

Workplace Bullying Awareness and Prevention

Paulina Sihdewi Purnandari, Juan Kurniawan Widyanto, Doan Minh Phuong, Bernardo Pena Chokeke, Andrea Tick

Óbuda University

paulina.purnandari@stud.uni-obuda.hu, juankurniawanwidyanto@stud.uni-obuda.hu, minhphuong0697@stud.uni-obuda.hu, Bernardo@stud.uni-obuda.hu, Tick.Andrea@uni-obuda.hu

Abstract: Workplace bullying is a tremendously researched topic that happens within the female, non-white employees and specific groups, including the diverseness of corporate culture, escalate awareness, and bullying prevention in the workplace. Workplace bullying can have significant impacts as a source of family conflict, less productivity, trauma, powerless of the employee. This research aims to raise employee awareness and awakening every individual in the organization to prevent workplace bullying. This study used a literature review method by assembling the literature to review, arranging the literature that was assembled, and assessing the arranged literature. The way to raise bullying awareness includes workplace bullying training, recruiting, selection, performance management, establish regulations by conducting systematic risk assessment, establishing the policy on bullying, and apply compensation for the victim.

Keywords: awareness, bullying, corporate, culture, employee, prevention, workplace.

1 Introduction

Workplace bullying is an experience that no one wants to go through. However, this phenomenon is very likely to occur, and this action will not stop if every element in the organization keeps quiet. The investigation into workplace bullying has now crossed more than 25 years [1]. There is a plentiful amount of research about bullying in the workplace. However, limited literature is directed to the other aspects of the bullying phenomenon, especially its process, theoretical underpinnings, mediators, and workplace bullying moderators [1].

Workplace bullying broadly refers to the prevalence, causes, consequences, and the difference in gender and race status on workplace bullying [2]. Experiences of bullying at work happen across all gender, and racial disparities, even when an organization has a social support buffer from coworkers, women and non-white individuals benefit non-equally from this buffering effect [2]. The Institutes of Medicine recognizes that the workplace environment is an essential factor in nurses' ability to provide safe and effective care [3]. Dysfunctional work environments in which bullying occurs can significantly impact the ability of registered nurses to safely and effectively care for patients [3]. In Germany, more than a third of the trainee teachers have experienced bullying (37.4% have

experienced at least one harmful act weekly), with prevalence rates higher among men (35.5%) than women (16.8%) [4]. The types of bullying included work-related, personal bullying, and physically intimidating bullying [4]. This bullying correlated positively to leave, burnout, and cognitive stress symptoms and decreased job satisfaction, general health state, and satisfaction with life [4]. Workplace bullying brings consequences for both victims and witnesses, including mental health and cardiovascular disease [5]. A profound negative consequence of workplace bullying victimization, as they transpire for victims and organizations as wholes [6]. A workplace bullying research in 2007 indicated that 45% of bullying targets experienced emotional and physical residuum due to their bullying experiences [6]. Moreover, findings of workplace bullying surveys in 2014 indicated that for 61% of targets, losing their jobs was the only way to stop bullying. The assaults of workplace bullies tend to be hollow, inaccurate, baseless, and trivial and however, as ineloquently as they may appear, they convey persuasive, subtle, and often nonverbal messages about the power and privilege of a given bully assailant relative to the intended target [6].

Through previous research, workplace bullying occurs in many different jobs, in many countries, in vulnerable people, such as women and black people. In modern life, where social media is booming, cyberbullying and bullying become controversial and painful issues that affect many workers' mentality and physicality for many years. Consequently, this research aims to raise employee awareness and awakening every individual in the organization to prevent workplace bullying.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Disruptive behavior of bullying

Disruptive behaviors include manipulation and workplace bullying. Manipulation is an action that impedes another's ability to succeed in the workplace, whereas harassment and discrimination continue with the intent to make another feel powerless [7]. European researchers described workplace bullying as an escalating process of harassing, offending someone until the person ends up in an inferior position [1]. Workplace bullying is understood to comprise a set of negative and repeated interpersonal behaviors that incorporate verbal and nonverbal communications to establish the social dominance and power of the bully perpetrator relative to an intended target [6]. Workplace bullying is also described as both a cause and an effect of physical and emotional fatigue that affects the overall health and safety of the entire workplace [8]. A workplace bully exhibits an ongoing mistreatment pattern that can be demoralizing or disrespectful and goes beyond a demanding boss with lofty standards [7]. Workplace bullying between a supervisor and a subordinate is often referred to as vertical bullying, for example, pointing out mistakes in public and giving somebody insufficient information for a task so that they are humiliated [7]. Distinguishing features of

bullying included persistency, power disparities, hostility, and harmful acts systematically and intentionally [1].

2.2 Workplace Bullying Perceptions

Differences in perceptions and cultural values should be considered when examining the nature, precursors, and outcomes of bullying.

2.2.1 Fit perceptions as antecedents of workplace bullying

Person-Environment fit theory states that the fit between the person and environment attributes leads to behavioral outcomes [9]. As most of the bullying acts are work or job-driven, an employee's incompatibility with his/ her job may give rise to workplace bullying perceptions [9].

2.2.2 Person-job fit and workplace bullying relationship

Perception of person-job fit is primarily influenced by individuals' expectations from the work environment, which eventually transcend into their appraisals of the work situation. When the organization does not fulfill individuals' expectations about their jobs, it may result in negative workplace experiences like workplace bullying [9]. Interpersonal conflicts are some of the main precursors of workplace bullying [9].

2.2.3 Person-supervisor fit and workplace bullying relationship

Person-supervisor fit refers to the match between supervisor and subordinate characteristics and is based on supervisor-subordinate value congruence, personality similarity, lifestyle, and workstyle resemblance [9]. Such an employee may be more effective in portraying his/her work as per the supervisor's expectations and at a lower chance of being bullied [9].

2.2.4 Workplace bullying-perceptions of organizational politics relationship

Perceptions of organizational politics refer to an individual's view that illegitimate, self-serving activities are instigated by other corporate members motivated by protecting or enhancing their self-interests at others' expense in the organization that produces a host of adverse outcomes such as contextual performance, stress, creativity, and proactive behavior [5]. Workplace bullying may constitute a crucial causal attribution that leads to increased corporate politics perceptions [5]. Other harmful acts, such as lack of intergroup cooperation, role ambiguity, fairness of rewards, and lack of trust, all increase an individual's perception that others' behavior is politically motivated [5]. Workplace bullying is a satirical act that reduces perceptions of connectedness and competence in a team context leading to a way of focusing on whether a person's behavior [5]. Also, corporate culture and

ineffective management can sometimes lead to bullying behavior in the workplace [7].

2.3 Workplace Bullying Implication

2.3.1 Workplace bullying as an origin of work-family conflict

Work-family conflict usually comes from continuous stress, and it will get a critical result such as depression and exhaustion [5]. The victims do not have control of themselves on task or responsibility in the workplace and that might result in a lack of family functions as well [5].

2.3.2 Deteriorated innovation as an outcome of individual and team dysfunction

Cognitive Dissonance theory shows that for persons who have experienced bullying cognitive dissonance could be recognised because of increasing work-family conflict and due to some changes in their behavior [5].

2.3.3 Effect on Project Management

Abusive behavior or bullying either face-to-face and virtual, practiced by project managers, only gets less or little attention in project management literature [5]. People who tend to have rough or violent characters should be evaluated before engaging in project management [5]. As more project managers get licensed and enter the field, their technical skills are and will be addressed, however, many of the project managers have difficulties dealing with interpersonal relations [5].

3 Methodology

The literature review aims to evaluate various related research topics to answer the study's objectives by following these stages [10]:

- 1) Assembling the literature to review [11]
 - a) Searching for literature on the database with relevance based on the suitability of keywords [10]: 29 articles on workplace bullying in total were collected
 - b) Making the literature map [12]: The literature map consists of workplace bullying topics and publishers' maps.

Figure 1 reflects Workplace Bullying Topic Map that categorized into three sections:

- a) *Input*: workplace bullying phenomenon and types
- b) *Process*: process to prevent, manage, and examine bullying incidents
- c) *Output*: effects of bullying

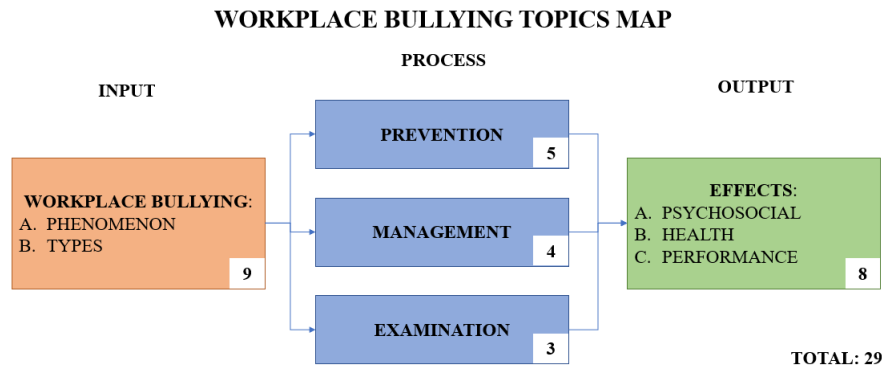


Figure 1
Categorization of the workplace bullying topics
Source: Developed by authors

Figure 2 shows that there is a limitation in the categorization based on publishers, since the majority of papers were published through Scindirect (83%), followed by:

- 1) Researchgate (7%):
 - a) Duru, P., Ocaktan, M. E., Çelen, Ü., & Örsal, Ö. (2018). The Effect of Workplace Bullying Perception on Psychological Symptoms: A Structural Equation Approach. *Safety and Health at Work*, 9, 210-215. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.shaw.2017.06.010
 - b) Rai, A., & Agarwal, U. A. (2016). Workplace Bullying: A Review and Future Research Directions. *South Asian Journal of Management*, 23(3), 28-56.
- 2) Wiley (3%):
 - a) Ritzman, M. E. (2016). A phenomenon we can't ignore: Performance improvement interventions to address workplace bullying. *Performance Improvement*, 55(1), 14-22. doi:https://doi.org/10.1002/pfi.21545
- 3) Springer (3%):
 - a) Peregrin, T. (2019). Managing Adult Bullying Behavior in the Professional Domain. *Journal of The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 1383-1387.
- 4) Academia (3%):
 - a) Lippel, K., & Cox, R. (2018). Regulation as intervention: how regulatory design can affect practices and behaviours in the workplace. In P. D'Cruz, C. Caponecchia, J. Escartín, D. Salin, & M. R. Tuckey, *Dignity*

and Inclusion at Work, Handbooks of Workplace Bullying, Emotional Abuse and Harassment (Vol. 3, pp. 1-17). Singapore: Springer.
doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5338-2_8-1

CATEGORIZATION BASED ON PUBLISHERS



Figure 2
Categorization based on publisher
Source: Developed by authors

- 1) Arranging the literature that was assembled [11]: Deciding whose abstract is relevant and picking the most recent issues [10]. As a result, 22 articles on workplace bullying seemed relevant.
 - a) Assessing the literature that was arranged [11]: Evaluating the literature by reading it comprehensively and summarizing every piece of literature [10].
 - b) Performing literature elimination and selecting literature that passes the evaluation phase based on the study objective [10]. Twelve (12) articles of workplace bullying were kept in the research.
 - c) Assembling the literature [10].
 - d) At the end of the selection and filtering process, the final literature collection gave twelve (12) relevant research papers from the 29 literature previously collected and selected from the scientific literature databases.

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4 Result and Discussion

4.1 Raising Bullying Awareness

Awareness and knowledge of bullying at all levels within an organization help reduce recognition time and prevent bullying situations from escalating [1]. As

line-level employees are likely to be the ones who witness workplace bullying, this group of employees must have an understanding of the phenomenon [1]. Further, organizations need to ensure that all organizational members understand what they should do if they experience or witness bullying [1]. Training interventions can be a valuable tool to educate HR professionals, managers, and employees alike [1].

4.1.1 Workplace Bullying Training

Educating employees through training is a significant performance improvement intervention to address workplace bullying, and it becomes a more pressing priority for HR professionals to pursue organizational efforts to eliminate that harmful behavior [13]. Workplace bullying is becoming a learned pattern of interpersonal interaction and behavior [14]. Training provides a means to deliver knowledge and facilitate learning among employees to reduce the prevalence of workplace bullying [13]. Meaningful learning about workplace bullying can produce a new conceptualization of the phenomenon, making different choices to reduce negative workplace interactions [13]. Training should present clear guidelines to employees, clarifying unacceptable behavior and communication in the workplace [13].

Also, intrapersonal and interpersonal emotional competence plays in the relationship between cyber-bullying victimization and mental health among Japanese adolescents by weakening the association and the latter by exacerbating it [14]. The skills to handle one's own emotions can be improved through interventions and even by daily behaviors such as helping others regulate their feelings [14].

4.1.2 Recruiting and Selection

Recruiting and selection are HR functions that can proactively address workplace bullying by preventing the introduction of individuals predisposed to perpetrate bullying in the organization [13]. It is suggested to screen potential employees for positive characteristics such as empathy, kindness, humility, and the ability to work in teams [13]. The recruitment and selection processes should focus on workplace bullying as a critical organizational issue to be addressed and prevented [13]. When employees are interviewed, HR professionals should take advantage of the opportunity to communicate expectations regarding personal behavior in the workplace, include sharing the expectations of consideration and respect with prospective employees [13]. These tools establish that the organizational culture will not support workplace bullying [13].

4.1.3 Performance Management

Institutional bullying occurs when bullying becomes accepted as a part of the organizational culture, and it usually happens after the organization tolerates,

ignores, or encourages workplace bullying behavior [13]. One of the most exceptive factors in mitigating bullying in the workplace is promoting the perception that the organization will not abide by bullying behavior. To encourage this result [13], HR professionals should ensure that employee behavior is aligned with ethical practices, suppose bullying behavior yields a positive reward for individuals or others who have observed this behavior [13]. In that case, these individuals learn to engage in bullying to advance in the organization [13]. Organizations can inadvertently offer positive responses to bullying behaviors through promotion and positive recognition, and it prevents managers from subjectively evaluating employee productivity and performance as a bullying tactic [13].

4.2 Workplace Bullying Prevention by regulation

General rules relating to civil and criminal liability, labor law, human rights, constitutional protections, occupational health and safety (OHS), and workers' compensation can all potentially provide tools for targets and workplaces to empower workplace actors to stop the behavior and ensure economic and psychological support for the targets [15]. Figure 3 shows the hierarchy of legal interventions, with the legislature's total silence regarding workplace bullying and psychosocial harassment (WBPH) at the bottom of the pyramid [15].

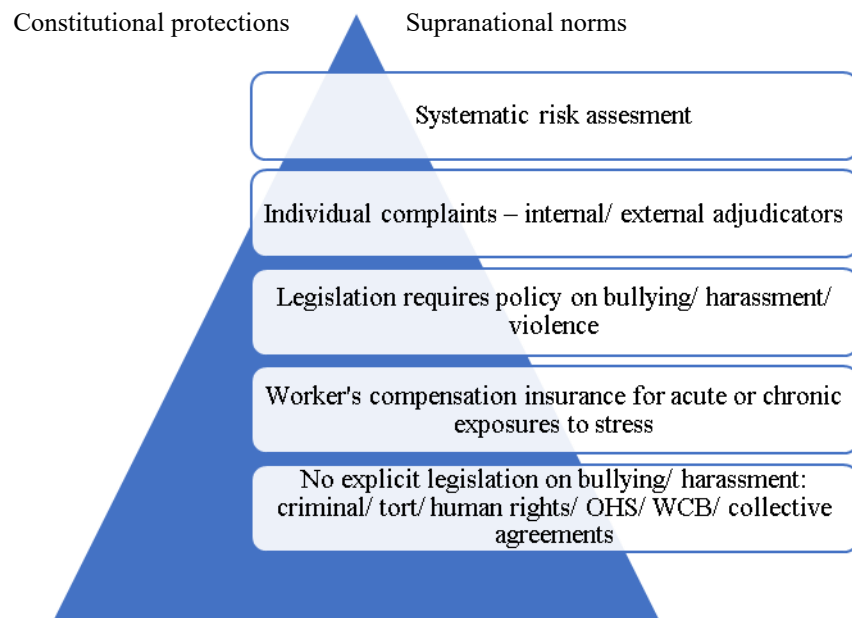


Figure 3
Typology of Workplace Bullying/ Harassment Regulatory Intervention [15]

It is essential to understand the significant differences between voluntary initiatives and binding legal regulations regarding legitimacy, enforceability, and durability [15]. Having provided an overview of various kinds of regulatory measures that affect workplace practices, examining detailed provisions in one authority will allow us to understand better the mechanisms by which legislative choices drive the actors' behavior [15].

When evaluating the pros and cons of embracing legislation on WBPH [15], the specific content of the proposed bill must scrutinize the content of the proposed legislation, considering all the contextual factors for employees forced to litigate when their rights are not respected [15]. Another issue likely to be raised in debates regarding the advisability of adoption of specific legislation on WBPH is the likelihood that more general legal regulation already in place will put a stop to WBPH in the workplace without naming it as such [15]. Until the root causes of WBPH at work are addressed, legal regulation aimed at changing workplace practices concerning WBPH on a micro-level will inevitably operate with a headwind created by these macro-level factors [15].

Legislation aimed at protecting employees from a broad range of psychosocial risk factors, including organizational factors, appears to be a fundamental but not sufficient measure to create meaningful protection from WBPH [15]. Psychosocial risks, including WBPH in the workplace, are wicked problems associated with inherent uncertainties created by the unclear cause-effect relationships, ambiguities, and conflicting interests [15]. Certain types of explicit legislation on WBPH are a prominent feature of a practical regulatory framework to prevent WBPH. A regulatory regime that only addresses WBPH and not psychosocial risk factors more broadly will be less applicable [15].

It creates no incentive for workplace parties and inspectorates to address the upstream determinants of WBPH [15]. A significant body of legal literature documents some of the effects of legislation on WBPH, in that analysis of cases made visible by the existence of legal remedies allows us to see both the nature of disputed behaviors in workplaces and the effectiveness or lack of efficacy of the standard rules and definitions in force [15].

4.3 Workplace Bullying Framework of Awareness and Prevention

A possible framework for managing workplace bullying awareness and prevention was developed in Figure 4. In the course of handling workplace bullying awareness and prevention must be considered and included simultaneously. Awareness raising should be included in the course of workplace bullying training, recruiting and selection as well as performance management. On the other hand, prevention should be considered when working out collective agreements, dealing with compensation insurance, internal-external adjustments

while company policy on bullying, harassment and violence needs to be prepared and the company needs to systematically assess the risk related to the issue.

The organization's success in eliminating workplace bullying will depend on every implementation of both factors. Further research should develop the relationship between these variables and make the weight between them. The development of the framework will be beneficial to organizations in operating their business process smoothly and managing their human resources fairly and with responsibility.

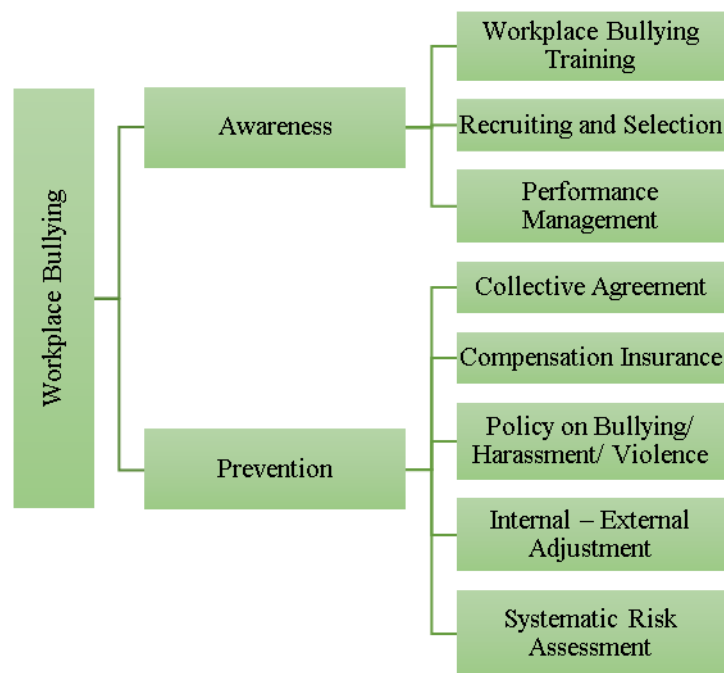


Figure 4
Conceptual Framework of Workplace Bullying Awareness and Prevention
Source: Developed by authors

Conclusion

Workplace bullying has been studied for more than 25 years and happens across all gender and racial diverseness. An intense negative consequence of workplace bullying, or victimization occurs as they become apparent for victims and organizations. The bullying targets experienced emotional and physical consequences. Some even resign in order to avoid the pain. The assaults of workplace bullies tend to be meaningless, inaccurate, unverified, and trivial; they convey persuasive, subtle, and often nonverbal messages about the power and privilege of a given bully assailant relative to the intended target.

Disruptive behaviors include manipulation and workplace bullying, whereas harassment and discrimination continue with the intent to make another feel powerless, with sets of malicious and repeated interpersonal behaviors that incorporate verbal and nonverbal communications to establish social dominance. When examining the nature, precursors, and outcomes of bullying, the following differences in perceptions should be considered: fit perceptions as antecedents of workplace bullying, person-job fit, person-supervisor fit, and organizational politics. Also, corporate culture and ineffective management can sometimes lead to bullying behavior in the workplace.

Workplace bullying can have significant impacts as a source of family conflict, contribute to the decrease of innovation, and contribute to the emergence of team dysfunction. Also, individuals who have a propensity for harmful workplace acts or abusive personalities should be intensely evaluated before assigning them project management roles or allowing them to engage in project management training.

This research used literature review methodology with the following steps: assembling the literature to review, arranging the literature that was assembled, and assessing the arranged literature. As shown in the findings, raising bullying awareness includes workplace bullying training, recruiting, selection, and performance management. Also, the way to prevent bullying by regulation includes: systematic risk assessment, internal/ external adjudicators, establish the policy on bullying, and apply compensation for the victim. Furthermore, it is necessary to examine the limits of bullying within specific cultures due to differences in values and ways of dealing with conflicts. In addition, it is necessary to research the effectiveness of the agency that will be responsible for bullying in the workplace. If the agency is associated with the Human Resource Department or other related agencies, regulations need to be set following the company culture.

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