

Conference Paper

A Conceptual Framework for Assessment of Moderating Role of Organizational Culture in the Relationship Between Workplace Bullying and Organizational Performance

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Abstract.

Workplace bullying has a significant impact on employee and organizational performance. Organizational culture also plays a crucial role in influencing employee performance and can help mitigate workplace bullying. This study aims to propose a conceptual framework to assess the relationship between workplace bullying and organizational performance, taking into account the moderating role of organizational culture.

Data for this study will be collected using stratified random sampling from academic staff at 20 public sector universities in Malaysia. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique through SmartPLS will be employed to test the hypotheses.

The study will analyze the significance of the interrelation between workplace bullying, organizational performance, and organizational culture using SEM with SmartPLS. The moderating role of organizational culture in the relationship between workplace bullying and organizational performance will also be examined.

It is worth noting that the framework in this paper does not include specific dimensions of organizational culture. To enhance the scope of future research, additional dimensions should be added. Furthermore, this study is limited to exploring the moderating role of organizational culture; including the mediating role could further enrich the research.

The findings of this research will be valuable for university and organizational management in creating a bullying-free work environment. Eliminating workplace bullying can lead to improved organizational performance and foster a progressive culture within the organization.

By investigating the moderating role of organizational culture, this paper offers a comprehensive approach to understanding the impact of workplace bullying on organizational performance. The unique focus on organizational culture as a moderating factor makes this study a valuable addition to the existing body of knowledge in this area.

Keywords: workplace bullying, organizational performance, organizational culture, organizational behavior, conceptual framework

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Published 7 December 2023

Publishing services provided by Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ICESG Conference Committee.

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1. Introduction

Bullying behaviors refers to communications and interactions in social gatherings, but these behaviors take a very dangerous shape when communications are prolonged and frequent with aggressive and immoral attitudes (Leymann 1996, Anjum, Muazzam et al. 2019). According to Shelton (2011), Workplace bullying (WPB) demonstrates the state where the senior employees at any stage are involved in bullying of their juniors or workers. The behavior of bullies is, sometimes, very extensive including wrong and illegal attention, dirty remarks and even bullies often involve in physical violence. The workplace aggressive behaviors are envisioned as hostile, and are considered as emotional attacks on the target (Yamada 2000). WPB includes negative influence on someone's work or to create the environment in which someone feels physically and mentally discomfort (Einarsen, Hoel et al. 2011). It involves a wide range of conscious or unconscious violated behaviors. Verbal behaviors involve negative remarks, shouting, blame, threats, insults, criticism, rudeness, humiliation and sarcasm and examples of non-verbal behaviors include unrealistic workload expectation, withholding resources, excluding employees and stealing work output. (HRMID 2017). However, the occasional vulgarity and rudeness are not often considered as bullying because these occasional immoral attitudes do not qualify as persistent behavior (Fox and Stallworth 2008). These negative impacts of WPB also influence the employees' performance and ultimately organizational performance (OP). As a consequence , bullying behavior leads to high turnover and low self-esteem among employees. This also causes declined output and performance of affected employees which eventually decreases the overall OP. The culture plays a vital role in reducing WPB and increasing OP. Organizational Culture (OC) is referred to as the set of principles, standards, behaviors and values that direct and educate or influence on all the employees of an organization. According to scholars of resource-based school of thought, OC, is a significantly associated predictor of OP. The other researchers use this term to describe how well companies adopt innovative technologies or management strategies. They could include a performance-oriented community, long-lasting jobs security, and quality improvement (Rodsutti and Swierczek 2002). All the dimensions of the culture influence the different perspectives of OP (Ahmed and Shafiq 2014). According to Umar and Riady (2015), there is a strong positive effect of OC on employees' job performance. Hence, OC can play moderating role in the relationship between WPB and OP.

This study aims to propose a conceptual framework to assess the impact of WPB on OP and the moderating role of OC in their relationship. This study will provide a

guideline to the organizations, government departments and enterprises to formulate better policies for mitigation of WPB, enhancing OP and improving OC. This research will serve as a value-added literature which will provide support for researchers working in this area.

1.1. Literature Review

1.1.1. Workplace Bullying

The research on WPB was started by Heinz Leymann in the early 80s with the term “mobbing” which denotes hostile behaviors towards employees at the workplace. (Zachariadou, Zannetos et al. 2017). According to Einarsen, Einarsen, Hoel et al. (2011) “bullying is an escalating process in which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of systematic negative social acts”. The negative impact of WPB on victim starts with job dissatisfaction (Mathisen, Einarsen et al. 2008), then goes to fatigue (Österman and Boström 2022), then poor health problems (Nielsen, Hetland et al. 2012), and finally this journey leads to job quitting (Djurkovic, McCormack et al. 2004). Salin and Hoel (2013) explored that a greater number of employees encounter bullying indirectly, both through witnessing bullying or through persecution from co-workers, peers, or their family (Salin and Notelaers 2018). Takizawa, Maughan et al. (2014) discovered that adverse effects of bullying on victims could be shown after 40 years. The person who has been bullied at school level is at high risk of depression at the age of 31 to 51 as compared to non-bullied person (Lund, Reider et al. 2010). The World Health Organization stated that “WPB is an incident during which individuals face a repeated and health-harming mistreatment by perpetrators” (Sidiropoulou, Drydakis et al. 2019). Literature showed alarming figures of bullying at the workplace but precisely bullying reports on female employees are significantly high (Keashly and Neuman 2010).

1.1.2. Organizational Performance

The capability to work in terms of quality and quantity is described as performance (Sr and Khan 2010). The term “performance” refers to both the outcome and the quantity of workforces. It may also be the result of a person, team, organization, or process (Mahfouz, Greenberg et al. 2019). The delivery of ever-improving value to customers and stakeholders is generated by an incorporated approach to OP. This approach also supports organizational sustainability, improves the capabilities and efficiency of the organization as a whole, and results in better performance (Pambreni, Khatibi et al.

2019). Six financial criteria were identified as the key predictors of OP from human resources perspective: "turnover growth rate, profitability, earnings per share, return on assets, average annual profitability per employee and proportion of company assets per employee" (Pang and Lu 2018).

In this global era, OP is crucial to create a competitive edge for the sustainability of enterprises in every sector. According to the literature, experts, and researchers acknowledged that competent employees have a substantial influence on OP to create organizational competitive advantage (Atan and Mahmood 2019). Organizations that manage their human resources efficiently can achieve their organizational goals and objectives effectively which leads to long-term OP (Al Aina and Atan 2020). Even though there is disagreement, the majority of scholars believe that measuring OP through multiple criteria, such as the processes and outcomes of various organizational tasks, is necessary for evaluating an OP (Bernal-Torres, César et al. 2021). Therefore, businesses that ignore performance indicators, their operating results and market sustainability could be in danger. The state of mind was seen as a necessary attitude for attaining goals, which has a significant impact on performance evaluations (Black and Allen 2017). Consequently, individuals' growth mindsets may play a significant role in fostering OP (Asbury, Klassen et al. 2016). Better attitudes and actions would immediately boost organizational effectiveness and performance (Li, Akouatcha et al. 2021).

1.1.3. Organizational Culture

The term OC was primarily explained by (Barney 1986) "as a set of values, beliefs, assumptions and symbols." Deal and Kennedy (1982) state that "OC influences the way organizations adapt to market demands, exercising considerable influence on the overall function of the organization and helping to improve its performance." OC has received attention recently, and it is considered to be a stimulant or a barrier when it comes to adopting and broadening the scope of process techniques in companies, both theoretically and practically (Raczyńska and Krukowski 2019). Many scientists have characterised OC in a variety of ways. Pettigrew (1979), who appears to be the first to describe OC in the literature, characterised "as a system of meanings, shared by a certain group of people, composed of symbols, language, beliefs, ceremonies and legends". Peters and Waterman (1982) also summed up Pettigrew's concept "as the sum of values shared by members within the organization" (Caliskan and Zhu 2020). The six components of an OC include tales, "symbols, rituals and routines, control mechanisms, power structures, and organizational structure." These six components are what make

up an organization's beliefs and behavior patterns (Rizki, Parashakti et al. 2019). The literature indicates that OC has significant impact on OP (Nazarian, Atkinson et al. 2017). The research studies also indicate that OC also influences organization's employees (García-Fernández, Martelo-Landroguez et al. 2018). Nazarian, Atkinson et al. (2017) assert that OP is essential for managers because it measures an organization's success in terms of its goals and objectives. Many authors have stated that OC is a collaborative system made by the members to be unique in the market and differentiated from other companies (Saleh and Atan 2021). Positive OC, minimises violent behavior, aggression, and mood swings in employees, assisting firms in attracting and retaining high-quality, valued personnel (Saleem, Shenbei et al. 2020). The overwhelming amount of previous research has shown how important OC is to a diverse range of outcomes, including work satisfaction, productivity, and absenteeism and turnover (Abdullah, Huang et al. 2021). The cultural framework of an organization may have a significant influence on workers' stress levels and attitudes toward work (Peterson and Wilson 2002). OC is based on shared practices in which employees adopt behaviors based on the symbolism, personalities, and customs that the company portrays, such as improvements in worker performance and satisfaction (Rossi 2016). As a result, OC emerges from the shared patterns of an organization's members (Mooij and Hofstede 2011). Within an academic institution, OC plays a crucial role. It is a recognised indicator that assists in understanding the organization's declared stability as well as the contentment, motivation, and encouragement of the employees with their current job. All of this is possible if there is a strong OC at the workplace that encourages such actions (Ramly 2018). OC establishes a competitive advantage by defining the organization's boundaries in terms of employee contact or experiences, as well as information processing capabilities (Soomro and Shah 2019). Similarly, researchers emphasised that a positive OC increases workers' motivation to attain organizational goals in each given perspective. Employees are embarking on a shared path toward attaining organizational objectives in a strong culture, which also provides an opportunity or incentive for employees to progress and flourish with the organization (Santoso and Soehari 2020). . According to Syauta, Troena et al. (2012), organizations that have a bad culture, decrease less life expectancy in the market. Therefore, it is apparent that without a strong strategy and sound OC, the organization's goals could not be attained (Abdullahi, Raman et al. 2021).

2. Conceptual Framework

This study developed on institutional theory. Institutional theory not only explains why organizational structures and practices become entrenched but also how and why change occurs (Carroll 2016). Institutional theory is an approach to understanding organizations and management practices as the product of social rather than economic pressures.

The explanation, according to institutional theory, is based on the key idea that the adoption and retention of many organizational practices are often more dependent on social pressures for conformity and legitimacy than on technical pressures for economic performance (Kessler, 2013). Whereas due to bullying, the performance of the victims at the workplace decreases and they are unable to fulfil the tasks and meet the organizational expectations. Due to poor attention and bad performance at the workplace both the organization and victim suffer directly and indirectly. Today's organization has changed their perception regarding economic resources, their norms, structure, and standards are going to change according to the fast-paced environment, so the patterns lead to the situation where institutional theory is applied because institutional theory predicts that organizational change to core organizational structures that define the organizational template. The incident of bullying is increasing in those organizations in which the organization's human resource management is inefficient and the structure of an organization is inappropriate (Delgado, 2014).

In institutional theory, organizations conform to gain legitimacy to survive. Using this theory, this study will describe the concept of WPB, its type, symptoms, and effects on OP. This study will also explore the moderating effect of OC on WPB and OP. This study will also depict how institutional theory is applied to the organization to personal experience if being bullied in the workplace.

The institutional theory hypothesizes that organizations decouple their structures from the activities that they need for performance. Argote and Greve (2007) pointed out that institutional theory shares common assumptions of bounded rationality and cognition and weak consistency between goals and behaviors with the behavioral theory of the firm. The strategic responses to institutional theory perspective state that self-interested choice behaviors can be accommodated within institutional theory because the degree of compliant behavior varies in a typology of responses: acquiesce, compromise, avoid, defy and manipulate. The cause of the institutional pressures, the organization's constituents, the content of the institutional pressures, the means of control exerted on the organization and the uncertainty and interconnectedness of

the organization’s context all predict the degree of organizational compliance with institutional pressures

Fig. 1 shows the moderation model for the moderation of OC in relationship between WPB and OP. The effect of WPB (independent variable) on OP (dependent variable) is shown as “c” path in Fig.1 (A) while Fig. 1 (B) shows the effect of WPB on OP when OC is introduced as moderator. The effect of WPB on OC is shown as “a” path and effect of OC on OP is shown as “b” path. The “c’” path shows the moderated effect.

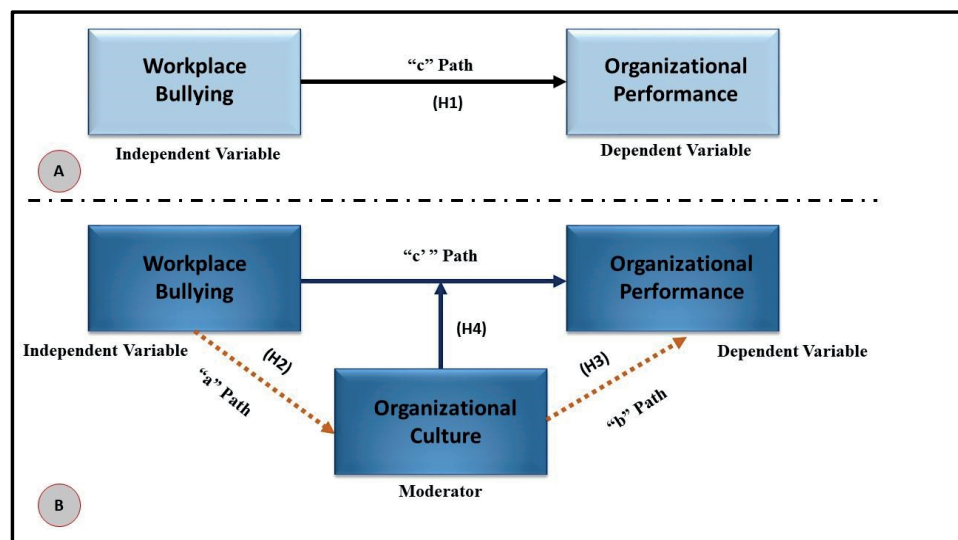


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Moderation Model.

3. Proposed Methodology

Sample: The descriptive survey design will be adopted to conduct this study. This study adopts a structured questionnaire developed from previous research. The unit of analysis in this study is “Individual faculty members of selected higher education institutions of Malaysia”. Stratified random sampling technique will be used to collect data through questionnaire.

Measurement: The instrument for this study will be developed by adaptation of previously published scales of measurement. A 9 items Short Negative Acts Questionnaire, S-NAQ (Notelaers and Einarsen 2008) will be used to measure the WPB on a 5 point likert scale (Never to Daily). The OP will be measured by (Tseng 2010), a 5 items and 5 points Likert scale (Strongly disagree to Strongly agree). For OC, the scale developed by (Denison 1990) will be adapted. The Scale has 12 items and 7 points Likert scale (Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

Statistical Analysis: In this study, PLS-SEM will be used to generate descriptive statistics and tables. The measurement and structural model analysis will be performed through PLS-SEM to estimate the complex cause and effect relation in path model between latent and other variables. This study will investigate the covariate effects and inter-relation of variables between WPB, OP, and OC.

4. Expected Results

Based on the measurement and structural model analysis through SmartPLS, the significance of the relationship between WPB and OP, WPB and OC as well as OC and OP will be assessed. The moderating effect of OC in the relationship between WPB and OP will also be assessed.

5. Theoretical Contribution/Significance

This research will assist the management of universities and organizations in building bullying free work environment. Bullying free organizations will increase their OP and this will lead the organization to form a progressive culture in organization. The study will be helpful for the governments to formulate better policies against bullying. Last but not the least this research will serve as a value-added literature which will provide support for researchers working in this area.

6. Limitations and Future Directions

In this research study the data were collected from the education sector only. It is therefore recommended that future research should cover other sectors such as banking and finance sector, industrial or manufacturing sector etc. In this study the diminution of OC is not included, it is proposed to add the dimensions of OC in the framework of future research.

7. Conclusion

Strong OC plays a vital role in reducing WPB and increasing OP in an organization. In this fast paced environment, it is difficult for an organization to deal with bullying and performance issues. This paper proposes a conceptual framework to deal with reducing WPB and enhancing OP through OC. The expected results of this paper will help the

management of the concerned sector to make bullying free policies which will ultimately increase the overall OP and maintain a strong and positive OC. This study will also be a value addition in the literature of organizational and social behavior.

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