

CAUSATIONS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING IN SMALL BUSINESS SECTOR IN KATHMANDU VALLEY, NEPAL

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Abstract

Workplace bullying is a repeated aggressive behavior of someone with the intention to hurt another person physically or psychologically in the workplace. It is quite complex in nature. It has become a major problem in the workplace. The present study analyzes the causations of bullying in small business sector in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. Workplace bullying is dependent variable and causation factors such as work environment, personal characteristics, and targets of other people are independent variables of the study.

Objective: *The objective of this study was to analyze the causations of workplace bullying in small business sector in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. Specially, it analyzed the relationships between dependent variable and independent variables.*

Methodology: *Quantitative research design was used to conduct the research. The questionnaire was distributed to the randomly selected as the sample respondents. The correlation analysis was carried out for the research work. The SPSS Version 25 for Window was used to analyze the data.*

Findings: *There is a positively significant relationship between workplace bullying and work environment ($r = .852, n = 75, p < 01$), personal characteristics ($r = .786, n = 75, p < 01$) at 1 per cent level of significance, and targets of other people ($r = .628, n = 75, p < 01$) at 1 per cent level of significance.*

Key words: Workplace bullying, productivity, work concentration, small business, targets of other people.

Introduction

Workplace bullying is a repeated aggressive behavior of someone with the intention to hurt another person physically or psychologically in the workplace. It is interpersonal hostility that is deliberate, repeated, and sufficiently severe as to harm the targeted person's health or economic status (Namie, 2003). It includes those physical and emotional behaviors that are aggressive, often intentional, controlling, and hurtful (Carter & Psych (n. d.)). These behaviors include physical, or verbal, or relational, or cyber. The victims may be subject to depression and anxiety which can have lasting effects on the individual as well as their family members. Physically abuse, threatening, spreading malicious rumors, isolating someone socially, making jokes, spying, unnecessary pressure, criticizing a person persistently, injustice punishment, blocking in promotion, backbiting, etc. are common examples of workplace bullying. Workplace bullying has become a major hindrance in the workplace, often diminishing their job satisfaction and productivity. It is too costly to ignore (Needham, 2003). Workplace bullying is quite complex in nature. Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003; Namie, and Namie, (2003) has identified distress, mental issues, physical illness, emotional harm, and career damage as the causes of workplace bullying.

Workplace bullying has been a subject matter of research in the world. The Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Prevention Act, 2015 came into effect on February 20, 2015 in Nepal with the objective to protect the right of every individual to work in a safe and quality environment. However, it is important to understand that workplace bullying is not only limited to sexual harassment but can range from anything like intimidation, ridicule, assault, making offensive jokes or showing offensive pictures. Therefore, the issue related to workplace bullying is still not addressed on a broad spectrum even it is an important organizational and social concern (Oladapo, 2013). The present study examines the relationships of causation such as work environment, personal characteristics, and targets of other people with workplace bullying. It is the

responsibility of the management to provide a safe and quality work environment to its employees to respect the workers and to increase the quality performance. It is the respect of entire mankind.

The present study covers the major sectors of small business such as barber's shop, car wash business, groceries stores, dry cleaning business, consignment shop, restaurant, and bar, electronic repair shops, tourist guide, shopping mall, agriculture business, printing and press, publication, education consultancy, etc. This article attempts to identify the cusses related to workplace bullying in small business sector in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal.

Statement of the Problem

The productivity of organization largely depends on its quality environment. However, the bullying culture in the workplace significantly reduces the productivity and increases stress levels of the employees and ultimately it develops their turnover intention. The study aims to analyze the effects of workplace bullying in small business sector in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. The study basically addresses the following issues: (i) is there relationship between workplace bullying and work environment?, (ii) is there relationship between workplace bullying and personal characteristics?, and (iii) is there relationship between workplace bullying and targets of other people?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to analyze the causation s of bullying in small business sector in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal.

Hypothesis

The hypotheses of the study are listed below:

H₁: There is relationship between workplace bulling and work environment.

H₂: There is relationship between workplace bullying and personal characteristics.

H₃: There is relationship between workplace bullying and targets of other people.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework outlines the possible courses of action. It provides the foundation in which the study is conducted. Workplace bullying hurt a person physically and psychologically in the workplace. Stress, anxiety, panic attacks, higher blood pressure, depression, loss of self-esteem, hostile work environment, absenteeism, etc. are the common impacts of the workplace bullying. Management should identify the major causations of workplace bullying to make free from the workplace bullying. This paper attempts to analyze relationships between dependent and independent research variables. Workplace bullying is the dependent variable and factors related to causation of bullying such as workplace environment, personal characteristics, and targets of other people are the independent variables.

Workplace bullying: Workplace bullying is dependent variable of the study. It is physical or psychological abuse by another person or group of people at work. It can happen in any type of workplace such as barber shops, restaurants and bar, bank and finance companies, government offices, and so on.

Workplace environment: Workplace environment is an independent variable. It is also known as corporate or workplace culture. Work related factors such as job design, job insecurity, workload, role ambiguity, work related stressors, and hierarchies give birth to the workplace bullying. There should be good organizational culture or environment such as respect to others, mutual co-operation, helpful behavior, honesty, trustworthy behavior, etc. to be free from workplace bullying.

Personal characteristics: Personal characteristic is also an independent variable of the research. Person related factors such as anxiety, anger, sadness, personal or professional insecurities, obsessive tendencies, extreme personality, etc. give birth to the workplace bullying. Characteristics of the persons may be different as their different appearances. Thus, it is very difficult to generalize the characteristics of individuals.

Targets of other people: It is also an independent research variable of the study. Generally, skilled, intelligent, determined, creative, and innovative workers are targeted by other people. Such people or workers are bullied by other people such as competitors, co-workers, people having inferiority complex, and sometime even your boss. Additionally, you may be bullied if you are caring, social, supportive, and co-operative.

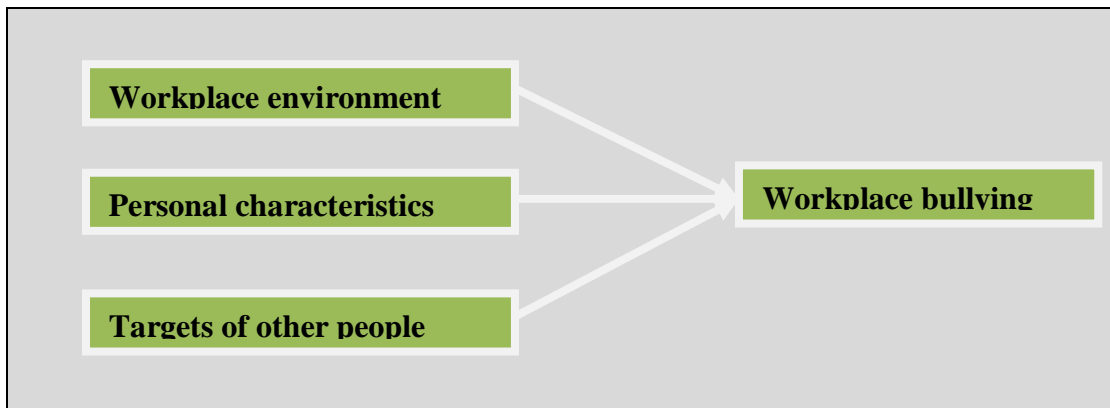


Figure 1: The proposed model

Literature Review

The job is important to survive oneself and to make the world better. Nobody wants to quit job without sufficient and genuine reason(s). Satisfied employees do not want to leave the organization and if they are supported by their organization, then they will be less intended to quit their job (Berthelsen, Skogstad, Lau, & Einarsen, 2011). Quality environment in an organization is the main factor to retain a long period of time. Bullying is intentionally causing pain to co-workers or other employees. The literal meaning of bullying includes, when a person is exposed to the negative actions repeatedly over time by one or more oppressors (Judge *et al.*, 2001, Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, Lee, 2000, Lee & Brotheridge, 2006). Bullying is exercised through both indirect and direct actions: indirect acts of aggression include social segregation, gossiping, and rumors while direct actions are public humiliation, verbal abuse, and accusations. Bullying victims start to feel inferior and indulge in fear and depression (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2014). Many employees quit their jobs due to workplace bullying from their co-workers and supervisors (Frenking, 2016). Many countries have strict rules against bullying culture; however, bullying exists in both developing as well as developed countries.

Workplace bullying is emotional abuse, or harassment, or psychological terror, or victimization, both verbal and nonverbal actions can be forms of bullying and some degree of bullying occurs in every organization (Davenport, Schwartz, & Elliott (2005). However, many organizations control the bullying actions, which make good working environment to the employees. If bullying culture is not controlled, numerous issues arise inside the workplace. Workplace bullying can be done through hostile and negative behavior, email, messages, physical touching, gossip, and even with different kinds of social media. It badly disturbs the mental wellbeing of the employees, which make them lose focus at work. Djurkovic, McCormack, and Casimir (2004) have revealed there is a positive relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention or intention to leave organization. Likewise, Sims and Sun (2012) have found negative relationship between workplace bullying, satisfaction of workers, and their commitment towards their job and organization. Workplace bullying has found to be one of the primary sources of anxiety and depression, job satisfaction, turnover, and absenteeism (Hauge *et al.*, 2010).

Research Methodology

The present study has followed a systematic way to solve a problem. It consists of research design, population and sampling, and collection and analysis of data. It also deals about reliability of questionnaire (Khadka, 2017).

Research Design

The present study is based on quantitative research design. It is the numerical representation for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect. It adopts scientific approach and focuses on measurement and proof (Khadka, 2018). The findings of this research were based upon the survey. The data had been collected by formulating a set of structured questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents.

Population and Sampling

Population is that universe from which samples are taken for the empirical study. It is any organization, or group, or collection of elements that are the focus of research interest. This study has covered small business sector in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. The researcher has taken only 75 employees from ten small businesses as sample by using the simple random sampling technique, in which every employee of the total population chance of being chosen, to analyze the causations of workplace bullying in small business sector. Questionnaires were distributed to 125 respondents among them only 75 questionnaires were returned. The primary reason to choose the small business sector of the country is because workplace bullying can often happen in this sector due to owners and managers dominance and direct work relationship. Besides, these respondents are more knowledgeable and aware regarding bullying behavior.

Reliability of questionnaire

Reliability of questionnaire is essential to be valid conclusions. Cronbach's alphas were calculated to test the reliability of questionnaire. Cronbach Alpha procedure is an estimate of reliability based on the average correlation between items within each factor where 0.65 is sufficient (Nunnally, 1978). The score of over 0.8 is considered to be good (Sekaran, 1992). The result of the analysis indicated that no values of Cronbach's alphas were less than 0.80. Thus, data collection instruments were considered reliable in the research.

Results and Discussion

Characteristics of Sample

The demographic analysis provides the information of the respondents such as age group, gender, marital status, academic qualification, designation, and job experience. The information is gained from the selected respondents of small business sector in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal.

Of the respondents to this survey, 40 percent were female and 60 were male. The frequency distribution of respondents by age group 26-30 (25.30%) has the highest frequency level and age group above 51 years of age (4%) has the lowest frequency level in the present study. Likewise, the frequency distribution of respondents by marital status, married has the highest frequency (i. e. 68 %) than that of unmarried one and the by academic qualification Plus 2 or Grade XII (41%) has the highest frequency level and Master Level (11%) has second lowest frequency level. There were no single respondent of having Ph.D. Similarly, the frequency distribution by designation Assistant Level has the highest frequency level (37.30%) and In-charge Level (5.30%) has the lowest frequency level in the present study and the frequency distribution by job experience year group 6-10 (30.70%) has the highest frequency and year group below 5 years (5.30%) has the lowest frequency level.

Correlation Analysis

This topic analyzes and evaluates relationships between dependent and independent variables with help of correlation. Especially, following research hypothesizes were tested in this topic: (i) H₁: There is relationship between workplace bullying and work environment, (ii) H₂: There is relationship between workplace bullying and personal characteristics and (iii) H₃: There is relationship between workplace bullying and targets of other people.

Table 1
Correlation Analysis between Dependent and Independent Variables

		Correlations			
		Workplace bullying	Workplace environment	Personal characteristics	Targets of other people
Workplace bullying	Pearson Correlation	1	.852**	.786**	.628**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	75	75	75	75
Workplace environment	Pearson Correlation	.852**	1	.786**	.673**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	75	75	75	75
Personal characteristics	Pearson Correlation	.786**	.786**	1	.777**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	75	75	75	75
Targets of other people	Pearson Correlation	.628**	.673**	.777**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	75	75	75	75

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Number of respondents (N) = 75

Table 1 shows that correlation between workplace bullying and each of three factors such as work environment, personal characteristics, and target of other people. These correlations were computed and analyzed by using Pearson Product Moment method. It consists of t tests for each pair of variables based at 1 per cent level of significance with 75 sample size. The p-values are also displayed along with their respective t-tests. As per Table 1, independent variables have been found positively and significantly correlated with a dependent variable. It indicates that work environment, personal characteristics, and targets of other people are the causes of workplace bullying. The strength of correlation is the highest between workplace bullying and work environment. It is followed by personal characteristics and targets of other people.

Hypothesis 1: There is relationship between workplace bullying and work environment.

The relationship between workplace environment and workplace bullying was computed by using the Pearson Product Moment method. The results show there is a positive relationship between workplace environment and workplace bullying ($r = .852$, $n = 75$, $p < 01$). The relationship between two variables is significant at 1 per cent level of significance. The strength of correlation between them is higher than moderate value. Hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is relationship between workplace bullying and personal characteristics.

The results indicate there is a positive relationship between personal characteristics and workplace bullying ($r = .786$, $n = 75$, $p < 01$). The relationship between two variables is significant at 1 per cent level of significance. The strength of correlation between them is higher than moderate value. Hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Hypothesis 3: There is relationship between workplace bullying and targets of other people.

The relationship of targets of other people was investigated against workplace bullying. The results show there is a positive relationship between targets of other people and workplace bullying ($r = .628$, $n = 75$, $p < 01$). The relationship between two variables is significant at 1 per cent level of significance. The strength of correlation between them is higher than moderate value. Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Conclusions

The objective of the study was to analyze the causation of bullying in small business sector in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. The study was based on quantitative research design. Data were collected through the random sampling technique from 75 respondents with the help of a structured questionnaire. The SPSS Version 25 for Window was used to analyze the data using descriptive statistics in the present study.

- There is a positively significant relationship between workplace bullying and work environment ($r = .852$, $n = 75$, $p < .01$) at 1 per cent level of significance.
- There is a positively significant relationship between workplace bullying and personal characteristics ($r = .786$, $n = 75$, $p < .01$) at 1 per cent level of significance.
- There is a positively significant relationship between workplace bullying and targets of other people ($r = .628$, $n = 75$, $p < .01$) at 1 per cent level of significance.

There is a positively significant relationship between dependent and independent variables. Thus, work environment, personal characteristics, and targets of other people are the major causes of workplace bullying respectively in the small business sector in Nepal. Bullying is a very serious problem. It may harm all the affairs of business. Management should take proper step to make bullying free workplace in the organization.

Further Investigation

This study had given insights into the causation of bullying in small business sector in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. Thus, the following suggestions would be worthy for future researchers:

Firstly, this study has covered only bullying in small business sector in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. It does not cover other sectors of the economy. Thus, further research may be a comparative one such as public sector with private sector.

Secondly, the present study has taken only four variables – workplace bullying, work environment, personal characteristics, and targets of other people. Therefore, further studies can be carried out including other factors such as jealous, empathy, superiority complex, and so on.

Finally, the present study has employed quantitative research design. Therefore, further studies can be conducted on qualitative or mixed research design.

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