

Chapter 9

Predictive Analytics of Workplace Bullying and Bad Leadership Practices: An Exploratory Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

Bad leadership and aggressive behavior in the workplace have been a recurring problem for most companies in the United States. With the rise in hostile work environment litigation, management has to address the problem of workplace bullying of employees. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the problem of workplace bullying and bad leadership behavioral traits on the victims and victims' actions to deal with bullying behavior. The researchers conducted a nationwide study with 327 participants that have experienced workplace bullying and bad leadership. The researchers used a first-generation, researcher-developed survey instrument to conduct this study. The results of the study show there is strong causal influence of workplace place bullying traits and victim behavior such as employee resignations and HR complaints. Management should carefully evaluate the effects of workplace bullying and bad leadership on its workforce.

INTRODUCTION

In today's workplace, the emergence of bullying is a fascination of academics and social science professionals. A growing number of victims are reporting this behavior. Hsu, Liu, and Tsaor (2019) contend that workplace bullying is a global phenomenon (Rosander & Blomberg, 2019). Researchers are still learning about workplace bullying behavior. The danger in workplace bullying behavior is that it is often insulated from litigation and often difficult to prove in court. Furthermore, victims continue to suffer from the wrath of the bully through many psychological misbehaviors. In addition to workplace bullying behavior, there is the aspect of bad leadership behavior in the context of bullying. Bad leadership behavior has an equally devastating effect on the victim.

Based on the history of this phenomenon, originally there was no name to describe aggressive behaviors in the workplace. Over the last three decades, much of the research in management and the social sciences began to highlight the importance of workplace bullying behavior (Notelaers & Van der Heijden, 2019).

This brings the researchers to examining the behavioral characteristics of aggressive behavior and bad leadership in the workplace. The danger of workplace bullying, as a behavior, is that its effects are more damaging to companies around the world than may be realized. This behavior tends to cost organizations money in absenteeism, turnover, misuse of resources, and litigation. Although we do not study it, there is also a cost to firms when workers practice knowledge hiding as retaliation to bullying (Yao, Zhang, Luo & Huang, 2020). There is considerable research examining workplace bullying and leadership behavior (Aquino & Bradfield, 2000; Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009; Jóhannsdóttir & Ólafsson, 2004; Hauge, Skogstad, and Einarsen, 2010; Hauge, Einarsen, Knardahl, Lau, Notelaers, & Skogstad, 2011; Naseem & Ahmed, 2020). However, this study takes a different approach. The researchers wanted to examine actual bullying behavioral traits as an intervening and predictive variable and its influence on victim behavior and victim coping strategies.

The goal of this chapter is to investigate and examine the prevalence of workplace bullying and bad leadership behavior and measure it through the development of a new instrument. This instrument measures the influence of workplace bullying and bad leadership behavior on the victim. The researchers' objective is to investigate and examine specific workplace bullying and bad leadership behaviors.

To accomplish this goal, the researchers developed an instrument based on several workplace bullying behavioral traits and bad leadership behavior traits. To execute the research strategy, the researchers conducted an exploratory study that investigated the prevalence of workplace bullying and bad leadership behavior. The researchers also developed composite factor scores of the instrument developed and used for this study. The authors established three types of validity: (a) *convergent*, (b) *discriminant*, and (c) *criterion-related*.

The purpose of this study was threefold. The first purpose was to develop an instrument to measure the degree of workplace bullying behavior and bad leadership at the workplace. The second purpose was to use the instrument to assess the effect of workplace bullying behavior on the victims and their coping behavioral strategies such as resignation, avoidance, retaliation, and others. The last purpose was to investigate the relationship between bullying and bad leadership orientation toward the organization as a whole, as measured through the instrument. This study: (a) tested a first-generation, researcher-developed instrument based on workplace bullying behavioral characteristics, and bad leadership behavioral characteristics from an extensive review of the literature; (b) conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to identify the underlying relationships between the measured variables.; and (c) assessed the predictive validity of the scale by examining the relationships of the workplace bully with the victim.

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