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Workplace Bullying and It's Impact and Remedies in the 21st Century Issues

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Abstract
This paper is prepared to see the concept of bullying and its impacts in the work place and suggest some remedies based on the empirical data. Then the rationale of this paper document is to address why and how businesses organization should promote healthy work environments, to stimulate awareness of WPB and its negative impact on employee health, to explore current and prospective anti-WPB laws, and to present employer and employee responsive strategies to combat this business challenge. This activity was performed by using introducing the topic, reviewing the existing literature and drawing conclusion which can help different organization to update their current position.

Keywords: Workplace, Bullying, 21st Century Issues.

I. Introduction
Bullying in organizations remain as an important consideration in the management of global organizations (Einarsen and Raknes, 1997), as it has harmful effects on productivity (Keelan, 2000), financial outcome (Field, 2003), and employee morale (Olafsson and Johannsdottir, 2004). Yet, bullying is often a misunderstood, misdiagnosed, and a mismanaged behavior in work environments. Many victims of bullying suffer from a form of social stress that is similar in nature to post-traumatic stress syndrome that can have a debilitating impact on the individual (Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996; Wilson, 1991). Thus, the bullied individual can have social, psychological, and psychosomatic dimensions, which can manifest itself in a negative impact on the individual's self-efficacy, and ability to perform his/her job (Einarsen, 1999; Einarsen and Raknes, 1997).

The question arises, exactly what is bullying. Bullying is repeated acts and practices that are directed at one or more workers, which are unwanted by the victim(s) which may be done deliberately or unconsciously, but clearly cause humiliation, offence, and distress, and may interfere with job performance and/ or cause unpleasant working environment (Einarsen, 1999).

As organizations evolve into global organizations, one could expect that there could be an increase in the frequency and severity of bullying behavior in the organization for a number of reasons (Berkowitz, 1993; Chen and St. Eastman, 1997). First, there can be an increase in the diversity of employees in the organization (Lin, 1999). It is anticipated that there can be an increase frequency (i.e., increasing number of foreign employees) as well as the degree of cultural novelty (i.e., cultural distance of employees from those of the home country) of foreign employees (Harvey and Novicevic, 2001). Diversity in an organization stimulates the concept of in-groups/ out-groups as well as stigmatizing groups that are not central to the general population (Giacalone and Greenberg, 1997). Stigmatization of foreign employees is generally focused on some recognizable differences in characteristics, such as race, weight, (dis)ability, gender, or nationality (Link and Phelan, 1999i).

According to The WPB Institute (U.S. WPB Survey) 37% of all U.S. workers have been targets of workplace bullies. Unfortunately, organizational leaders either do not recognize the negative effects of WPB, or they do not know how to productively intervene (Salin, 2003). As a result, bullies continue their reign of terror, and targets worry about the bully, lose trust in the company, or leave their workplace. WPB has a negative impact on a company's profitability; organizational leaders who proactively address this social issue will more effectively meet their organizational goals (Keashly & Jagatic, 2003). WPB has become a problem that is too costly to ignore (Needham, 2003). Although several studies (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003; Namie & Namie,2003) have vividly illustrated the pain, mental distress, physical illness, emotional harm, and career damage suffered by victims (targets) of bullying, academic study is fairly recent.

Then aim of this paper is to a) present key concepts on the topic of workplace bullying, b) assess the issue and effects of WPB & CB in different organization, and c) provide some understanding of the contemporary issues on the WPB. The

outcome of this paper will able to increase the awareness of what actions will take at workplace to overcome WPB. Then armed with a deeper awareness of WPB, organizational leaders will be better to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees.

2. Empirical Review

2.1 Definition of Bullying

Crawshaw (2009) identified different terms used in association with WPB such as abuse, aggression, counter-productive workplace behavior, harassment, hostile workplace behavior, mistreatment, mobbing, emotional abuse and psychological harassment.

Some definitions of WPB

- According to Salin(2003) WPB is a repeated and persistent negative acts including social isolation, silent treatment, rumors attacking victim's private life or attitudes, excessive criticism or monitoring, withholding information, is depriving responsibility, verbal aggression.
- WPB can be defined as repeated, unreasonable efforts to humiliate, offend, slander, exclude, show lack of support or threaten recipients (McCarthy et al., 2003).
- WPB is unreasonable and inappropriate workplace behavior includes bullying, which comprises behavior that intimidates, offends, degrades, insults or humiliates a worker, possibly in front of co-workers, clients or customers, and which includes physical or psychological behavior (Catanzariti, 2004).
- Bullying is repeated acts and practices that are directed at one or more workers, which are unwanted by the victim(s) which, may be done deliberately or unconsciously, but clearly cause humiliation, offence, distress, and may interfere with job performance and/ or cause unpleasant working environment (Einarsen, 1999).

2.2 Bullying Behaviors

Bullying behaviors can take many different forms, from the obvious to the subtler:

- Repeated hurtful remarks or attacks including your family, sex, sexuality, gender identity, race or culture, education or economic background,
- Sexual harassment, particularly stuff like unwelcome touching and sexually explicit comments and requests that make you uncomfortable;
- Excluding you or stopping you from working with people or taking part in activities that relate to your work;
- Playing mind games, ganging up on you, or other types of psychological harassment ;
- Intimidation (making you feel less important and undervalued);
- Giving you pointless tasks that have nothing to do with your job;
- Giving you impossible jobs that can't be done in the given time or with the resources provided ;
- Deliberately changing your work hours or schedule to make it difficult for you ;
- Deliberately holding back information you need for getting your work done properly
- Pushing, shoving, tripping, grabbing you in the workplace ;
- Attacking or threatening with equipment, knives, guns, clubs or any other type of object that can be turned into a weapon; and
- Initiation or hazing - where you are made to do humiliating or inappropriate things in order to be accepted as part of the team.

2.3 Factors of Bullying

The four prominent contextual factors that stimulate and/or elicit bullying behavior in a work environment:

- **Deficiencies in work design**: lack or improper supervision or the conditions in which individuals are required to work (i.e., physical environments conducive to allow bullying to occur such as isolated areas) or the actual process of completing the work (i.e., lack of supervision),
- **Deficiencies in leadership behavior:** inadequate supervision or lack of training of supervisors/ managers on how to address bullying behavior observed in the workplace and, what constitutes appropriate/inappropriate behavior with peers and subordinates, and/ or the potential consequences of their bullying behavior,
- **A socially exposed position of the victim**: weaknesses of a fellow employee or in management processes are known to the bully and are acted upon to take advantage of the social inequities in the work environment.
- **Low morale standard in the department**: the culture and climate within the organization has over time learned to accept substandard treatment and therefore, bullying is not only tolerated but expected (i.e., demoralization similar to prisoners of war) (Einaresen, 1999; Leymann, 1993; Morrill, 1992).

2.4 Types of Bullying

- **Individual bullying**: Much of the literature on bullying, particularly that produced by support groups, has focused on individualized bullying involving a single bully bullying and one or more targets.
- **Complex bullying**: While there are complexities in understanding the origin and processes involved in the development of bullying between two people, the situation becomes much more complex in an organizational setting where there are a number of players, a range of motivations, hidden agendas and old scores to be settled.
- **Good guy/bad guy bullying**: There are occasions when two or more individuals become involved in the bullying process. The good guy will befriend and appear concerned about the target while passing on information to the bad guy who uses the information to refine their bullying behavior.
- **Subordinate bullying**: Although the power of the role or position can protect the jobholder from bullying, around 12 per cent of bullying in the UK is by subordinates.
- **Passive aggressive bullying**: People use passive aggression as a way of undermining and manipulating others. Instead of being open in disagreeing, they will resist undertaking any tasks allocated to them and covertly sabotage or undermine the efforts of their manager and others.
- **Personality disordered bullying**: Personality disorders are long-standing disturbances in personality that commonly begin in late adolescence and continue throughout life.
- **Organizational bullying**: In recent years, it has been recognized that organizations can behave in a bullying manner (Liefooghe & MacKenzie Davey, 2001). Organizational bullying occurs in situations in which organizational practices and procedures are used to oppress, demeanor humiliate the workforce.
- **External pressure bullying**: Sometimes organizations are bullied by outside bodies including shareholders, customers and government agencies.
- **History and culture bullying**: Organizational cultures tend to develop over time and are made up of shared beliefs, assumptions and behaviors.
- **Senior team tactics bullying**: In some organizations, the chief executive may appoint a henchman or woman whose job it is to carry out harsh and uncaring actions, leaving the CEO with clean hands
- **Process bullying**: When oppressive organizational practices are employed frequently and consistently, employees feel victimized by them.

Major Findings on Workplace Bullying

- **Appelbaum et al. (2012):** To date, limited solutions and interventions on WPB have been identified. Study reports that transformational and ethical leadership practices have shown promise in abating offensive behaviors.
- **Bentley et al. (2012):** In line with prior estimates, about 10% of travel industry employees experienced bullying at work.
- Meloni & Austin (2011): Authors implemented a zero-tolerance bullying and harassment program in a hospital setting. After 3 years, employee satisfaction survey results had significantly improved.
- Wheeler et al. (2010): The study views 'bullying' from a personal resources perspective, i.e., bullies actively create resource gain cycles to their benefit. Organizational strategies to combat WPB include the elimination of motives that fuel bullying types of behavior.
- Bond et al. (2010): The authors view WPB as chronic stressors that elicit "organizational crisis" which create significant disruption to constructive business processes and work flow.
- Saam (2010): The author, based on a review of the literature, acknowledges a dearth of intervention strategies in organizations' response to workplace bullying.
- Rhodes et al. (2010): The authors examined the issue of organizational ethical responsibilities in responding to incidents of bullying, particularly maintaining and asserting constant vigilance.
- Martin & Lavan (2010): This study examined 45 litigated cases in the U.S. and found that 20% of bullying incidents involved physical violence. Surprisingly, only about one-third of the involved firms had an official policy banning workplace bullying.
- Pate & Beaumont (2010): Utilizing a case study, the authors found that although employees appreciate management practices that address workplace bullying, the level of trust of senior management remained rather low.
- Tuckey et al. (2009): In a sample of Australian police officers, the study examined the role of psycho-social environmental factors on workplace bullying. High job demands and low levels of social support exacerbated bullying.
- Salin (2008): Within the context of HRM, the authors studied measures used in 'harm' policies. Results indicated that such policies targeted the role of managers and immediate supervisors.
- Heames & Harvey (2006): The authors applied transactional coping theory to the study of WPB across 3 levels (individual, group, organization). Managerial policy needs to address all 3 levels in tandem in order to be effective.

- Djurkovic et al. (2004): These researchers examined the psychological impact that WPB has on the intention of 'target' employees to leave (job attrition) and their overall well-being. Findings show that bullying leads to both physical health complaints and negative effect.
- Rayner & Cooper (1997): During the 1990s, WPB was a largely ignored subject in organizational life. The authors concluded that bullying is the key factor identified in employment litigation connected to stress-at-work.

2.5 Bullying In the 21st Century (Cyber Bullying)

What is Cyber Bullying?

- Cyber bullying is largely viewed as inappropriate, unwanted social exchange behaviors initiated by a perpetrator via online or wireless communication technology and devices (Durkin & Patterson, 2011; Sheridan & Grant, 2007).
- Cyber bullying occurs when we use technology deliberately and repeatedly to "bully, harass, hassle and threaten" their peers (Goodno, 2011) this can be performed by using internet, e-mail or smart phones sending or retrieving data or voice messages (Li, 2005).
- According to Bauman (2013) cyber bullying is possible because of the wide availability of digital technology and the proliferation of technological innovations will therefore always mean that research and, by implication, legislation, will lag behind.
- Cyber bullying most commonly occurs through social networking sites for example Face book, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, text/picture/instant messaging, chat rooms, gaming sites and email.

2.6 Impacts of WPB

- **Psychological Effects of Bullying on the Individual:** It include lower job and life dissatisfaction, lower normative and affective commitment, and conflict between work and family, and psychological distress, prolonged stress. The psychological symptoms include feeling of disempowerment (feeling of helplessness), generalized stress, anxiety (Bordia and Tang 2009), depression and difficulty concentrating, emotional exhaustion (Tepper, 2000), low levels of self-esteem (Hobman et al., 2009), impaired judgment, anger, memory loss and inability to concentrate, irritability and anxiety (Appelbaum and Roy-Girard, 2007). Health professionals indicate medical concern regarding **work environments and employee health**. Dr. Ingram (2005), in his book entitled "How to Eat Right and Live Longer", discusses that a poor diet is a primary cause of heart disease, stroke, heart attack, hardening of the arteries, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, and arthritis as well as other numerous diseases.
- **The Physiological Effects of Bullying Behavior on the Individual:** The physical symptoms include: sleep disruption, stomach disorders, headaches, body ache, exhaustion and rapid heart rate. Other physiological effects known are changes in blood pressure, muscle tension, impaired judgment, irritability, anxiety, anger, an inability to concentrate and memory loss.
- **Effects of Bullying at the Organizational Level:** Some of these include: deviant behavior, aggression, revenge, (Heames et al., 2006), work-alienation, low unit cohesiveness, low leader-endorsements and low levels of performance leading to a loss to the organization. For instance, in the USA alone, a record amount of $200 billion is lost each due to employee deviance (Appelbaum and Roy-Girard, 2007).
- **Financial Impact of WPB:** Employers, as a result of WPB and related malfeasance, may suffer financially. First, employers may bear direct expenses in the defense of lawsuits as well as additional worker's compensation and health related complaints filed by employees. Second, indirect expenses may be expended in association with increased employee turnover, internal sabotage, and absenteeism because of conflict, a reduction in worker motivation, and health problems (Yamada, 2008).
- **Impact of Cyber Bullying:** At an individual level, it has been shown that cyber bullying leads to "low self-esteem, academic problems, delinquent behavior" and, last but certainly not least, "suicidal thoughts" and "suicide" in learners (Goodno, 2011). Adolescents who contemplated suicide were "twice as likely" to have contemplated such behavior, due to having experienced cyber bullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).

2.7 Remedies for WPB

2.7.1 Actions

- Obtain copies of harassing / bullying paper trails; hold onto copies of documents that contradict the bully's accusations against you (e.g., time sheets, audit reports, etc.).
- Create a zero tolerance anti-bullying policy. This policy should be part of the wider commitment to a safe and healthful working environment and should have the full support of top management.
- When witnessed or reported, the bullying behavior should be addressed immediately.
- Structure the work environment to incorporate a sense of autonomy/ decision-making processes.

- Hold awareness campaigns for everyone on what bullying is. Encourage reporting.
- Ensure management has an active part in the staff they supervise, rather than being far removed from them.
- Encourage open door policies.
- Investigate the extent and nature of the problem. Conduct employee attitude surveys.
- Improve management's ability and sensitivity towards dealing with and responding to conflicts.
- Establish an independent contact for employees (e.g., Human Resources contact).

2.7.2 Organizational Responses

- Business leadership and management set the cultural climate for actions fostering worker dignity, respect, and civility in the work environment.
- To formulate such a cultural climate, organizations must design and create internal policies that promote these desired goals.
- Places of employment should aim to have annual training on WPB, its impact, and the potential consequences for bullies and their targets through the human resources and/or legal departments.

2.7.3 Individual Responses

- According to WPB consultants, employees must be diligent in their responses to WPB. In total, targets of WPB are encouraged to be proactive in their own defense (White, 2014).

2.7.4 Strategies to Deal with Cyber Abuse/Bullying

- Company policy must confirm, in the strongest terms, that any form of online or cyber-bullying will be classified within the domain of workplace bullying. Thus, electronic offensive behavior will be designated under strict, 'zero' tolerance standards.
- Standards on workplace friendships and romantic relationships need to be explicit, with avenues for professional counseling when interpersonal conflicts arise;
- Counseling options for employees who may have difficulties with anger issues should be available;
- Company policy, including privacy issues, on the procedures in handling complaints by 'targets' need to be unambiguous;
- Managers need to remain vigilant on any signs of intimidation, threat, emotional outbursts, or suspicious messaging regarding potential abusers, and aware of signs and characteristics of 'targeted' employees;
- All complaints must be handled confidentially, and interventions such as mediation or counseling may need to be consulted with legal advice;
- Upper-management and top management need to be cognizant of the legal liabilities to the company while preserving the rights of all employees involved;
- Maintaining safety in a positive work environment should be a top priority; and

3. Conclusion

This paper tries to show concepts of WPB, its impacts and some remedies to overcome problems the work environment. Employee health is crucial towards high performance and increased productivity. Many factors contribute to or hinder an employee's well-being especially psychological well-being. This paper's analysis indicates that bullying at the work place has tremendous negative effect on employees' health.

The prevalence of WPB in the nations should be further investigated and policies framed to ensure the psychological and physiological well-being of the nation's knowledge workers and to secure the future of education in different countries. According to empirical research data assessed strongly suggests that stress, depression, feelings of injustice, and anger may be the result for not only the targets of WPB but also their co-workers and families. More far-reaching consequences are those in which the community is negatively affected by bullied employees who may engage in violent actions to deal with unfair workplace situations. Then all organization must focus on the concept of WPB to make conducive their business environment.

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