

Organizational Bullying and Women Stress in Workplace

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Abstract

Purpose: Women in the various governmental and private organizations are significantly enhanced in recent years and have got the specific role in the knowledge based economy as productive human resource. The attendance of women in society is dominantly effective when the vital circumstances are provided for their presence. One of the obstructions in women's path is the organizational bullying which expose stress to women and disturb their mental and physical tranquility. The purpose of this paper is to review the relationship of organizational bullying and stress.

Methodology: sample comprises the women clerks in Tehran University and 285 individuals are considered as sample. For data gathering, we chose questionnaire by 5 choices Likert scale with 25 questions for organizational bullying and 25 ones for stress. Also, we analyzed the data by the method of factor analysis and spearman correlation.

Findings: The findings depicted the dominance of recognizing the stressful factors in workplace and proposing some tricks to deteriorate them.

Conclusion: The results illustrate that relationship between the bullying and stress in significant. It sounds that some factors such as unawareness of women of their rights, unawareness of an accurate definitions of bullying, unfamiliarity with its elements and neglecting them in the workplaces and finally, approval of masculinity have entails in emergence of the passive position from women in this regard.

Keywords: Bullying, Organizational incivility, Stress

1. Introduction

Bullying and organizational incivility are one of the most troublesome issues of women in organizations. The feministic studies not only haven't resolve this barrier but also ironically, have intensifies it. Regarding the

studies, it is estimated that 2% of the clerks have encountered the bullying in their workplaces (Pate et al, 2009: 171). In 1990, the term “Bullying” entered the Britain from Scandinavian countries for the first time. This term comprise accusation, insolence, terrifying, malevolence, insult which give rise to annoyance, menace, contempt, deterioration of self-confidence and finally stress in staff (Lee, 2000: 121). Despite the influential role of bullying in inducing stress, it has been hardly considered. Stress, depression, distemper, irritation, furiousness and committing a suicide are some of the mental effects of the bullying.

Stress in workplaces induce pricy and disadvantageous personal problems (Ganster, 1991, 268) which some are listed as ,namely, headache, digestive disorder, anxiety, high blood pressure, heart disease, depression and organizational consequences such as job dissatisfaction, enhancement of organizational accidents, absence, productivity deterioration and job quit (Giorgi, 2009, 35).

Surveys allege that stress causes irrecoverable human costs and induce psychological and physical illnesses, therefore enormous financial succeeding are ensued. Costs of stress for employers are mainly absence, job quit, wastage product and claims. It is estimated that stress affect 90% of medicine disorders, besides it is considered as a significant component in social medicine expenses. In 1994, this cost go up to 950 milliard dollar merely in US, which comprise the 13.7% of gross domestic product of this country (Edwards, 1999).

Concerning the importance role of stress, this article attempts to investigate the effects of organizational bullying on women stress in Iran.

Bullying is a interpersonal conflict which is confined to the characteristic of bully and sacrificed in personal level and concentrated on the responsibility as an organizational culture in the group or organizational level. Some surveys relieve that bullying is the result of power discrimination and is comprised of individuals who are not capable of self-defense. This incident is intensified when the victim’s manager lacks the managerial skills or the victims are deprived of their colleagues or managers supports (Lewis and Orford, 2005, 30).

The issue of bullying has received considerable attention in the latter decade and named variously. Einarsen has considered emotional abuse, insult and malevolence as some portions of this incident. In other word, he defined bullying as constant offend at co-workers, superior and inferior which may cause serious social and psychological problems for the victims (Harvey, 2009, 27). Leymann has regarded the bullying as a commonplace phenomenon in the daily life and stated that bullying strikes when somebody is behaved with contempt and insult. Focal annoyance arises when frequency of bullying increases, power discrimination between the bully and victims elevates, the situation is narrowly avoidable or escape route is not available and finally, values and attitudes of victims are targeted (Tehrani, 2004, 358).

Organizational bullying is a complex of tactics in which many behaviors and communications are utilized. These recurring treats are setbacks for health and imposed by vocal insult, threat, insolence, despising, dread, obstructionism, sabotage or a combination of them and obscure the workflow in the workplaces.

The absence of a unique definition of bullying is purely on major problem, since people encounter problems for indentifying these insults and face barriers for taking legal actions in this regard (Bullying Institute, 2006). Brodsky (1976) believes that bullying is to keep someone in a sequestered life (Meglic- Sespico, et al., 2007: 32). The term of bullying has different meanings and applications in workplaces and is varied in different fundamental circumstances and organizations, even the victim’s perception and reaction is dependent on the conditions (Lewis, 2006:120). In this paper, the term “bullying” refers to any insult, contempt, mock, threat, insolence, sabotage or obstructionism which occurs in the organizations and induce negative emotions and behaviors in victims and even spectators.

1.1 Bullying Consequences

In a study, 165 individuals of professional staffs who have experienced stress in workplaces have been surveyed. The findings revealed that in 2-year period, 40% of staff have been victim of bullying and 68% have observed this incident in workplaces. Noticeably, 44% of the victims of bullying have suffered a high Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after attack. Bullying has negative effect on health and tranquility, moreover, it enhanced the stress and furiousness and mental stress and finally, lessens the mental health (Tehrani, 2004:357-359).

In 1996, Leymann and Gusstafsson conducted a study on 64 victim of bullying who have referred to a psychology clinic. 92% of them have suffered PSTD (Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996: 121). In another qualitative survey, which was conducted in the society of women in governmental section, the sample was gathered from the individuals who had considered themselves as bullying victim. This paper investigated the bullying experience of 10 women in governmental section by method of interview and Grounded theory. The

findings illustrated the bullying as the main origin of stress in workplace. Bullying hurt the victims by physical and psychological irreparable damages. Interestingly, the effect of bullying is differed among men versus women, say, women much more suffer bullying in workplaces and its consequential effects obviously appear to a greater extent (Lewis, 2006:119). Furthermore, the relationship of bullying and overcoming stress in schools was discussed and diversity of victims was studied. The findings of the study which was generated from population included 510 individuals in ages between 10 to 12, indicated that stress is considerably more in victims' group rather than other ones (Olasfen and Viemero, 2000: 59). Another paper stated that bullying in the workplace is a fruitless treat which is harmful for both organization and its goals. Leymann considers the financial expenses as the most trivial tangible cost of bullying which for instance allocate annually 30,000 to 100,000 dollar for every bullying incident in any organization (Meglic-Sespico et al., 2007: 31).

According to the result of the study handled by technology and science institute of Manchester University, 1 out of 3 diseases which are related to the stress are emerged from tyranny and violence against women in workplaces. 58% of victims who are exposed to bullying in workplace are women, and 80% of bullies over women are by other women. Furthermore, 84.3% of the victims of bullying state that the bullies have committed bullying formerly as well. Also 73.4% of them have alleged that their manager were aware of this incident. Moreover, 92% of bullying over women appears in overloaded hardworking manner, 95% of bullying over women occurs because employee hardly report this incident and 94% happens as bullies can evade their responsibility toward their action. 26.4% of female victims declare that they have resigned from their job because of this matter (Bullying Indicator Center, 2007).

Notably, women are exposed to bullying in workplaces to a greater extend. 57% of women who have reported the bullying were women. In addition, 60% of men are more likely to participate in bullying and violent actions. If the bully is women, his target is mainly women 71% (Bullying Institute, 2006). Dominantly, race play a highly significant role in this happening. Regarding the bullying institute statistics in workplaces, the following figure has been released: Spanish (52.1%), American (46%), Whites (46%), Americans (30.6%).

Concerning the "Wellness and work-life" project at Arizona State University, bullying in workplaces entails physical, psychological, organizational and social costs and stress is the crucial consequence of this incident. Stress not only poses the deterioration in physical and psychological health, but also results in sick leave and absence. According to the statistics of National Institute of Occupational Safety Health in US, psychological illnesses in workers induce reduction in job outcome of employees by 19 milliard dollar and decrease in productivity by 3 milliard dollar.

Based on the surveys of institute of bullying in workplace in 2006, some of the bullying tactics in workplaces are as below: accusation (71%), gazing and nonverbal threatening (68%), reflecting other one's sentiment or ideas trivial and stupid (64%), separating one from others (64%), ignoring satisfaction and laudable quality of done tasks despite evidences (58%), tough criticisms and defining various standards for the task goal (57%), spreading nasty rumors about one person (56%), encouraging others to treat unfairly against victim (55%).

Bullying may occur physically as well, but studies indicate that the verbal method is more commonplace and even may finally cause physical violence. Sometimes this concept (bullying) and violence overlap.

Bullying comprises a wide range of negative and spontaneous which often take place in workplaces. Prevalent treats such as seclusion, targeting personal domain, mock, and contempt, oral threatening and spying on the functional tasks. Mentioned behaviors should be conducted deliberately, otherwise they won't be taken for granted, since bullying is continuous and intentionally.

Two 2 principle ways for skipping the bullying crisis are proposed as below: To eradicate bullying incident and treat its victims: Utilization of strategies for overcoming other bully colleague by some employees, Preparing some reports for employer related to labor organization and other governmental supports, Calling upon some professional of employee's educational services program or other experts of health cure. Seeking for granting compensation way (including financial and non financial compensations)

A majority of methods for non financial compensations are on the basis of federal government's regulations model and anti-bullying policies about: international outlook, civil rights of US, regulations in job safety and health, regular rules of US and organizational policies, therefore, obviously domestic culture of every country affect the incident of bullying acknowledgment.

There are two approaches for releasing and compensation of organizational bullying: To set rules against bullying, Enforcing organizational policies (Meglic-Sespico et al, 2007: 32). The environment and social processes have profound impact on bullying process (Lewis and Orford, 2005:31). Mental effects of bullying range from stress to depression, aggressiveness, irritability, furiousness and suicide. Investigations about

bullying and health is about to consider bullying as a observable and measurable phenomenon (Lewis and Orford, 2005:30).

Bullying occurrence is directly related to the social environment forms. The management approach can modify bullying. Varita and inersin pointed out that there is a close relationship between bullying and leadership method of managers. Leadership method stands for abuse of power, dictatorial ways and poor relationships and virtually as these components get more and the circumstances deteriorate, bullying is more.

Bullying occurrence may calm down with positive aspects of job social situation. Especially, social advocates in favor of bullying spectators who are willing to report as witnesses can smooth the situation and the more these supports become common, the less bullying becomes.

Inerson considered endorsement as supportive factor which relent the relationship between bullying and health (Lewis and Orford, 2005: 31). Reiner classified bullying behaviors into following sectors: Professional position threatening, Personal situation threatening, seclusion, Overloaded working, Instability of job safety (Cruz et al, 2009, 102-103).

Questionnaire is the most common method of data gathering for bullying incident and often is conducted via self-assessment. Liman has improved a questionnaire for measuring bullying which contains 45 or 46 items and pointed out that bullying actions comprises attack to social relations of a person, attack to communicational means of person, etc. In 1990, he performed factor analysis on his questionnaire and found out 4 following factors about bullying: contemptuous behaviors, insulting behavior, frequent job modifications as punishment, violence or threatening for violence (Cowie et al., 2002: 38).

Einarsen and Ranex proposed Negative Act Questionnaire (NAQ) for study about violence in workplaces, namely bullying. This questionnaire which was applied extensively by the researchers of this domain afterwards was composed by 22 items and information resources. The creators, then, achieved 3 factors: characteristic spoilage, violence relative to work, social deprivations.

In this questionnaire, bullying scale (percentage of the people who are exposed with each item of NAQ) is states in the following questions and the answers were reviewed in Likert 5-scale (as never, sometimes, monthly, weekly, daily): Within the latter 6 month how often have you targeted to the 18 behaviors as below in workplace?

You are deprived of the essential information about your job; mocking or offensive insult; your are given an undertaking which is less valued than what you reserve; deprivation of your responsibilities and tasks; dispersing rumors against you and making you notorious; depriving you from colleagues or social activities; scathing attack to you or your personal life; getting signals of others declaring that you have to leave your job; insult or physical threatening; reminding you of your flaws; utilization of silence or violence as a response to your questions or efforts in a discussion; depreciating your works or efforts; neglecting your ideas and notions; mocking; depreciating your rights or points due to your age; exploit you such as doing personal works of boss (Einarsen and Raknes, 1997: 253). The manifestations of sexual bullying are expressed as below:

Impromptu advances which is due to your gender; unplanned concerns which are actually related to your gender; improper offers, calls or written messages from opposite sex; depreciating your rights and opinions because of your gender (Cowie at al, 2002: 38). Furthermore, Nordick represented a questionnaire for assessing bullying. In his questionnaire, following questions are used for bullying assessment: In the latter 6 months, have you been victim of bullying? Have you observed anyone who is exposed to bullying? (yes or no). To name a behavior as bullying, the offensive action should be repeated regularly in a time span and the victim has to suffer difficulties for self defense. It should be noticed that this behavior is not recognized as bullying when 2 parties are in equal power level (Hansen, 2006: 68).

1.2 Bullying and Stress

Wholly, stress is a comparative reaction toward an external (environmental) factor that induces the psychological, behavioral, cognitive and psychological consequences for every individual and leads one to an abnormal manner. One reason for importance of studying stress in organizational behavior is the dearly costs which is incurred to organization due to stress. The expenditures for low morale, dissatisfaction, low quality, absence, dissatisfaction, etc are the costs that are exposed to organizations due to stress. About 75% of losses and harms in work are consequences of stress in organizations. Moreover, the complaints about stress in workplaces add costs fines for organizations. That is to say workers complaints against their employers for stressful jobs incur considerable costs for organizations (Gholipour, 2007).

Stressful stimulants may induce reverse psychological, physiological or behavioral response. Literature review of work stress introduces some stressful factors which are associated to varied levels of organizational structure. Losing job (Leana and Fledman, 1990: 1155), change of workplace (Martin, 1996:279), arising conflict between workplace and home (Anderson et al., 2002: 801) and increase in organizational strategies (Cropanzano et al., 1997: 178), are some potential stressful stimulants which are related to organizational structure.

It is declared that bullying in workplace is reflected by threat, frightening, invasion, contempt and screech and is aimed to insult, treat with contempt, mock and offence the other side. Bullying is one of the challenges faced by managers which should be contrived (Pearson et al, 2000; Cowiea et al., 2002). Like violence and sexual abuse in organizations, power is a contributory factor in bullying. Studies (Oore et al., 1998; Kivimaki et al., 2000) corroborate this fact that powerless individuals in inferior levels are mostly exposed by bullying from powerful superiors. Importantly, women are more exposed to bullying in comparison to men. The victims of this incident and also the witnesses have committed more mistakes, weak decisions, absence, delay and low performance which are all consequences of the stress induced by bullying. Therefore, the organizations should consider the background of employees in the regards of this point in most of their human resource procedures such as selection, employ and promotion and lead consultative sessions and mental supports in order to bear organizational circumstances without stress.

Hence, concerning the above mentioned points, we present the hypothesis as below: "Existence of bullying incident in organization increases the stress in women in organizations."

2. Research Method

This paper is an applied research from purpose point of view, a descriptive research (non-experimental), a survey from data gathering perspective and a correlative research on the regard of variable relationship. The research method is survey which has the advantage of generalization the findings.

Population and Sample: The population of this survey includes women staff in University of Tehran. We administered questionnaire among all women staff in administrative departments and in result, 285 questionnaires which were completed were utilized in the analysis.

92 persons of population (32.4%) are single, 162 persons (57%) are married and the remaining 10 percent did not mention their marital status. 72 persons of population (25.4%) are 20-30 years old, 101 persons (35.6%) are 30-40 years old, 57 persons (20.1%) are 40-50 years old, 24 persons (8.5%) are above 50 and 30 persons (10.6%) have not inserted their age. 43 persons of population (15.1%) are graduated, 132 persons (46.5%) have bachelor degree, 34 persons (12%) have master degree and above and remaining 32 persons (11.3%) have not declared their educational degree.

Data gathering instrument: Questionnaire is used for gathering the data for hypothesis test. The queries are extracted from standard questionnaires and are generated in two sections of stress by 25 questions and bullying by 28 questions in order to facilitate the analysis.

Measurement and reliability scale: We have noticed the accuracy of the questionnaire queries so that the questions endow the simplicity and clarity. In order to determine the questionnaire reliability 30 questionnaire were dispensed and collected and after defining the Cronbach's alfa, some queries were modified. Cronbach's alfa scale for stress assessment queries was 96% and for 92% for bullying assessment queries. The questions number 36, 39 and 42 were eliminated for low factor load and remaining 50 questions.

Information analysis and hypothesis tests: We used software of SPSS version 15 for factor analysis and correlation test. The error level of 5% was considered for hypothesis test. KMO index for stress is 0.954 and χ^2 index is 4.295 with freedom degree of 231 and p-value of 0.000. Also, KMO index for bullying is 0.957 and χ^2 is 5.277 with freedom degree of 300 and p-value of 0.000.

Regarding the results of Spearman test, it is declared that there is a significant but negative relationship between two variables of bullying and stress. Meaning that while bullying recognition is increased stress reduces. There is a meaningful and positive relationship between bullying and record, therefore when record is increased, the bullying is elevates in organizations. The relationship between bullying and educational degree and between bullying and marital status is not meaningful. So, there is not any relationship between these variables and bullying. In addition, there is a significant positive relationship between job status and bullying, meaning that when staff's contract position move from temporary contract to lifelong contract, the sensibility against bullying incident is more and cannot ignore this incident.

3. Discussion and Conclusion

In recent years, active attendances of women in various social fields have been brilliantly noticed. Increase in number of women in universities indicates that participation rate will elevate about 25 % in the following decade (Gholipour, 2007, 2). But women participation is threatened while conventional insights preside over the society and indisputably women will not be able to have the precision and concentration to conduct the assignments accurately when attending workplace.

Studies show that victims of bullying and also the witnesses will commit resource waste, job quit, losing job commitment, negligence about tasks, loss of motivation and job satisfaction which are all the consequences of stress of bullying. Insulting induced by bullying will lessen self-esteem in social life and reduce the ability to face personal, organizational problems efficiently and therefore, will alleviate personal motivation.

Bullying in workplace has negative relationship with wellness and health of staff and raises the furiousness, deaden mental health and elevate mental stress. Intensification of anger will have devastating effect on the relationships of staff and colleagues and subgroup and will be reflected outside the workplace and in result, will cause tribulations in social life of individuals. Stress in workplace will induce costly personal problems such as headache, diagnosis disorders, anxiety, and increase in blood pressure, heart disease and depression. Fear of physical and mental harms and its social consequences, distrust for safe and secure attendance in workplace and as a result, deprivation of the society of half of the work labor are some other outcomes of this incident. The mental harms are more obvious in bullying victims in comparison to staffs. If this incident persists, victims will suffer grievous social and psychological harms. Besides, stress will result in organizational effects such as job dissatisfaction, increase in organizational crashes and collisions, absence, reduction in productivity and job quit. To loss women in the organization will compel potential, direct or indirect, short term or long term costs. Furthermore, loss and benefit cost of knowledge, experiment and competence of women in managerial job path of organization should be considered.

Powerless individuals in low levels of organization are usually victim of bullying from powerful ones. Hence, it is recommended that managers be aware of this perilous incident in organization throughout some mechanisms such as informal information channels so that they would be able to contrive it smoothly. The indispensable but not sufficient condition for encountering bullying and the first stage in this way is to inform managers, staffs and especially women.

The findings of this study reveal that the independent variable of this study (bullying) has negative relationship with dependent variable (stress). The results illustrate that some research variables like age, occupation, marital status, educational status have relationship with independent variable (bullying). In this regard, the more is the age of staff, their recognition of bullying is enhanced. Furthermore, occupation status of lifelong contract have more affect on bullying recognition rather than other contract statuses (hourly, temporary) and marriage and educational status do not have significant relation with bullying recognition.

All former studies announce that bullying has close relationship with bullying (Lewis, 2006: 121) and have harmful effects like destruction in workflow, damages for organizations and costs such as absence, work off and also reverse relationship with staffs' health (Edwards, 1999:88). Other research allege that bullying in workplace have negative relationship with employees' wellness and health and cause increase in stress and anger and reduction in mental health and raise in mental stress (Tehrani, 2004: 357-359). In 1996, Leymann and Gustafsson studies 64 victims of bullying who had referred to psychology clinic. The findings showed that 92% of them suffered from PTSD (Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996:121).

A comparison between the studies reviewed above and the findings of present study indicates that there is a conspicuous discrepancy about the bullying incident and its consequences in global and Iranian organizations. The negative relationship between bullying and stress in Iranian organizations may occur for several reasons which we suggest to be studied in future researches.

Firstly, a distinct definition of women's right does not exist in Iran regulations and Iranian women either do not perceive some issues that are primitive rights of western women in workplace or do not divulge it as their right because of fear of being mocked or objected. Rash of this incident in many women has eventually induced society to approve this belief that women do not have any right rather than what nowadays society donate them. Therefore, they do not expect more than these rights. Consequently, their definition of bullying is quite confined and they do not recognize many insults in their workplace as bullying.

Socialization of women in traditional and masculinity society of Iran has close relationship with definition of bully behaviors. In these society women, from early childhood, have gradually admitted to be in conformity

position against men and sometimes do not expect any more. Hence, their recognition of some behaviors which are basically the fundamental principles of bullying is varied and perceives bully as a natural incident.

Lack of women's awareness of their genuine rights, their unconsciousness of accurate definition of bullying, their unawareness of its elements, their ignorance to bullying components in workplace and also women's conformity to masculinity society have prompt passive position in them. This notion has impacted perception of bullying and its relationship with stress and even any effort to eliminate this incident. Furthermore, notwithstanding the attentions towards this issue, women do not expect the circumstances to modify, i.e. such as many other matters in which women have witness their inability to change the social issues. So, they would feel indifference and passive in this regards.

To train the required skill in order to participate in society, prevention of job conflicts, motivating self-esteem morale, encountering bullying incident intensely and wise, reasonable reaction against this incident will crumble it.

We believe that legal affairs against organizational bullying, ruling against it and enforce organizational policies can result in its deterioration in organizations, therefore establishing morale restrictions and anti-bullying instructions is a way to prevent bullying in workplaces.

There is a close positive relationship between bullying and leadership type of managers. Here, leadership type stands for power abuse, dictatorial approach and loose relationship which. Management style modification in organizations, increase of relations and supervision over staffs are proposed to reduce the bullying.

Studies have introduced social endorsements as a mechanism to overcome stress. Social supports lessens the possibility of stressful induces recognition in workplace and little periodical requirements in both homes and workplaces. Managers can alleviate job stress by developing social supports network in organization and among colleagues, superintendents and subgroups. For instance, official educational programs can be run to heighten the relations on the social supports aspect. Therefore, social supports can reduce organizational stressful induces.

The restriction in the current paper is that it has merely studied the women staff in Tehran University and since organizational environment have a particular culture, they cannot be generalized to industrial and commercial environments. Hence it is suggested to regenerate the research in industrial, production and commercial entrepreneurs' environment.

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