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## *A Theoretical Analysis of the Causes and Effects of Workplace Bullying*

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*Abstract: Even with all of the research that has been done on risk assessment, prevention, and safety procedures that businesses follow, bullying at work is still a difficult issue for businesses today. This essay attempts to give readers a basic grasp of the types of workplace bullying that occur in organizations. The substantial empirical research on workplace bullying that has been done is reviewed and summarized in this study. We have divided workplace bullying into three groups in this review paper: physical, personal, and work-related bullying. Bullying behaviors harm not just the victims but also the organization and society as a whole. We have made an effort to create a conceptual model that illustrates the findings from the literature in a comparable way.*

*Keywords: Organizational Effects, Workplace Bullying.*

### Introduction

These days, people are more conscious of their surroundings and how they wish to be perceived by others. The growing emphasis on issues related to equality and human rights is one of the primary causes of this. People are more aware of the various workplace issues they may encounter, one of which is "workplace bullying." Bullying at work is widely seen as a major social issue and a critical concern in the workplace.

Bullying has multiple definitions and is a subjective behavior. According to Olweus (1999), bullying is commonly characterised as "a subset of aggressive behaviour, where the aggression continues to occur and in which there is an imbalance of authority such that the victim finds it difficult to defend himself/herself." According to studies, one in four persons have experienced bullying at work in the previous five years. By using this data, it is also possible to determine that bullying at work costs an estimated 18.9 million lost working days. This is because the afflicted continue to miss work on a regular basis.

The mental and physical health of employees can be severely impacted by behaviors like social exclusion, verbal aggression, humiliation, gossiping, physical abuse, undermining, stalking, and making unwanted physical contact. In extreme cases, these behaviors may even necessitate psychiatric treatment (Niedl, 1996). Bullying at work can occur in both horizontal and vertical forms. When one employee harasses another, or when multiple employees mistreat a single employee, this is known as horizontal bullying. Achilleos (2011) study revealed that it is difficult to perceive bullying. Bullying takes the form of verbal abuse and intimidation and is a repeated act. The consequences of bullying are devastating. Vertical bullying occurs when a manager or supervisor mistreats a subordinate. It is commonly acknowledged that this phenomena causes mental strain, sadness,

low self-esteem, and an increase in absenteeism, among other things. In this study, we first look at definitional concerns, and then we look at how bullying in the workplace affects employee and organizational performance. Additionally, we will concentrate on comprehending the reasons behind and techniques that change how bullying is perceived before exhibiting behavioral and attitudinal consequences over time.

The aims of this paper are outlined below:-

- To talk about the causes of workplace bullying.
- To investigate how bullying at work affects individuals
- To investigate the effects of bullying at work from an organizational perspective.
- To evaluate the effects of workplace bullying on society.

### Defining Workplace Bullying

Bullying in general and workplace bullying in particular have not been given a clear description in the literature. American psychiatrist Carroll Brodsky did the first research on workplace bullying in the late 1970s. By the end of the 1980s, bullying was becoming more and more of a problem across North Europe. Leymann first observed the hostile methods that certain students were using to bully their peers. Following this, the emphasis was moved to the investigation of workplace bullying. According to Leymann (1996) "When an employee is subjected to hostile and aggressive behaviors at work, primarily of a psychological nature that have the intention of dehumanizing, intimidating, frightening, or punishing the target, this is referred to as workplace bullying." Over 55% of Indian workers reported being bullied at work, according to a survey conducted by the job portal CareerBuilder.in. According to the poll, more than 40% of employees' did not report such occurrences to their HR department, and 81% claimed that they had dealt with the bully on their own, with different degrees of success. 37% of those who said they had been picked on said that something had been done about it, while 21% claimed that nothing had been done. Einarsen (1999) has addressed workplace bullying as "violent behaviors that are persistent, deliberate, and harmful to the targets. A study of the research indicates that bullying at work is a persistent behavior that has detrimental effects on both the target individual and the organization as a whole. According to (Zapf & Gross, 2001), Bullying begins with aggressive behavior that may be challenging to evaluate at first. As the perpetrator employs psychological violence and physical assault, the bullying gradually gets worse, causing serious issues for both the organization and its personnel. The literature on workplace bullying states that the victim of bullying is known as the target, while the bully is known as the perpetrator.

### Types of Workplace Bullying

This study's primary goal is to outline the many forms of workplace bullying that have been documented in the literature. A review of the literature indicates that bullying at work can take many different forms. These are divided into three primary categories-

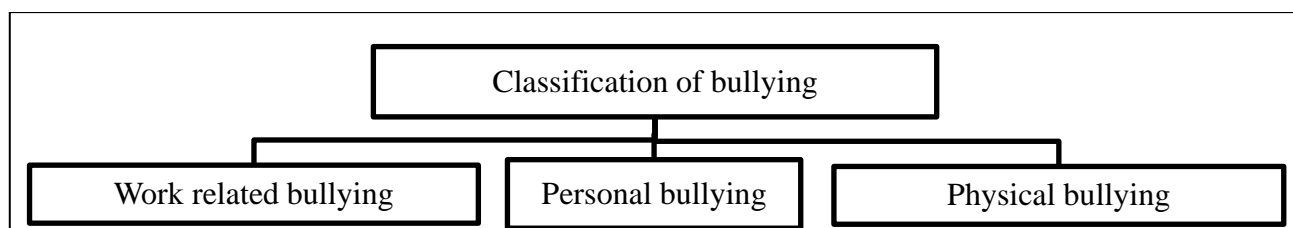


FIGURE 1: CLASSIFICATION OF BULLYING

The term "workplace bullying" refers to an act of frequent and persistent power imbalance caused by the offender using his or her victim's power against them. Depending on the victim's perspective, workplace bullying may be regarded as a subjective issue (Einarsen et al., 2003). Figure 1 presents the many categories that we created based on an in-depth analysis of bullying

behaviors. We have divided the bullying actions into three major categories that encompass all possible bullying behaviors. These categories include bullying at work, bullying on a personal level, and bullying that is violent or menacing.

Bullying at work was examined in relation to leadership styles, working circumstances, job characteristics, and workload. The primary issue that emerged from the literature research about bullying at work was the power distance, which allowed the bully to freely exercise control over the target. Regardless of appropriate procedures, the organization's high power distance culture permits the supervisor to exert strong supervisory authority and authoritative authority over the subordinates. (Hofstede, 2001). Bullying may also occur when the target is subjected to unfavorable working conditions. Additionally, tense relationships with superiors raise the likelihood of bullying at work. Baillien and De Witte (2009) have talked about a number of stressors that have been linked to an increased likelihood of workplace bullying, including role conflict, job instability, an isolated work environment, unclear duties, and frequent disagreements involving job and team dependency.

Personal bullying is associated with another type of job bullying. Under this, the victim of bullying is singled out for various forms of harmful social activities, his personal space is mocked, and he consequently feels less than worthy of respect from others. Bullies have been identified in the literature as engaging in behaviors such as verbal abuse, harassment based on sexuality, screaming, spreading rumors, violating someone's personal space, and disrupting other people (Gardner & Johnson, 2001; Rayner, 1997). Additionally, it was discovered that the offenders engaged in negative behaviors such as stalking, humiliation, personal jokes about the target, and constant criticism (Baillien et al., 2009; Gardner & Johnson, 2001; Randle et al., 2007; Simpson & Cohen, 2004). Incivility among coworkers is also a kind of personal bullying. Coworker incivility happens when an uncivil individual (the perpetrator) interacts with another employee (the target) and perceives the incivility. Workers who encounter instances of incivility find it difficult to concentrate at work because they are afraid of reoccurring and attempt to avoid the aggressor, which leads to subpar output (Porath and Pearson, 2009).

The second category deals with physical bullying, in which the aggressor uses forceful tactics like pushing, kicking, punching, beating, or breaking things. The offender intimidates the victim by using his brute force. It directly entails causing harm to someone's body or property. The victim of physical bullying may have both immediate and long-term consequences.

### **Individual Impacts**

The effect of bullying on victims is the paper's second goal. According to research, bullying has serious negative effects on the targeted person as well as the group that they are employed by. In addition, it reduces the efficacy of the organization (Harvey et al., 2007). Negative employee behavior stemming from bullying is directly associated with decreased job involvement, poor job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, a willingness to leave, and diminished affective commitment with the organization. According to (Appelbaum & Roy-Girard, 2007), Bullying has a negative impact on employees' social and psychological well-being in addition to their behavior at work. The following outcomes are related to the individuals:

### **Employee Motivation Level**

“It speaks about the readiness or desire to do more effort because one finds the activity enjoyable (Amabile, 1996)”. Bullying at work causes employees to become emotionally fragile and unstable which lowers their intrinsic drive and makes them less likely to work harder at their jobs. When faced with workplace rudeness, employees also experience emotional exhaustion, which may lower their intrinsic desire to work and make them attempt to defend themselves against future emotional and physical abuse.

### **Job Satisfaction**

This is a thoroughly studied result of bullying at work. According to research, those who experience bullying report feeling less satisfied with their jobs than those who are not targeted. Numerous other studies have also looked at the negative

relationship between workplace bullying and job satisfaction, finding that higher levels of bullying lower job satisfaction (Giorgi et al.2015). Workers believe they are unable to defend their positions and are slow to respond when an issue arises (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1965)

### **Psychosomatic Health**

Serious emotions including grief, rage, tension, bewilderment, and restlessness are displayed by bullied workers. Being bullied lowers a person's sense of self-worth, according to Lee & Brotheridge (2006). Those who are targeted also experience helplessness and self-doubt. According to a Cooper et al. (1988) study, surprise bullying episodes cause bullied employees to stay upset. The victim of bullying experienced anxiety and tension, finding it difficult to handle everything that was going on (Oatley, 1992).

### **Stress**

Numerous studies have demonstrated the link between high levels of stress and workplace bullying (Hoel & Salin, 2002). Research on workplace bullying looked at social support and psychological capital as moderators of the association between stress and bullying. Similarly, Laschinger and Nosko (2015) discovered that every victim of bullying had experienced trauma thanks to the use of a bullying–(PTSD) post-traumatic stress disorder test.

### **Moral Disengagement**

According to (Claybourn, 2011), workers who have experienced bullying at work exhibit strong moral disengagement tendencies, which impair job satisfaction. It was also discovered that, eventually, even the harassed workers began to believe that it was okay to hurt others, which raised the intensity of harassment even more. Additionally, this study showed that the victims' right to retaliate against their bullies was granted by the moral disengagement process.

### **Affective Commitment**

According to Hol and Cooper (2000), there is a negative association between bullying and employees' degree of commitment. Bullying has a direct negative impact on the target's emotional attachment to the company, which lowers the employee's affective commitment with it. bad emotional responses are also a result of bad interpersonal events that occur within the groupings. Supervisory behaviors that discourage affective commitment to the business include aggressive supervision, domineering leadership, and social isolation. These behaviors encourage negative behavior, and when faced with unwelcome obstacles, an employee may lose faith in the organization. These deliberate personal and professional obstacles lower employee engagement, according to Duffy et al. (2002).

### **Intention to Leave**

Bullying lowers employee motivation since victims are more likely to be absent from work and to consider quitting their position and leaving the company at some point (Quine, 1999; Hoel et al., 2003). Bullying at work raises the likelihood of quitting as well as absenteeism (Vartia, 2003). It has been noted that people who have been harassed may leave their positions quickly, which could result in significant future expenses for the organizations (Waldman et al., 2004). In the UK, for instance, a survey revealed that over 25% of employees who experienced bullying quit their jobs (Rayner and Cooper, 1997).

### **Work Family Conflict**

When an employee can't strike a healthy balance between work and family, it affects his personal relationships with his family members and puts him in a difficult situation (Matthews et al., 2010). This is known as work-family conflict. Negative job experiences including excessive workloads, unattainable objectives, and impossible deadlines frequently trigger this stress response, which implies that bullying at work may logically be a significant stressor that contributes to work-family conflict.

## **Organizational Impacts**

In response to research question 3, which examined the impact of bullying on organizations, it was found that bullying has a direct bearing on employees' abilities and negatively affects the organization's reputation. If bullying is not appropriately and promptly addressed, it can also undermine the effectiveness of the organization. Bullying at work can negatively impact an employee's ability to learn tasks, be a part of a team, behave in a group, and collaborate, among other team-related skills. It causes the sufferers to become rigid and unaccommodating toward their coworkers, which leads to the collapse of the organization. It may lessen the giving behavior of staff members who were previously upbeat, inventive, sympathetic, and supportive. Ultimately, it is possible to view workplace bullying as an organizational cancer that, if allowed to continue unchecked, might destroy the entire company (Harvey et al., 2006).

Research has indicated that workplace bullying can lead to counterproductive behavior, wherein an employee deliberately engages in acts that bring harm to the firm and destroy its reputation (Kelloway et al., 2010). It also causes various bad behaviors in the subordinates, like workplace hostility, violence, abuse, and injustice inside the firm. According to Alberts (2007), workplace bullying can also be defined as a problem that starts with verbal and emotional abuse, progresses to damaging actions, and ultimately lowers organizational performance.

Since Leymann's initial investigation, bullying has unquestionably been seen as a significant organizational issue due to its detrimental effects on people's health and well-being (Einarsen et al., 2011). It was said that if a healthy psychological work atmosphere is not maintained, anyone can participate in bullying behaviors. According to Samnani & Singh (2012), bullying behaviors have the potential to permeate throughout the organization's departments and divisions, especially if bullies are employed in key positions. This could lead to an unsuitable work environment and decreased efficacy within the organization.

According to research, bullying at work can lead to stress in workers, which can then result in mental health disorders, poor physical conditions, anxiety, burnout, and an increase in sick leave usage. It can also result in workers compensation claims, higher medical costs, and a decrease in productivity (Farrell & Geist-Martin, 2005). Bullying at work imposes additional financial, social, organizational, psychological, and physical expenses.

## **Social Consequences**

The fourth research topic focuses on determining the societal repercussions of workplace bullying. Bullying at work has been linked to higher medical and welfare expenses for the company, according to some researchers. Additionally, there may be a greater likelihood of retiring early (Hoel and Cooper, 2001). According to research, bullying at work may also have a negative impact on relationships with coworkers, the rate of unemployment, and the expense of court cases since victims of bullying may find it difficult to secure employment in the future (Vega & Comer, 2005). Because workplace bullying is an act that should not have happened if appropriate policies had been implemented to stop social injustice, it can also be observed from the perspective of social injustice.

## **A Conceptual Model**

We have created a concept-based model that illustrates the elements connected to bullying and the previously described repercussions based on our literature review (see fig. 2). The model explains how to classify the elements that contribute to workplace bullying and the effects it has on various stakeholders. The purpose of this model is to arrange the current body of literature in a way that displays the important data in an easy-to-understand manner.

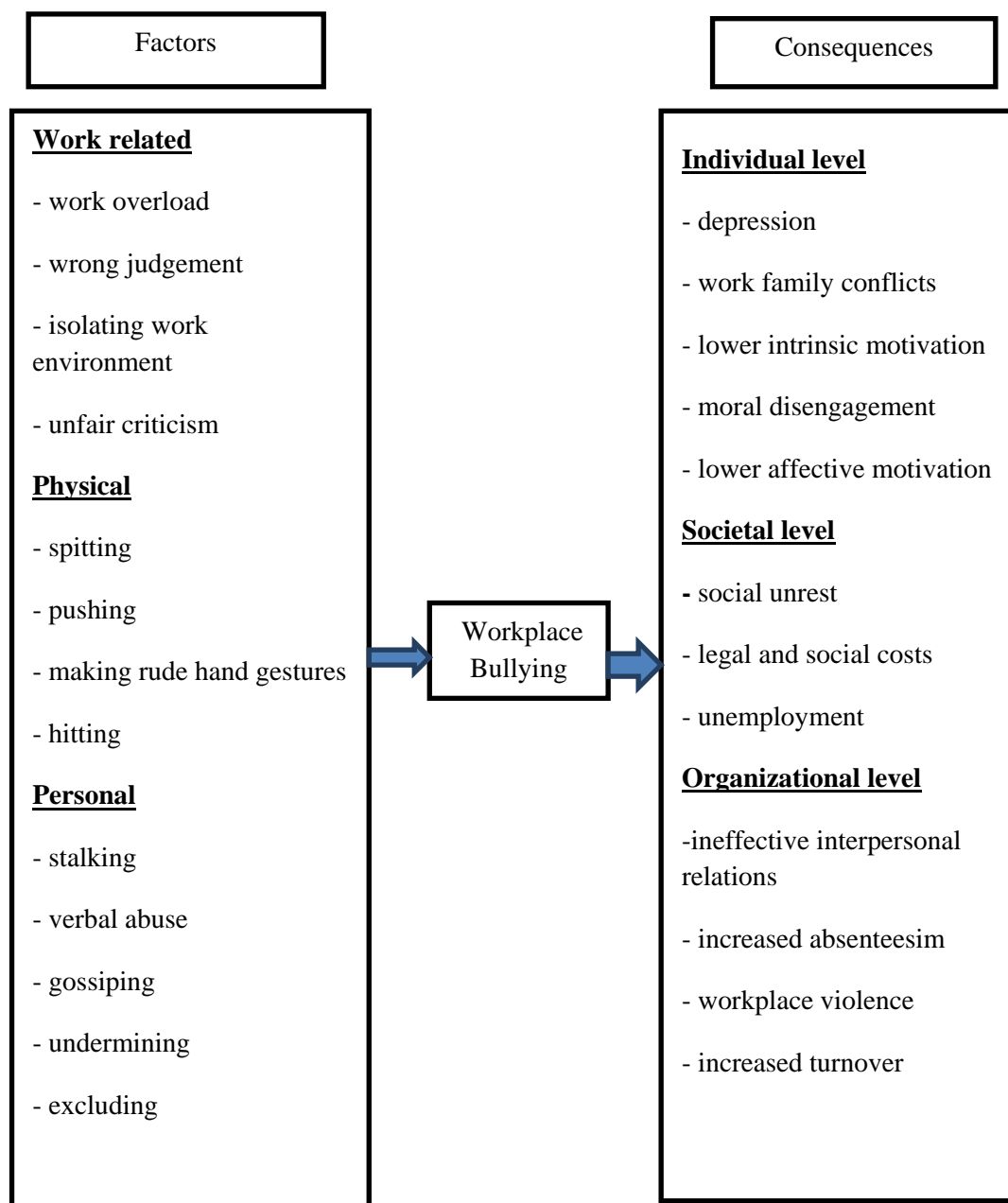


FIGURE 2: WORKPLACE BULLYING- A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

## DISCUSSIONS

Previous research indicates that bullying at work occurs practically everywhere in the globe and has detrimental effects. Bullying at work affects not just the victim but also the company and the community. Even while research has advanced significantly throughout time, there are still certain critical gaps in certain areas. Prior studies have not concentrated on specific aspects of an individual's personality. For instance, are there any particular aspects of a person's personality that are strongly correlated with their being a perpetrator? Do individuals bully because they were bullied in the past? Do those who engage in bullying use it as a means of imposing their authority on their targets in order to improve their performance? Furthermore, it is important to have a conversation about the length of time that bullying actions occur, since Leymann (1996) stated that an individual who experiences bullying should have dealt with the condition for at least six months, with one bullying incidence occurring each week. However, it's time to investigate a shorter time frame for these behaviors to qualify as bullying behaviors.

Once more, after researching the consequences of workplace bullying, it can be concluded that companies need to implement policies that prevent and end bullying at its source in order to lessen the trauma that comes with it. Namie (2003)



created a model policy that emphasizes implementation and has the phrase "zero-tolerance workplace bullying." It also entails informing every employee about these policies and conducting a thorough investigation and adjudication process in the event of workplace bullying.

## CONCLUSION

We have made an effort to compile and arrange the wealth of research on workplace bullying—both empirical and theoretical—into a single document that addresses all of the findings. To do this, we have reviewed the literature. This essay essentially provides a summary of all the research on workplace bullying conducted throughout the previous 30 years. The amount of study on bullying has increased significantly, and it has been discovered that bullying at work poses a major risk to the companies. As a result, it is now imperative that the businesses take the required actions to eradicate bullying from the workplace. As a result, more research is being done to determine what causes bullying. Also, in order to ensure that no person feels mistreated upon leaving their place of employment at the end of the day, organizations, the government, policy makers, and the general public need to be made more aware of the negative effects of workplace bullying. We have created a model that offers a comprehensive understanding of the problem of workplace bullying with the aid of a literature review. The approach can be helpful in evaluating regions that have been well investigated and offer directions for future research in areas that have gotten little to no attention.

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