

Relationship between Workplace Bullying, Resilience and Job Satisfaction among Employees in a University in Pakistan

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Received: October 2, 2018 Accepted: November 16, 2018 Online Published: December 1, 2018

doi: 10.23918/ijsses.v5i1p42

Abstract: The objective of the study was to ascertain the relationship between workplace bullying, resilience and feelings associated with job satisfaction. The study was conducted in a university setting amongst the university academic staff. The data was collected from administrative staff at a private university in Pakistan. Three questionnaires along with the demographic profile were used to measure the variables. The questionnaires used were: Work and Meaning Inventory (Steger, Dik & Duffy, 2012), Brief Resilience Scale (Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, & Bernard, 2008), and Negative Acts Questionnaire Revised (Einarsen, Hoel & Notelears 2009). Descriptive and Inferential Statistics were done. The results indicated a weak correlation between the variables under study i.e., workplace bullying, resilience and job satisfaction. The results are discussed in light of review of the literature. There are myriad implications of the study, for example to make people in workplace setting aware of workplace bullies and to make laws to control it so that the workers can enjoy a healthy and positive work environment.

Keywords: Workplace Bullying, Job Satisfaction, Resilience, Pakistan, Academic Staff

1. Introduction

Bullying is a common phenomenon across the globe. Moreover, it is accepted during the initial years of individual's career (Allanson, Lester & Notar, 2015). The word bullying dates back to 1530s and basically includes two people one who is a bully and other the bullied, thus a victim. It has been observed and reported that since birth individuals are expected to be the best or strive for perfection but this drive for being the best or being perfect results in a competition leading to bullying. By manifesting such behaviors superiority over others, by being dominant and making others feel inferior or submissive is achieved. Bullying at workplace is now a common phenomenon. It may seem that bullying is only done when the victim or the bullied individual is younger in terms of age and experience and perceives that he/she lacks the ability and skills to protect or stand against the bully. It is a well-established fact that the corporate world is on the rise which is leading to innumerable benefits. However, there are some negative consequences as well such as down-sizing, cut throat competition and bullying. Where there is a power struggle regardless of the organization there is bullying. Bullying is defined as a constant act of negative or hostile behavior with a colleague by another colleague or by some authority figure which may result in upsetting the victim (Yahaya et al., 2012). It has been reported that the bullied or the victims are negatively affected, for example abstentism from work, health issues, frustration, stress and

inability to manage deadlines (Beswick, Gore, & Palferman, 2006). In the 1980s a German psychiatrist named Leymann opened up Work Trauma clinic in Sweden which was first of its kind in the world. Leymann was concerned about how bullying affected an individual's health so it was he who came up with the term "mobbing" which according to him caused "psychological terrorization". Over the years people became more aware of this phenomenon and their rights as a result people started to name it. One such effort was made by Andrea Adams a British journalist in 1992. She initiated the term "Workplace Bullying" (Namie, 2003). Inappropriate body language or unjustified criticism may also be counted as workplace bullying (Yamada, 2003). One of the main factors leading to workplace bullying is the power the authority figures have and use it against those who are lower to them in position or rank (Lee, 2000). Leadership styles and roles are also involved as factors of bullying. Weak leadership style in which organizational planning of tasks is missing could also lead to workplace bullying (Olsen, Bjaalid, & Mikkelsen, 2017). Differences in gender at times lead to bullying. This may have its roots in gender discrimination. Men are more inclined to physical bullying whereas women are involved in psychological or emotional bullying. One reason for this is the stereotypes which support men to be aggressive and women to be gentle and soft spoken. It has also been observed that men are bullied about "sexuality" whereas women are bullied about "loose morals". Men tend to bully strangers more as compared to women who bully those in their close circle (Wimmer, 2009). Bullying can be categorized into work related bullying and person related bullying. Work related bullying is to give irrelevant tasks or giving short time for completion of tasks and also giving undue workload. Person related bullying is humiliating or spreading rumors or gossiping about someone (Einarsen & Hoel, 2001). With the advent of technology there is also now an increase in cyber bullying (Donegan, 2012). Cyber bullying is the use of internet to threaten or bully the other person either by sending messages, hacking, tempering the photos and documents, etc. To probe the causes of workplace bullying, different theories from social psychology explain this phenomenon better. According to frustration aggression theory workplace bullying takes place when there is a hindrance in the goals of the employees. This may result in "nervous breakdown". Moreover, nervous breakdown takes place when the worker, works under stress on regular basis. According to another theory bullying takes place when the bully displaces his/her feelings unto the workers or colleagues at work (Chirilă, 2015). According to stress-strain model if the employees encounter situations with high level of stress than the chances of their psychological well-being is threatened (Devonoish, 2013). Furthermore, according to person environment fit theory, stress is enhanced when an individual who perceives the lack of ability or lacks the ability to deal with difficult situations faces a conflict they tend to suffer more (Heugten, 2012). It has also been observed that many a times the bullied are not effected at personal or professional level and even if they are they restore their well-being personally and professionally sooner than later. Among many other reasons for the aforementioned is resilience. All humans experience negative and traumatic events but some are able to cope up with them and bounce back which is known as resilience. Resilience is basically defined as a person's ability to spring back after experiencing a trauma. In case of organizations it is defined as the ability of the employee to recover quickly, avoiding absenteeism and without showing any signs of stress (Chirilă, 2015). Researchers have divided, resilience into two categories, physiological and psychological. Psychological resilience is the ability to move positively from distressing experiences. Social support is one of the key aspects to maintain resilience (Jackson, Firtko, & Edenborough, 2007).

There is a strong correlation between resilience and locus of control. Locus of control means to label the results of our actions either internally or externally. According to researchers individuals think to have

greater “control” over situations is more relaxed, think logically and respond constructively (Cazan & Dumitrescu, 2015). Many studies have been conducted on the effects of bullying. According to some of the studies bullying can lead to heart diseases, stress and stress generated diseases such as diabetes and hypertension and depression and in cases suicidal attempts (Oladapo & Banks, 2013). According to a recent study workplace bullying is positively associated with anxiety. Anxiety is caused in employees where workplace bullying exists and their work is not respected or they are subjected to negative evaluation or criticism. This further leads to emotional drainage of the employee, job burnout and also lowering level of job satisfaction (Shi et al., 2018). Workplace bullying is a constant effort to create issues and unpleasant experiences for that one particular co-worker which might result in leaving him emotionally and psychologically drained (Arynne, 2009). Workplace bullying has many harmful effects on the one who is bullied. It results in psychological problems, stress and anxiety related issues, body aches, low self-esteem levels and other health issues (Bano & Malik, 2013). According to Tepper (2000) those who are constant sufferers of aggression they are highly dissatisfied of their jobs. Bullying may result in loss of self-esteem and suicidal ideation (Djukorvik, McCormack, & Casmir, 2004). Moreover, resulting in disturbed sleep, post-traumatic stress disorder and extreme anxiety which in turn affects work performance (Salin, 2003). Job satisfaction could be defined as how good a person feels about his job. At the same time if an individual associates negative feelings with a job which also has been found to have positive correlation with high job dissatisfied. In order to generate a positive environment at workplace it is necessary to keep the employees satisfied (Çelik, 2011). Job satisfaction is attributing positive feelings with the job but when bullying exists in a workplace than the chances of being satisfied with job become questionable. Over the years the researchers have categorized job satisfaction into “intrinsic satisfaction” and “extrinsic satisfaction” (Markovits et al., 2010). It is observed that bullying occurs mainly because of undue power on one in the relationship (Mete & Sökmen, 2016). According to job demand-resources (JD-R) model the working environment can be divided into job demands and job resources. A challenging environment and difficult interactions at workplace come under the category of job demands and social support; however, career opportunities for growth fall under the category of job resources. This model has been helpful in predicting high job demands which are linked with low job resources. Moreover, dual strategies increase job resources and decrease job demands (Olsen, Bjaalid, & Mikkelsen, 2017). The work environment plays a key role in keeping the employee satisfied (Mete & Sökmen, 2016). Attitudes are also shaped by environmental factors. Several studies show that bullying is caused due to an exhausting or emotionally suffocating environment. The chances of bullying go up if a “low quality” work environment exists (O’Moore & Lynch, 2007). Job satisfaction is also defined as an attitude which is triggered by environmental factors which account for religion, family, cultural elements etc. (Celik, 2011). Culture also plays a significant role in the environment of the workplace, attitudes and behaviors of the employees and their perception of the job satisfaction. Culture could be defined as morals, traditions and values exhibited by a large group of people which is inherited generation after generation. Culture is further categorized into individualistic and collectivistic. Individualism is when more attention is given to individual rather than focusing on the needs of the group whereas collectivism is related to the group one belongs to in terms of goals and success (Myers, 2010; Bashir, Jianqiao, Abrar, & Ghazanfar, 2012). Collectivistic culture thrives where a person affiliates himself to the group and places the wishes of the group before his or her own, set goals in the light of the goals of the group and attributes success to the group whereas in individualistic culture the self is given importance over group (Bashir, Jianqiao, Abrar, & Ghazanfar, 2012). Culture of a particular organization also helps in

predicting certain behaviors at work and help employees perform their work duties. Cultural issues related to female values, individual attention, focus on general well-being and other regulatory bodies lead to low rate of bullying (Olsen, Bjaalid & Mikkelsen, 2017).

1.1 Summary of Introduction

The literature summarizes that workplace bullying; resilience and job satisfaction have a very strong relation with each other. Several studies mentioned that workplace bullying takes place when an individual exhibits a negative behavior towards another making one a perpetrator and the other a victim. The literature review highlights that job satisfaction means assigning a level or rating to how much an individual feels positive or happy about the current job he or she is holding at a workplace. Furthermore, the chances of job satisfaction are diminished if an individual experiences bullying at his/her workplace. Resilience is the construct which makes the individual bounce back after encountering a negative situation. Negative correlation between workplace bullying and job satisfaction has been attributed to resilience manifested by the individual. It has also been reported that bullying leads to frustration and several health issues and in severe cases suicidal ideation as well. The above literature has been aided by several theories such as frustration-aggression theory, stressor strain model, person environment fit theory etc. Culture also has a role to play in the in the attitudes and behaviors of people which seeps into workplace settings too.

1.2 Aim

The aim of the study is to determine the relationship of bullying with resilience and job satisfaction of the employees at a private Pakistani university. There have been numerous researches done in the West using these variables. Moreover, it is to determine that do these studies conducted in West and now in Pakistan retrieve similar or different results and why.

1.3 Objective

- 1 To ascertain that do high levels of workplace bullying lead to low job satisfaction.
- 2 To determine the relationship between resilience and job satisfaction.

1.4 Hypotheses

H1: Low job satisfaction has high correlation with workplace bullying.

H2: Low resilience results in high chances of workplace bullying.

2. Method

This section consists of how this study was carried out. The research design, sample and the sampling strategy are delineated. Furthermore, the measures that were used and the procedure that was followed is mentioned.

2.1 Research Design

The research design which was used in this study was correlation study design. The purpose was to determine whether the variables are in relation with each other or not.

2.2 Sample

The sample consists of 100 participants from university's academic staff with a total sample population of 55 % men and 45% women.

2.3 Sampling Strategy

For collection of the data random sampling technique was used. According to this the university's academic staff is the target population for this research paper which was selected through random basis.

2.4 Setting

The sample is collected from a private university of a cosmopolitan city of Lahore, Pakistan.

2.5 Measures

To measure variables and for collection of the data three questionnaires were administered upon the sample population. The psychometrics for the instruments is as follows:

Demographic Profile: The demographic profile consisted of gender, age, number of siblings, birth order, education, family system etc.

NAQ-R: This questionnaire consists of 22 items. This questionnaire determines the frequency of bullying in past six month. The responses of the items are made on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 (never), 2 (yes, but not rarely), 3 (yes, now and then), 4 (yes, several time a week) to 5 (yes, almost daily) is seen. The reliability for this instrument is .93 (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelears 2009).

Brief Resilience Scale: This consists of six items and 5 point Likert scale is used to respond to the items, where 1(strongly disagree), 2(disagree), 3(neutral), 4(agree) and 5(strongly agree). BRS is scored by calculating the mean for those six items. The Cronbach alpha ranges from .80-.91 (Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, & Bernard, 2008).

Work and Meaning Inventory: This instrument consists of 10 items and for recording the respondents answers a 5 point Likhert scale is used where 1(absolutely untrue), 2(mostly untrue), 3(neither true nor untrue), 4(mostly true) and 5(absolutely true) (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012).

2.6 Procedure

The research proposal was first presented to the Board of Research studies for approval. After the approval it was sent to Institutional Board Review (IBR) for further approval. After the proposal was approved by IBR a request was made to HR department of the University for the permission to conduct research on university's academic staff. The email to the HR consisted of an informed consent which clearly mentioned that if at any point the participants wish to leave the study they may do so as it is on

voluntary basis. It was also mentioned that their confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained. The respondents were approached directly once the permission was given. They were briefed about the study and that their confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained. The respondents were also told they may discontinue at any moment if they would not feel comfortable in responding to the items in questionnaires. They were given the informed consent and then the questionnaires to fill. After the participants had filled the questionnaires and returned them, they were checked for missing items. In cases there were missing items the participants were asked to fill if they wished to but if not they were thanked for their participation and the questionnaires with missing items were not included in the study. The participants were thanked for their participation at the end. The data was fed into SPSS to retrieve the results for further analysis by using Pearson correlation.

3. Results

The results were divided into the following sections:

- Demographical Information of the Participants
- Characteristics of the Sample
- Correlation among items of the tools

Table 1: Mean and SD of the Age and Number of siblings (N=100)

| Variable | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|
| Age | 30.85 | 6.99 |
| No. of siblings | 3.22 | 1.61 |
| Birth Order | 2.26 | 1.18 |

The table above depicted the Mean and Standard deviation of the age, number of siblings and birth order of the academic staff.

Table 2: The table below depicts the frequency and the percentages of the key categorical demographics

| Variable | Male <i>f</i> (%) | Female <i>f</i> (%) | Total 100 |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Family System | 55 | 45 | |
| Nuclear | 29 | 33 | 62 |
| Joint | 26 | 12 | 38 |
| Upbringing | 55 | 45 | |
| Rural | 10 | 3 | 13 |
| Urban | 45 | 42 | 87 |
| Ethnicity | 55 | 45 | |
| Punjabi | 50 | 35 | 85 |
| Pashtun | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Siraiki | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Kashmiri | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Sindhi | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Others | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| Qualification | 55 | 45 | |
| Bachelors | 29 | 19 | 48 |
| Masters | 26 | 26 | 52 |
| Educational Institute | 55 | 45 | |
| Private | 47 | 34 | 81 |
| Government | 8 | 11 | 19 |
| Family Income | 44 | 45 | |
| Below Rs 40,000 | 11 | 8 | 19 |
| Rs 40,000-60,000 | 18 | 9 | 27 |
| Rs 60,000-80,000 | 6 | 6 | 12 |
| Above Rs 80,000 | 20 | 22 | 42 |

The table above clearly depicts the demographics used in the study. The table shows a distribution of these demographics between male and female.

Table 3: The table below depicts correlation between the items of the tool

| Variables | NAQ- R | WAMI | BRS |
|------------|--------|--------|-------|
| NAQ-R | | -.214* | -.145 |
| WAMI | | | .139 |
| BRS | | | |
| <i>M</i> | 37.3 | 39.5 | 20.2 |
| <i>S.D</i> | 14.5 | 5.5 | 3.74 |

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)

4. Summary of the Results

The sample size consisted of 100 participants (55% men and 45% women). The mean age for the participants was 30 whereas for siblings the mean showed 3 and for birth order the mean came out to be 2. The frequency and percentages of key categorical demographics show that for family system 62% of the participants live in a nuclear family system whereas 38% live in a joint family system. In case of upbringing 13% of the participants responded to a having a brought up in rural setting whereas the rest 87% chose urban setting as place of upbringing. 85% of the sample population chose Punjabi as their ethnicity. For educational qualification 48% responded to have bachelors as their qualification where as 52% responded to have masters as their qualification. In case of the previous educational institute attended 81% of the participants responded to have last studied from private institute whereas 19% responded to have studied from government institute. In section of family income 42% responded to have an income above Rs 80,000 whereas 19% responded to below Rs 40,000 as their income. In order to determine the relationship between the three variable workplace bullying, resilience and job satisfaction correlation was done. The correlation results indicated a weak correlation between the three variables.

5. Discussion

The primary focus of the present study is to ascertain for relationship between workplace bullying, resilience and job satisfaction among a private university employees. As mentioned in the literature review bullying is manifested in many forms and one of them is workplace bullying. Workplace bullying is the variable under study. It is described as inappropriate body language or unjustified criticism (Yamada, 2003). Moreover, work related bullying is to give irrelevant tasks or giving short time for the completion of tasks and also giving undue workload. Workplace bullying has many harmful effects on the bullied. It results in psychological problems, stress and anxiety issues, body aches, low self-esteem levels and other health issues (Aryne, 2009; Bano & Malik, 2013,). Another variable in the present study is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is attributing positive feelings for the current job but when bullying exists in a workplace then the chances of being satisfied from the job gets diminished. According to Tepper (2000) those who are constant sufferers of aggression are highly dissatisfied of their job. The work environment plays a key role in keeping the employees satisfied (Mete & Sökmen, 2016). The present study consists of another variable which is resilience. Resilience is basically defined as one's ability to spring back after experiencing a trauma. In case of organizations it is defined as the ability of the employee to recover quickly, avoiding absenteeism and without showing any signs of stress (Chirilă, 2015). Social support is one of the key aspects to maintain resilience (Jackson, Firtko, & Edenborough, 2007). The study was conducted on 100 participants (55% men and 45% women) which were employees at a private university in Pakistan. In the light of the literature review two hypotheses were formed for this study. The first hypothesis is that "low job satisfaction links to higher chances of workplace bullying". Where there is poor attribution towards job satisfaction than there are chances that workplace bullying might be present. The literature review reveals that those who suffer from bullying at workplace are highly dissatisfied from their job (Tepper, 2000). Another hypothesis for the present study is "low resilience results in high chances of workplace bullying". Through literature it is demonstrated those who lack the trait of being resilient chances are that they are victims more of workplace bullying.

To test these hypotheses NAQ-R (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelears 2009) was used to measure workplace bullying, WAMI (Steger, Dik & Duffy, 2012) was used to measure job satisfaction and BRS (Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, & Bernard, 2008) was used to measure resilience along with the demographic profile. The results were retrieved using Pearson correlation as part of the analysis. Surprisingly the results contradicted the literature (Chirilă, 2015; Devonoish, 2013; Oladapo & Banks, 2013; Arynne, 2009; Djukorvik, McCormack, & Casmir, 2004). The results showed a weak correlation between the variables workplace bullying, resilience and job satisfaction. The reason for inconsistency between the results and review of the literature could be explained in the light of culture. Culture is commonly defined as “collective programming of mind that distinguishes the member of group or category of people from another.” It is culture which actually makes us perceive, express and experience bullying in a different way as compared to other parts of the world (Bashir, Jianqiao, Abrar, & Ghazanfar, 2012). It primarily depends upon what kind of culture people belong to. Most of the studies in the review of the literature are from the western world therefore it is plausible to think on the lines that culture has a role to play. One of the reasons for the results to not be aligned with literature through cultural perspective could be due to the tools which are not specific for our culture and population.

It is observed that West exhibits and promotes individualistic culture whereas East is more into collectivistic culture. Though it could be assumed in view of the results it may not necessary be the case that bullying doesn't exist. It may exist but at the same time may not have any relationship with the other two variables, resilience and job satisfaction. The adopted tools are formed in West and applied on their population which exhibit a high correlation. Since Pakistan is a country which thrives on collectivistic culture it is quite possible that in their families bullying was an everyday phenomenon. Collectivistic culture is where the society plays an important role and the individual self doesn't matter as every individual associates him/herself with a certain group from birth till entire lifetime and shows submissive attitude towards the group in all characteristic and traits. The focus in collectivistic culture is to fulfill group goals. On the contrary in individualistic culture the individual shows no belonging or biasness for any group and he/she is free to do what they feel like doing. Individualistic culture focuses on self and fulfillment of goals related to self. So in collectivistic culture the decision of the group weighs more importance than the individual whereas there is no such pressure of groups in individualistic culture (Bashir, Jianqiao, Abrar, & Ghazanfar, 2012). In Pakistan children are told by their parents about what to study and what to wear thus denying them their uniqueness and at the same time imposing them with what the group feels instead of what they feel. It is seen primarily with girls that they are always taught to be gentle and submissive and in many families their will for study; marriage etc is not taken into account. These gender stereotypes play a huge role in bullying. Men tend to bully strangers more as compared to women who bully those in their circle (Wimmer, 2009). Similarly as the individuals are part of a collectivistic culture majorly people belong to joint family system and it seen that it is made compulsory on them to follow whatever their elders expect and they have no right to say no to the elders. It won't be wrong to point that as a collectivistic culture people look up to others for decision making process. Even if bullying at workplace is taking place people are not strong enough to word it out and also fear about losing the job. As the results are not constant to the expectation of the researcher as previous researches have reported strong correlation it could also be seen in the light of environment. The work environment plays a key role in keeping the employee satisfied (Mete & Sökmen, 2016). Attitudes are also shaped by environmental factors. Job satisfaction is also defined as in attitude which is triggered by environmental factors which account for religion, family, cultural elements etc. (Celik,

2011). It could be seen that may be the environment at the local university was such that majorly all the employees were satisfied and were not a victim of workplace bullying. To set any strategies at workplace it is necessary to first ascertain the culture of that organization. It is therefore the culture of that particular organization which helps in creating a positive atmosphere resulting in boosting the employee's performance and dedication towards the organization (Bashir, Jianqiao, Abrar, & Ghazanfar, 2012). Several studies link a negative job environment as a potential factor for bullying (O'Moore & Lynch, 2007). This means that at the local university the employees may have a positive work environment which made them score low on the workplace bullying scale. These are just some plausible explanations for the study and for them to be counted accurate more research needs to be done.

6. Implications/Recommendations

The study has primarily helped in highlighting the issue of bullying if it exists amongst academic staff of a private university. This study has been also a turning point against the literature that it is not necessary that the variables workplace bullying, resilience and job satisfaction show a strong correlation. It could be implied that as the tools were not culturally valid a weak correlation has been reported.

The research has certain limiting factors. One of the factors is a small sample size. With the sample population of 100 participants the results cannot be generalized. Secondly the research took place only at one educational institute and because of that not much diversity was covered from the respondents. For the research to be valid and strong it is necessary that it takes place in various other settings such as hospitals, banks, schools etc. The present study is open for further research.

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