approach to management, also worsens bullying behaviour because the manager may desire the bully and target to solve their issues on their own without involvement from the administration (Lutgen-Sandvik & McDermott, 2008).

Organizational leaders frequently lack the skills to deal with bullying behaviours or are unaware of the consequences associated with avoiding or improperly handling them (Salin, 2003). When accusations of bullying are disregarded or characterised as personality clashes, the negative effects for the target may be compounded. When a conflict is classified as a personality conflict, the victim is expected to shoulder some of the responsibility for the bullying. According to Keashly (2002), targets perceive an organization's response as abusive behaviour if organisational leaders do not stop bullying or fail to prevent it. In response, both the bully and the organisation mistreat targets (Keashly, 2002). Organizational cultures that fail to address bullying behaviour are considered as complicit with the bully and contribute to it (Keashly, 1998). Furthermore, because many bullies at work are supervisors, when bullying behaviour is accepted, it gets ingrained in corporate culture (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert; 2006), which encourages other employees to imitate it. The problem is exacerbated by this trickle-down effect, and corporations are now responsible for identifying and combating workplace bullying (Hodson, Roscigno, & Lopez, 2006).

Even when targets report bullying, managers who are ill-equipped to handle the issue may dismiss their claims or characterise them as personality problems. If left unchecked, workplace bullying can have costly effects for the company as well as particular people. A National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH) study found that stressful workplace environments reduce motivation and morale and raise absenteeism and turnover (Hauge, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2007; Stress, 1999; Zapf & Gross, 2001). Furthermore, 53 percent of respondents to her study said they lost time at work trying to avoid the bully; 22 percent said they put in less effort; 10 percent cut back on the number of hours they worked; and 12 percent said they quit (Pearson & Porath, 2005).

Therefore, victims of workplace bullying frequently suffer in silence and live in fear of personal humiliation, social rejection, and financial loss rather than taking the further humiliation of having their accusations rejected. Targets of workplace bullying, according to Keashly and Neuman (2004), experience chronic stress and high levels of "anxiety, sadness, fatigue, frustration, and powerlessness" (p. 339). Additionally, victims of workplace bullying are plagued with rage, frustration, dread, and contempt (Keashly & Neuman, 2004; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007).

Insomnia, clinical depression, eating disorders, heart disease, and gastrointestinal problems can all result from this heightened stress (Gardner & Johnson, 2001; Keashly & Neuman, 2004; Stress, 1999; Sypher, 2004). Additionally, even those workers who are not the direct recipients of bullying practises experience severe consequences. Employees who see their coworkers being bullied may worry that they will become the bully's next victim. As a result, non-targeted coworkers are more stressed, less satisfied with their jobs, and more likely to leave their jobs than those who work in bully-free situations (Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts, 2007). Sometimes witnesses opt not to intervene, which can make them feel bad. In other cases, by devising strategies to exact revenge on the bully, witnesses may try to aid the target. The witnesses spend a lot of time discussing the bullying, which may result in decreased productivity for the company (Pearson & Porath, 2005).

Last but not least, teams with a bullying-target relationship are seen as having lesser prestige than teams without a bullying problem (Coyne, Craig, & Chong, 2004). Due to a lack of trust, fear, and effective communication, this toxic workplace has an adverse influence on group performance as well as on individuals (Keashly & Neuman, 2004). These stress-related disorders lead to decreased productivity and increased absenteeism, which together cost American businesses billions of

dollars annually. According to the American Institute of Stress, one million workers miss work each day as a result of illnesses related to stress (Job Stress, n.d.). An estimated \$300 billion in additional expenditures and resulting lost profits are caused each year by absenteeism, turnover, accidents, medical expenses, workers' compensation payments, and decreased productivity (Job Stress, n.d.). Targets also have a lower level of loyalty to the companies they work for. Individuals are not the only ones who suffer as a result; organisational earnings also suffer. These elements work together to make it more difficult for the United States to compete internationally (Gardner & Johnson, 2001; Sypher, 2004).

The sociological phenomenon of workplace bullying has long been actively addressed in other nations, but research on this subject is just beginning in the United States. Because of this, many American businesses are under-educated about the subject and do not appreciate the human and financial costs of workplace bullying. From the viewpoint of graduate students entering the workforce, this study was created to raise awareness of the actions and behaviours related with workplace bullying and to disclose options for effectively coping with it. The first step towards reducing this issue is to comprehend it. All employees may have safer and healthier working conditions as a result, and organisational revenues may rise as well. The findings of this study support the notion that organisational cultures frequently worsen the issue of workplace bullying. This may be partially explained by the lack of a recognised definition of workplace bullying, which prevents leaders from recognising its warning indications or mistaking it for a harsh management approach. Additionally, it was discovered in the research that because neither organisational leaders nor specific employees are aware of how to handle it, workplace bullying may not be acknowledged as an issue. Unfortunately, indifferent leaders encourage bullying.

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Additionally, the harm is not restrained at work. These concepts were created by the students, and their perceptions are significant because they reflect the worries that the upcoming generation of workers will have about being bullied at work. The results of this study are in line with those of earlier studies (Gardner & Johnson, 2001; Sypher, 2004), which contend that being the target of a bully affects relationships outside of the workplace and that the high levels of stress are taken home. Most intriguingly, according to Lutgen-Sandvik, the participants' responses appear to reflect those of actual workplace bullying victims (2008). In Lutgen-study, Sandvik's target identification was examined as a result of traumatising workplace bullying, and participants' impressions reflected the victims' genuine emotions.

The implication of this mirroring is that workplace bullying and its repercussions have become part of the general mentality, and that as a result, even the perception of workplace bullying can be harmful. Individuals frequently have no idea how their behaviours affect other people. In fact, some bullies might not even be aware of their actions. Bullying at work may be motivated by aggressive communication techniques, poor interpersonal abilities, and cultural misconceptions. Workplace bullying is more likely to occur when a person with a powerful personality also has low self-esteem or poor social skills. The idea that this is a difficult situation will persist without a precise definition of workplace bullying, awareness and interpersonal relationship skills training, and rules that offer checks and balances.

5.1. Workplace Bullying in India

Despite the fact that workplace bullying has been recognised as a global issue of concern (Einarsen et al., 2011), there is little scholarly research on the topic in India compared to other nations and scant information accessible on its nature, prevalence, and scope. D'Cruz and Rayner (2013, 2015) pioneered empirical research on workplace harassment in India by examining the prevalence of harassment in the Information Technology Enabled Services Business Process Outsourcing (ITES-BPO) industry and providing mean scores for categorising respondents on the basis of severity level using the Work Harassment Scale (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Back, 1992).

Workplace bullies do exist in India, according to D'Cruz (2012), the author of the book *Workplace Bullying in India*, who also said that it is challenging to gauge the prevalence of workplace bullying

due to the lack of empirical data. The prevalence of workplace bullying has been researched outside of the ITES-BPO industry, including among bank personnel (Gupta, 2013a), college instructors (Gupta, 2013b), IT workers (Ciby & Raya, 2014), and junior doctors (Bairy et al., 2007). Bullying is still a topic that receives little scholarly attention in India, and the majority of employing businesses are dreadfully unaware of its dynamics and effects (D'Cruz, 2016b).

A number of well-known online publications as well as more traditional trade journals have drawn attention to the worrying problem of workplace bullying among Indian workers (see <http://www.citehr.com>, <http://www.ipetitions.com>, and <http://www.womensweb.in>). There have also been articles about workplace bullying published in The Times of India, The Hindu, The Indian Express, and other publications, reflecting on the type and frequency of antagonism and maltreatment that occurs in Indian workplaces. Recently, Bollywood films like Rocket Singh and, to some extent, Kartik Calling Kartik have brought up the issue of workplace bullying in India. This means that scholars should focus their attention on Indian contexts specifically while studying workplace bullying.

6. SUGGESTIONS

Workplace bullying and the perceptions of workplace bullying can both be reduced by creating policies and procedures that include a zero-tolerance policy for bullying, formal reporting and recording procedures, and continual review of policy/procedure efficacy. It is crucial to remember, nevertheless, that these regulations will function better if they are created in collaboration with organisational executives and employee representatives. Finally, the organisation as a whole and the community at large must be informed about the policies. Future employees' opinions of workplace bullying can be altered to make it less of an issue by creating practical solutions and making sure they are implemented as a part of a business culture that is shared with the neighborhood.

The findings of this study suggest the value of applying Roger Schwarz's (2002) problem-solving approach to facilitation to help increase awareness of the issue of workplace bullying, identify the underlying causes of this phenomenon, and suggest solutions for resolving it, in addition to raising awareness of the issue and offering potential solutions for dealing with it. This study's extensive

data confirm Taylor Cox's (2001) hypothesis that diverse groups produce more original and creative. The perceived issues and root causes of workplace bullying should be considered by organizational leaders, but they should also identify potential solutions that might successfully address this societal issue. Instead of blaming the bully, stigmatizing the target, or criticizing the company, a worthwhile solution to this pervasive issue should be one that benefits all those impacted by workplace bullying. From an organizational standpoint, the answer ought to improve their reputation and be related to their stated objective. From a personal standpoint, the solution shouldn't label the target in a way that stigmatizes them.

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7. CONCLUSION

The results of this research lead to several conclusions. First, the study emphasized that there is not a clear definition of workplace bullying, so it is a concept that is often misunderstood. As a result of this confusion, organizational cultures may either intentionally or inadvertently encourage bullying behavior. Moreover, in the United States, the target may not be protected by policies or procedures that apply to other types of harassment and discrimination. In addition to organizational cultures, poor communication skills, misperceptions, diversity, poor interpersonal skills, and globalization also contribute to workplace bullying. As the results of this study indicate, workplace bullying is not a simple problem requiring a one-size-fits-all solution. Given the myriad perceived

root causes of workplace bullying at both the individual and organizational levels, a systems approach will be the most effective way to address the phenomenon.

This type of approach will evaluate the organizational culture to determine how it exacerbates workplace bullying and review the current procedures for dealing with workplace bullying. As the resolution process is developed, it should build upon the interests of both the organization and the individual employees, as this collaborative problem-solving approach will have more effective and longer-lasting results. It will also incorporate preventative strategies, along with support structures for bullies and targets.

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