



Workplace Bullying and Management of Mistreated Behaviour: A Case Study in the Banking Sector

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Abstract: *This study assessed the psychological impact on a workplace bully victim and the management of mistreated behaviour within the banking sector. It discusses how the issue of workplace bullying can be resolved and how a policy strategy can be implemented at the workplace. A social-metric technique was used to determine and to analyze the effect of bully behaviour episodes in the banking sector on the victim. The consequence revealed that the victim was penalized for the inability to perform the right management by the top management. This case study contributes and explains the right steps to be implement by the top management to end the workplace bullying.*

Keywords: Bully, Unethical Leadership, Management Behaviour

1. INTRODUCTION

Workplace bullying and management of mistreated behaviour can give a negative impact on employee either psychologically or physically. The workplace bullying and management of mistreated behaviour is the process in which an employee is subjected to frequent negative acts (Glambek et al., 2014), how the bully effects on employees' in terms of physically and mentally. The purpose of this study is that this office politics mistreating behaviour of her co-worker and supervisor reflected as though Thiva was the trouble maker in the team, to the point that the higher management had decided to pressure Thiva to transfer to another department that neither suited her education background nor matched her working experience.

Thiva was a bank employee in Malaysia. Thiva joined the bank under the Branch Operation Department. Thiva was employed in the Operation Division at the entry level. Thiva was a talented employee with high academic qualification. Her presence was welcomed by her co-workers in the operation department. Thiva displayed exceptional personality skills, was highly motivated, could easily adopt new knowledge to develop her self-discovery skills. After a few years, Thiva had decided to transfer to another

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working environment to explore new knowledge with the advanced skill and confidence that she had gained at her previous workplace. Thiva was transferred to the Headquarters (HQ) of Cheque Operation Malaysia under Callback section. After a few years in the Callback section, Thiva was approached by a supervisor from the Data entry section, which was a newly developing section in the cheque operation clearing department that had only a group of four members. Thiva was excited to explore new experience and decided to try the new work task, as described by the new data entry supervisor. Thiva's work performance was better than her colleagues, to the extent that one of her female co-workers had even complained to the supervisor that she was creating trouble at work and was unsuitable to work in the team due to her inability to work as a team member. Additionally, the female co-worker provoked a similar propaganda about another female teammate in the group of four, but the supervisor did not practice fair dealing treatment in this case. Thiva was continuously mistreated by the abusive co-worker and from the irresponsible supervisor. The higher management drove her to the extent to tender voluntarily resignation or work dismissal without executing a proper examination on the root cause. Thiva, in this case, appears to be an innocent worker with exceptional attitude and outstanding work performance, but unfortunately for her, the organization she worked for, was not on her side.

2. A CASE STUDY OF ABUSIVE CO-WORKER AND SUPERVISOR: WORKPLACE BULLY AND IMMORAL BEHAVIOUR

The bullying situation is seen as a disciplinary problem that creates by the employer towards employees' in which affects the health impairment, such as sick leave, rehabilitation or disability pension while to discharged or internally relocated (Leymann, 1992; MacIntosh, 2005) because of the adverse nature of the working conditions that occur bullying (Berthelsen et al., 2011). This case describes the impact of immoral behaviour by a co-worker and the supervisor in charge on the victimized employee at workplace. The event took place at one of the banks in Malaysia, where the victim's co-worker performed her service. The victim, who moved to another section in the bank at the HQ, became a threat to other employees due to her extraordinary and outstanding work performance. As a consequence, the abusive co-worker and the supervisor started to target the victim's work performance and continuously exerted immoral behaviour towards her to demotivate her from performing her good work performance, as well as to paralyze her full involvement and responsibility to complete a job in a quicker and right manner. The few weeks of her employment at the new section under Data entry from the Callback section was all good as she was contented with her new job scope, which was better than performing the boring callback task. Her new job scope as Data entry for cheque clearance section was an advantage for her to improve her innovative technology usage talent, apart from gaining more innovative knowledge and information regarding soft skill. Her new job scope and working climate had been really challenging for her, but she had cooperated with her colleagues to accomplish daily basis work task in a right manner without any defect. She also felt that she had learnt a lot from the new challenging experiences. Somehow, after spending some time with her teammates, she began to sense some discomfort about her both abusive co-worker and supervisor. Initially, she was clueless about the exact issue being raised by the abusive co-worker and the supervisor. However, she was able to accumulate an imprecise sense of understanding after her abusive colleague began to

repetitively communicate and text abusing comments concerning her daily task as merely a joke to demotivate her.

The abusive comments about her work task were not only spewed at the workplace, but also in her WhatsApp work group chat on a daily basis. Each solution and new idea suggested by her was immediately rejected by both the abusive co-worker and supervisor. The situation turned worse when the supervisor repetitively announced that any new idea suggested by her must be approved by another co-worker as a new procedure that the supervisor implemented, but not stated in the Standard of Procedure (SOP) at that time. The victim was frustrated and was unable to seek help from anyone in that dreadful situation. She realized that she had been targeted by both of her abusers and she could not perform her tasks as accurately anymore. As the victim could not face the dramatic issues continuously raised by the abusive co-worker and the supervisor, she had finally decided to highlight these repetitive bullying episodes to her higher management, the Head of Department (HOD). Unfortunately, she realized that she had made a wrong decision by escalating the abusive and repetitive bullying episodes to the higher management when the chief himself did not stand by her side, but instead, ignored her and remained silent.

To make matters worse, the higher management and her supervisor had a short meeting with the data entry team to sort out the highlighted workplace issue by transferring the bully victim to her previous section – the callback section. This decision was made by both supervisors from callback and data entry sections with full agreement by the Head of Department. Clearly, the higher management did not make the right decision to stop the highlighted bullying issue at workplace. The unethical and immoral behaviour displayed by both the abusive co-worker and the supervisor to demotivate Thiva from performing a good job was partly due to ‘zero’ team cooperation in her working environment. Unfortunately, the bullying episodes did not stop after she was moved to callback section. The abusers continuously targeted her to fully stop her from performing any task in the data entry section even as a replacement staff in the event of insufficient headcount. The entire team probed her to do dual check without indicating her name on the finalized daily basis report. The entire team disobeyed the rules and regulations stipulated by the bank for their own team satisfaction. The callback supervisor did not assign her previous work task as the sub-lead of the team, but only requested her to focus on normal callback tasks. The callback supervisor insisted her to e-mail him all the early morning callback distributing tasks, so that once he had finished his jogging in the morning, he could just send the distribution tasks to all employees. Although this horrendous incident was acknowledged by the higher management, no action was taken. Psychologically, the victim felt more depressed and frustrated, while the top management was given wrong information that she was doing a poor job at her current workplace. As a result, the situation worsened and the top management had decided to dismiss her work service and no action taken against the abusers.

This case allows us to visualize the effect of misuse of power and position. In this context, the supervisors had the main power of control (Future Leaders in Organizations) over the victim. The supervisors in the banking sector displayed the ability to perform immoral acts towards the victim within the organization. In this case of continuous harassment, the organization must outline five fundamentals to prove the responsible existence of Future Leaders in Organizations, namely: (1) Discuss skills to

effectively lead an organization, (2) Describe power in the organizational context, (3) Discuss the positive and negative aspects of power and influence, (4) Explain the different types of conflict, causes, and consequences, as well as (5) Recognize influence tactics and impression management.

Future Leaders in Organizations refer to the comprehensive management behaviour that helps to eliminate irrelevant occurrences in an organization, such as unethical harassment at workplace. Employers and supervisors have the power to hire and fire workers based on the stimulus of power. Thus, the power bestowed to them, such as promotion and pay remuneration in employment, is their factual in an organization, predominantly in the banking sector. This power may serve as an advantage for the employers and supervisors to act immorally towards the employees. Thus, innocent employees often become victims and submissive sufferers due to the irresponsible management's behaviour, which has a propensity to adjustment due to the surroundings. Harassment that occurs between employees due to organizational politics can affect the management's behaviour, either to defend or to ignore.

Workplace bully has become an average incident that happens in the working environment. Bully is an unethical act that exerts negative psychological effect on the victim. Consequently, workplace bully can negatively impact and ruin an organization's reputation if not nipped at the bud to halt physical or verbal abuse or humiliation that upsets over long time. Harassment involves the use of harsh words and texting negative comments of about one's abilities and capabilities. Harassment also reflects rising of voice to an employee, highlighting comments on one's physical appearance or personal abilities, making provoking signals, using indecent languages, and belittling movements made by the victim.

In this case, the victim was employed under the supervision of an irresponsible supervisor. Subsequently, there would also be no issue if the victim had remained silent and merely obeyed the unethical abusing direction or management. Cases of harassment commonly involve the accused being solely targeted and continuously bullied due to their immoral behaviour. By this proclamation, one can deduce that the organizational climate is one of the leading facts that can affect transformation in management behaviour at workplace. The present organizational structure is led by the top management, who are composed of seniors. When junior employees are more talented and display excellent performance, it is difficult for most senior employees to accept the new comers to concur the leadership task. The inability to adopt the changes suggested by new comers causes the senior employees to feel ridiculed to obey instruction directed by these new comers to perform their work task. To safeguard their positions, some senior employees choose the harassment method to demotivate new comers and paralyze their ability from becoming an excellent future leader. These new comers are blocked and constrained by unethical or immoral behaviour issues.

Table 1: The 25 most common workplace bullying tactics

NO.	Types of bully tactics execution	Declaration statement
1	Falsely accused someone of "errors" not actually made	YES
2	Stared, glared, was nonverbally intimidating and was clearly showing hostility	YES
3	Unjustly discounted the person's thoughts or feelings ("oh, that's silly") in meetings	YES
4	Used the "silent treatment" to "ice out" and separate from others	YES
5	Exhibited presumably uncontrollable mood swings in front of the group by the superior	YES
6	Made-up rules that even they did not follow	YES
7	Disregarded satisfactory or exemplary quality of completed work despite evidence (discrediting)	YES
8	Harshly and constantly criticized, having a different standard for the target	YES
9	Started, or failed to stop, destructive rumors or gossip about the person	YES
10	Encouraged people to turn against the person being tormented	YES
11	Singled out and isolated one person from other co-workers, either socially or physically	YES
12	Publicly displayed gross, undignified, but not illegal, behaviour	YES
13	Yelled and screamed in front of other co-workers to humiliate a person	YES
14	Stole credit for work done by others (plagiarism)	YES
15	Abused the evaluation process by lying about the person's performance and not promoted	YES
16	Declared target "insubordinate" for failing to follow arbitrary commands	YES
17	Used confidential information about a person to humiliate privately or publicly	YES
18	Retaliated against the person after a complaint was filed	YES
19	Made verbal put-downs/insults based on gender, race, accent, age or language, and disability	YES
20	Assigned undesirable work as punishment	YES
21	Created unrealistic demands (workload, deadlines, duties) for person singled out	YES
22	Launched a baseless campaign to oust the person; effort not stopped by the employer	YES
23	Encouraged the person to quit or transfer rather than to face more mistreatment	YES
24	Sabotaged the person's contribution to a team goal and reward	YES
25	Ensured failure of person's project by not performing required tasks, such as sign-offs, taking calls, and working with collaborators	YES

Source: Namie, (2003). The Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) Report on Abusive Workplaces

Table 1 lists the fundamental findings regarding continuous bully episodes by using secondary data (Namie. 2003) of the types of bully tactics prepared questions, which showed a strong impact on the victims. The study of workplace bully in the banking sector revealed the most common workplace bullying tactics used to constrain a victim to the extent to tender resignation or voluntarily quit as the only option prearranged by the top management or else terminate the victim from service.

3. PROCEDURE ENACTMENT

In light of the above situation, it can be construed that employees identified as a victim of workplace bully can highlight this delinquent to the Malaysia Labor Court. The victims are required to convey this harassment to the management. As a victim of workplace bully, the victim might be in an exhausted condition and unable to seek proper help or guidance as the entire management is ruled by the mistreating management authorities.

Under the SOP in any workplace legislation, there is no encouragement for any supervisor or leader to be able to perform the acts of bully unto another employee or staff by demotivating the particular person and mistreating with corrupt management politics. As a result of this endowment, the respective head of department, upon receiving a complaint, should be fully responsible for the following directions: (a) Obtain complaints regarding workplace bully by an employee, hereby the complaints should be determines as confidential, (b) Sort official records of all complaints acknowledged, (c) Conduct an examination to sanction whether the substance described is defensible or otherwise, (d) Escalate the consequences of the examination of workplace bully to the Disciplinary Authorities, and (e) Preserve a record of all complaints acknowledged with the up-to-date of the complaints and continuous observation of the acts is obligatory. As an absolute argument, a person who is guilty of committing workplace bully can acquire any solitary or an amalgamation of some or even more of the subsequent penalties as identified to determination, apart from resolving this delinquency by giving cautionary and disciplinary penalties. According to Malaysian labour laws, the police will obtain and investigate the matter under the existing Penal Code (Act 574) (Mallow, 2014).

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, workplace bully can adversely affect an individual. Hence, it is of obligatory that the top management in the Malaysian banking sector to be extra cautious and be proactive, such as to be additional defensive for employees instead of practicing to be reactive. In order to effectively address workplace bully cases, the top management should follow the rules and regulations according to their legislations and SOPs to ensure employees' safety and health. Besides, workplace bully can be prohibited and exterminated utmost meritoriously if mutual strength and understanding is cultivated among the employees and the top management. Several internal techniques and methods for avoiding and exterminating workplace bully can be established and deployed.

The top management can offer help by recruiting an association affiliate to a substantial employee assurance into executing and obeying a positive workplace atmosphere. An employee must be equally treated without compromising their position or status to

safeguard the individual's dignity and self-respect. Simply put, an employee should be treated with respect and with full care. The top management should implement promotional plans and positive messages to develop a good and polite work culture, apart from creating a safe and healthy working environment. The top management should understand that employees come first when running a business in any field. Without a team of independent and responsible employees, an organization would not achieve its goals and objectives. The Ministry of Human Resources plays a huge role in ensuring a safe and healthy work atmosphere for employees, besides being able to extend their services to employees who seek aid or guidance.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When did the bullying harassment incident start?
2. Why was the victim targeted for this unethical behaviour of workplace bullying harassment?
3. What are the tactics of bullying harassment executed in the workplace?
4. Who face the unfair dealing and the negative impact of workplace bullying harassment?
5. How can the top management address and solve issues related to bullying harassment at workplace, particularly within the banking sector?

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