

Workplace Bullying and Turnover Intention among University Teachers

Ambreen Anjum*

Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to assess employee's experiences of workplace bullying in higher education institutes, its effects on intention in terms of employees' turnover intention. In order to meet these objectives, present study was carried out on 400 teachers (Male =200, Female =200) taken from 7 public sector universities of Lahore. Age ranged of sample was between 24 to 60 years (M= 33.55, SD= 8.0). Purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data. The present study used cross sectional design. Workplace bullying scale and turnover intention scale with demographic information sheet were individually administered. Data were analyzed using statistical package for the social sciences version 20.0. Findings showed that 42% of teachers reported experiences of workplace bullying in their respective institutions. Women had more exposure of bullying as compared to men. Findings showed that person-related bullying positively and significantly predicts turnover intention. Bullied teachers (M= 23.02, SD= 3.09) have more intention to turnover as compared to the teachers who never exposed to bullying (M= 20.18, SD= 3.01), ($t = -2.58, p < .01$). Gender differences were also explored and results showed that female teachers have more intention to turnover as compared to male teachers.

Keywords: Workplace Bullying, Turnover Intention, Person-related Bullying

This article can be cited as:

Anjum A., (2018). Workplace Bullying and Turnover Intention among University Teachers, Journal of Arts and Social Sciences V(II).¹

*Ambreen Anjum PhD Scholar Department of Applied Psychology, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore

Introduction

Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is defined as an exhibition of undesirable behaviors toward one or more employees, which results stress and humiliation in the targeted individual, and problems in performance and work environment of the organization (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997). Workplace bullying exhibits a wide range of behaviors. Such behaviors might consist of: public humiliation and condemnation, social segregation, verbal exploitation, intimidation, inaccurate allegations, ignore people for a long period of time, and repeating reminders of one's errors (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). Olweus (1993) defined bullying as the systematic, repetitive, and intended undesirable behavior of one individual or group directed towards another one.

Bullying is a situation where the target of bullying has difficulty in defending him or herself against these actions (Einarsen et al., 2009). Bullying acts are measured into two dimensions: work-related and person-related bullying. Work-related bullying actions make difficult to carry out employees' work or involve taking away some or all of their responsibilities. Person-related Bullying: such actions are basically person-related. Ignore opinions, social exclusion, spread rumors, and undesired sexual approaches are examples of the person-related bullying.

Bullying in Higher Education Institutions

Higher education institutions are in danger (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994), but lacks adequate exploration of this work differentiating factors. According to Björkqvist et al. (1994), university teachers mentioned rivalry for promotion and envy as perceived main reasons for being targeted by bullies. They further argue that university administrators and heads of faculty are hesitant to confess to any form of bullying in their institution because it may be perceived as a result of their own poor management or leadership. Simpson and Cohen's (2004) study reported that 25% of university employees had experienced workplace bullying in the UK.

Academic institutions by their very nature cause frustration, insecurity, and competition. Student's assessment and promotion process also create frustration for academic staff and this frustration increase for junior faculty.

According to McKay, Arnold, Fratzl, and Thomas (2008) academia is an especially vulnerable place for this persistent harassment. They say that 32 percent of employees (faculty, staff, and administrators) described that they were experiencing bullying for more than three years. They further described that this percentage was increased to 49 percent when they focused on teaching staff.

In sum, prevalence of workplace bullying in academia is very high. Bullying is not only detrimental to the victim and witnesses, but also severely harmful to the

learning process and the academic institution as well. Although, we are not proposing that bullying is only limited to the academic setting but, academic institutions have a unique setting or context where bullying may develop.

Workplace bullying has not only harmful effects on employees' health but also for institution. Past studies have shown that workers exposed to bullying suffer from stress, depression, low self-esteem, emotional exhaustion, family problems and isolation in private life.

Effects of Workplace Bullying on Institution

Bullying cost is not restricted to victim but organizations also pay lot where bullying occurs. Johnson and Indvik (2001) describe the costs of workplace bullying, including litigation costs, absenteeism, turnover, and the possibility of increase in violence. Glendinning (2001) say that loss of creativity and increased sick time are the major consequences of workplace bullying. Organizations should take notice of this alarming issue because when employee leave, organizations face difficulty in recruiting new employees. Numerous studies (e.g., Magner, Welker & Johnson, 1996; Namie, 2003) reported high turnover rate in the result of bullying workplace bullying. So, turnover is most dangerous consequence that any organization bears in the result of bullying (Hauge, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2007; Hoel & Cooper, 2000; Zap & Gross, 2001).

Intention to Leave Institution

According to researchers (Horn, Griffeth & Salario, 1984; Steers, 1977) turnover intention is the final decision or step before employee actually leaves institution. Lacity, Lyer and Rudramuniyaiah (2008) said that turnover is a planned behavior of worker to leave the organization. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) intention to turnover can be described as employee's behavioral intention to leave organization. In the present study we used definition of Tett and Meyer (1993), they defined turnover as a conscious and strong will of employees to leave their organization. The present study considered the possibility of employees' intention to leave the institution as an important organizational outcome of bullying. Institutions spend a lot on their employees in terms of their induction and training (Ongori, 2007). So, worker's turnover is highly expensive for any organization. There is a strong association between the workplace bullying and victims' resignation from the organization. Vartia (2001) revealed that in her study, 43 percent of the victims had the intention of leaving the organization. In study of the UK National Health Service, Quine (1999) reported a strong association between bullying and intention to leave the organization. Ongori (2007) say that it is observed that bullied workers have a strong wish to leave the organization.

Jacob's Intention to Turnover Model

Jacobs (2005) presented turnover intention model according to that positive or negative view regarding the organizational culture was related

employee's intention to turnover. Organizations with the culture of knowledge sharing, respect of one's dignity, fair treatment have low turnover rate. employees' perception regarding their organizational may work as a key mediating variable, that may, again in turn, direct to decision to stay or leave with the institution.

Petriglieri's Intention to Turnover Model

Petriglieri's (2011) model of identity threat responses also shed light on an employee's decision to leave his or her organization. According to this model employees examine the identity threat as well as possible coping possibilities to deal with that threat. If employee cannot cope they leave their organizations. Jolly and Krylova (2015) argue that when employees experience bullying in the workplace, feel identity threat, such victimization compel employees to leave organization.

Giffith, Hom and Gaetne (2000) noted that turnover may also arise when high performances are insufficiently rewarded. Abassi and Hollman (2000) add that toxic work place environment is a major factor which makes staff to quit their jobs. The reason as to why turnover is strongly linked to workplace bullying is because of the fact that victims of bullying will offer the same advice to other victims that they should resign from the organization so that they can protect themselves from bullying behaviors (Zapf & Gross, 2001).

Glendenning (2001) describes that when any organization has the fame of being a hostile environment, employee recruitment can be difficult that can result in a skills shortage. And obviously when such fame reaches to institutions employees, the result can be divesting. Labov (1997) say that employees have a strong need and wish to be informed. According to bullying literature, organizations with strong communication systems enjoyed lower turnover of employees. Moreover, workers feel comfort-able to stay longer, in positions where they are involved in some level of the decision-making process. Institutions spend a lot on their employees in terms of their induction and training (Ongori, 2007). So, workers turnover's highly expensive for the organizations. According to the number of studies (e.g. Namie, 2003; Magner et al., 1996) high turnover occur in the result of workplace bulling. According to Namie (2003) bullied workers have 70% chance that they will leave their jobs. It is observed that bullied workers have a strong wish to leave the organization (Ongori, 2007). In short toxic work place environment is a major factor which makes staff to quit their jobs (Abassi & Hollman, 2000).

Meaghan, Stovel, Nick, and Bontis (2002) say that employees are highly crucial for any organization. Therefore, boss must understand that workers as major contributors to the efficient achievement of the organization success (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000). Glendenning (2001) concluded that bosses might play a significant role to protect employees from hazards like bullying. So, the aim of present study

was to explore the effects of bullying on teachers turnover intention in higher education institutions. Following hypotheses were made after reading the literature.

Hypotheses of the Study

- Bullied teachers have more intention to turnover as compared to non-bullied teachers.
- Work-related bullying significantly predicts intention to turnover.
- Person-related bullying significantly predicts intention to turnover.
- Female teachers will have more intention to turnover as compared to male teachers in the result of bullying exposure.

Participants

In the present study total of 521 teachers of 7 public sectors universities were contacted and of these potential participants 400 respondents completed the questionnaires (response rate of 76%). Purposive sampling technique was employed to collect the sample. The age range of participants was 24-60 years ($M = 33.55$, $SD = 8.0$). The base line of education of the sample was M.A/MSc. The sample of present study was characterized of various demographic variables, e.g. age, gender, monthly income, education, and job rank. Only those employees were included who have more than 1 year of experience. Non teaching employees were not included in this research.

Research Design

In order to meet the objectives of present study cross sectional research design was employed.

Measures

Following measures were used to collect the data.

Demographic Information sheet In the light of literature, demographic information sheet was prepared. Age, gender, level of education, job rank/status, marital status (unmarried, married, separated/divorced, widow), reason for doing job, and work experience were included in the demographic information form.

Workplace Bullying Scale (WBS) WBS was developed by Anjum and Shoukat (2013) in the cultural context of Pakistan. This scale was consisted of 21 items and all items were written in behavioral form. This scale consists of two subscales Person-related bullying and work-related bullying. Sample items are “being ordered to do work below your level of proficiency”; withholding necessary information affecting your professional progress” and “persistent unjustified monitoring of your work”. Alpha coefficients were .87, and .77 for Person-related bullying, and work-related bullying respectively. The scale was scored on a 5-point Likert rating scale where Never was scored as 1 and Daily as 5.

Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) In case of workplace bullying employees’ intention to turnover was measured with brief turnover intention scale (TIS-6)

developed by published by Bothma and Roodt (2013). This scale measures the respondents' intention to leave the institution in near future (Roodt, 2004). Sample items of turnover intention scale are: "How often have you considered leaving your job?" and "How likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level should it be offered to you?" The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .82. The higher score on turnover intention scale showed higher intention to leave organization.

Procedure

Participants were contacted after the official permission of authorities of their institutions. Written consent was also taken from participants individually. Researcher informed Participants about the nature and objectives of the study. Written instruction were also given about to fill the questionnaires. Demographic information form, workplace bullying scale and turnover intention scale were individually completed by all the participants. Researcher collected questionnaires personally. This study was completed keeping in view the rights of participants. They were told that all the information will be confidential and they also have a right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Results

Method

This section deals with the statistical analysis of data to test the hypotheses of main study using SPSS version 20.0. Descriptive statistics of the demographic

variables were described. To assess the internal consistency of scales, reliability analyses were run and Cronbach's alphas of all scales and subscales were also obtained. Data was examined to test the abovementioned hypotheses of the study. *t*-test was performed to examine the group differences on study variables. Furthermore, stepwise linear regression analysis was employed to identify the role of independent variable (work-related and person-related bullying) on dependent variables (intention to turnover).

Table 1

Mean, SD, Cronbach's alphas, and Inter Correlations among Study Variables (N=400)

Scales	1	4	α
1-Bullying scale	-	.34 **	.90
2-Turnover			.82
M	53.84	22.58	
SD	10.63	3.27	

**P < 0.01

Above table indicates that all scales used in this study possess excellent reliability (Fieldman, 2005). Variables i.e. workplace bullying and turnover intention are significantly correlated.

Table 2

Male	200	21.70	2.85	-3.01	.001	-1.61	-.33	2.12
Female	200	24.10	3.50					

*** $p < .001$

Table shows that female teachers (M= 21.70, SD= 2.85) have more intention to turnover as compared to the male teachers (M= 24.10, SD= 3.50), ($t(398) = -3.01, p < .001$), $d = 1.70$.

Tale 4

Means, SD and t-value of Teachers' Score on Turnover Intention Scale according to Bullying status (N= 400)

Bullying	N	M	SD	$t(398)$	P	95% CI		Cohen's d
						LL	UL	
Bullied	211	20.18	3.01	-2.58	.01	-1.48	-.20	-.2
Non-bullied	189	23.02	3.09					

** $P < .01$

Above table shows that teachers who had a exposure of bullying (M= 23.02, SD= 3.09) have more intention to turnover as compared to the teachers who never exposed to bullying (M= 20.18, SD= 3.01), ($t(398) = -2.58, p < .01$), $d = 1.70$.

Discussion

Workplace bullying is an alarming issue for all organizations and particularly in higher educational institutes. According to the results of present study forty two percent of teachers reported being bullied. Furthermore, several studies reported that institutional turnover is a major consequence of bullying (Quine, 1999; Waldman, Kelly, Arora & Smith, 2004). Begley (1998) that incurs substantial costs for the organization.

To explore the effects of workplace bullying it was assumed that bullying (both work-related and person related) predicts turnover intention. Stepwise regression analysis was employed and findings showed that person-related bullying significantly predicts intention to turnover. Employees reported that it is unbearable to face rumors about their personal life. So, they think that it is better to leave that institution. Glendinning (2001) support our findings and showed that person-related bullying is important factor of turnover intention.

Namie (2003) conducted a study in American institutions and also reported bullying cost US\$64 billion annually due to employee disengagement and turnover costs. The victims who leave institution are often expert in their field and it is difficult to found talent in that field after their depart. Our findings are also in accord with the study of Quine (2001).

Gender difference with reference to turnover intention was also explored. Results show that female teachers have more intention to turnover in the result of bullying as compared to male teachers. Male people have a responsibility to meet all the needs of their family members. Furthermore, search new jobs in Pakistan are also a challenging task. So, they think less to leave their job as compared to female teachers in the result of bullying. Our findings are in accords with Vartia (2001). Briefly, bullying in the workplace is a cause of negative consequences for an employee, the victim of bullying and organization as well.

Limitations and Suggestions of the Study

The participants for this study were collected only from public higher education institutes due to two reasons; one dissimilarity in the work environment and second, as investigators say workplace bullying is more prevalent in public higher education institutes. But, to deal with the matters of external validity, the sample should not only contain from both private and public educational institutes but also from other cities of Pakistan.

Conclusion

Workplace Bullying is prevalent in universities in high frequency with severe negative impacts both on employee and organization.

Contribution

Our findings will contribute to the limited research on the exploration of workplace bullying in higher education institutes and its prevention, so that employees and organizations alleviate its deleterious effects.

References

- Abbasi, S. M., & Hollman, K. W. (2000). Turnover: The real bottom line. *Public Personnel Management*, 29(3), 333-342.
- Anjum, A., & Shoukat, A. (2013). Workplace bullying: prevalence and risk groups in a Pakistani sample. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 3(2), 92-97.
- Begley, T. (1998). Coping strategies as predictors of employee distress and turnover after an organizational consolidation: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 71(4), 305–329.
- Bjorkqvist, K., Osterman, K. & Hjeltback, M. (1994). Aggression among university employees. *Aggression Behavior*, 20, 173-184.
- Bothma, C. F., & Roodt, G. (2013). The validation of the turnover intention scale. *Journal of Human Resource Management*, 11(1), 1-12.
- Carver, C. S. (1997). You want to measure coping but your protocol's too long: consider the brief cope. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 4, 92-100.
- Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., & Notelaers, G. (2009). Measuring exposure to bullying and harassment at work: Validity, factor structure and psychometric properties of the negative acts questionnaire-Revised. *Work and Stress*, 23(1), 24–44.
- Einarsen, S., & Raknes, B. I. (1997). Harassment at work and victimization of men. *Violence and Victim*, 12, 247-263.
- Field, A. (2005). *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications Ltd. <https://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=518130>

- Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention and behavior: An introduction to theory and research*. Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Glendinning, P. M. (2001). Workplace bullying: Curing the cancer of the American workplace. *Public Personnel Management, 30*(3), 269-287.
- Hauge, L. J., Skogstad, A., & Einarsen, S. (2007). Relationship between stressful work environments and bullying: results of a large representative study. *Work and Stress, 21*(3), 220-242.
- Hoel, H., & Cooper, C. L. (2000). *Destructive conflict and bullying at work*. Manchester School of Management. University of Manchester institute of management and technology, Manchester.
- Horn, P. W., Griffeth, R. W., & Sellaro, L. (1984). The validity of Mobley's (1977) turnover model. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 34*, 141-174.
- Jacobs, E.J. (2005). *The development of a predictive model of turnover intentions of professional nurses*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.
- Johnson, P., & Indvik, J. (2001). Slings and arrows of rudeness: incivility in the workplace. *Journal of Management Development, 20*, (8), 705-713.
- Jolly, P. M., & Krylova, K. O. (2015). An investigation of harassment and bullying, identity threat, and turnover intentions. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 1, 136-145. doi:10.5465/AMBPP.2015.13645.
- Labov, B. (1997). Inspiring employees the easy way. *Incentive, 171* (10), 114-18.
- Lacity, M. C., Lyer, V. V., & Rudramuniyaiah, P. S. (2008). Turnover intentions of Indian IS professionals. *Information Systems Frontiers on Outsourcing, 10*, 225-241.
- Magner, N., Welker, R., & Johnson, G. (1996). The interactive effects of participation and outcome favorability in performance appraisal on turnover intentions and evaluations of supervisors. *Journal of Occupational and*

Organizational Psychology, 69, 135-143.

Mckay, R., Arnold, D. H., Fratzl, J., & Thomas, R. (2008). Workplace bullying in academia: a canadian study. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 20, 77–100.

Meaghan, L., Stovel, R., Nick, L., & Bontis T. (2002), Voluntary turnover: knowledge management-friend or foe? *Journal of intelligence*. 3 (3): 303-322.

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at the school: what we know and what we can do*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.

Ongori H. (2007). A review of the literature on employee turnover, *African Journal of Business Management*, 1(3): 49-54.

Namie, G. (2003). Workplace bullying: escalated incivility. *Ivey Business Journal*, 68(2), 1-6.

Quine, L. (1999). Workplace bullying in NHS community trust: staff questionnaire survey. *British Medical Journal*, 318, 228-232.

Roodt, G. (2004). *Turnover intentions*. Unpublished document: University of Johannesburg Johannesburg, South Africa.

Simpson, R., & Cohen, C. (2004). Dangerous work: the gendered nature of bullying in the context of higher education. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 11, 163–186.

Steers, R. (1977). Antecedents and outcomes of organizational commitment. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 22 (1), 46–56.

Tett, R. P., & Meyer, J. P. (1993). Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention and turnover: Path analyses based on meta-analytic findings. *Personnel Psychology*, 46(2), 259–293.

Vartia, M. (2001). Consequences of workplace bullying with respect to the well being of its targets and the observers of bullying. *Scandvian Journal of Work Environment and health*, 27(1), 63-69.

- Waldman, J. D., Kelly, F., Arora, S., & Smith, H. L. (2004). The shocking cost of turnover in health care. *Health Care Management Review, 29*(1), 2-7.
- Zapf, D., & Gross, C. (2001). Conflict escalation and coping with workplace bullying: a replication and extension. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 10*(4), 497-522.