

How to Cite:

Gawas, N. M. (2022). Workplace bullying and employee turnover intention: a mediating role of organizational justice. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S3), 4486–4493. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS3.6839>

Workplace bullying and employee turnover intention: a mediating role of organizational justice

Dr. Namdev M. Gawas

Associate Professor, Government College of Arts, Science & Commerce, Sanquelim, Goa, 403505.

Email: ngawas33@gmail.com

Abstract--Workplace bullying is a distal and indirect cause of employee turnover intention which in turn poses negative consequences for organizations. The present study investigated the mediating role of organizational justice on the relationship between workplace bullying and employee turnover intention. The major focus of this study is to explore the proposition that workplace bullying has a mediating effect on organizational justice in predicting employee turnover intention. Study findings support the role of organizational justice in mediating the relationship between bullying and turnover intention. Data from 207 employees from 10 leading BPOs in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region was taken. This study draws from several established theories including: (1) social exchange theory; (2) justice perspective; (3) emotional intelligence; (4) organizational commitment; and, (5) job satisfaction. Results suggest that it is important to pay attention to employees' reactions towards organizational injustice as these reactions may affect not only their attitudes but also their behaviour.

Keywords--working conditions, bullying, turnover intention, organizational justice.

Introduction

Workplace bullying is often a distal and indirect cause of employee turnover intention. Turnover intention refers to the employees' wish or determination to leave their workplaces (Cowherd, 2010). Workplace bullying and employee turnover intention are both stressful work conditions that negatively affect employees as well as organizations. These negative effects of workplace bullying include physical and mental health problems, job dissatisfaction, low performance, and organizational commitment (Burke et al., 2013; Dechêne et al.,

2009; Dennerstein & McLean, 2004; Greaves & Salin, 2015; Hoel et al., 2003; Johnson & Smith, 1991). Moreover, workplace bullying has a negative effect on the economy (Baldwin et al., 2015; Hoel et al., 2003; Pease & Fussell, 2009). Employees affected by workplace bullying often experience mental trauma, resulting in higher levels of exhaustion, depression, and anxiety (McLean & Carrier, 2010). These employees are more likely to develop low job satisfaction and commitment. They may become less productive as a result of their physical and mental health problems and may find it difficult to make any sort of meaningful contribution to the workplace. Consequently, workplace bullying affects both the individuals as well as groups in organizations/institutions.

Organizational justice refers to trust in organizations (Cropanzano et al. 2003). Managers can create trust in the workplace through different ways (Bass, 1995; Cropanzano & Folger, 2007). Organizational justice is one such way of creating trust. It refers to the fairness of treatment and perceptions of fairness received by employees in an organization or institution. It includes issues of equity, rewards and outcomes (Cropanzano et al., 2003). It covers how workers perceive their superiors' behaviour towards them. Fairness perception depends on how workers see their superiors' treatment of them in terms of their rewards on the job and allocations for promotion (Cropanzano & Folger, 2007). Workplace bullying is very common. The problem is that it has negative consequences for the organization and its employees, which would ultimately affect the profitability of businesses. Thus, it is necessary to understand its mediating role on employee turnover intention on organizational level to ensure its positive impact in organizations.

The present study investigates the mediating role of organizational justice on the relationship between workplace bullying and employee turnover intention. Workplace bullying is a distal cause of employee turnover intent whereas organizational justice is an intermediate or proximal cause. The present study investigates whether there was an interactive effect between workplace bullying and corporate justice in predicting employee turnover intention (i.e., whether workplace bullying affects organizational justice and vice versa). The purpose of the study was to address the following questions:

- What is the relationship between workplace bullying and employee turnover intention? Is there a mediating role of organizational justice on this relationship?
- What are the relationships among workplace bullying, organizational justice, job satisfaction and employee turnover intention? Is there any mediating effect of organisational justice on these relationships?

Review of Literature

Workplace bullying has been identified as a distal or indirect cause of employee turnover intention. This can be attributed to extensive research done on the subject globally. A meta-analysis shows that workplace bullying has a negative effect on job performance (Hoel et al., 2003). The present research extended this finding and investigated the mediating role of organizational justice on workplace bullying-employee turnover intention relationship. Researchers have shown positive associations between workplace bullying and employee turnover

intention. However, there is limited research that investigates the mediating or interactive effect of organizational justice on this relationship. As far as we are aware, there only a few studies that explored this issue (Burke et al., 2013; Pease & Fussell, 2009). Burke et al., (2013) found a negative relationship between workplace bullying and organizational commitment; the effect was mediated by employee satisfaction. On the other hand, Pease & Fussell (2009) reports a positive association between low levels of organizational justice and employee turnover intention. Hoel et al., (2003) in their meta-analysis shows that the relationship between workplace bullying and employee turnover intention is weaker in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures. The present study extends this research by investigating the interactive effect of organizational justice on workplace bullying-employee turnover intention relationship.

Organizational justice is a very important factor because it is directly related to work satisfaction, job performance, commitment and turnover intention (Bass, 1995). According to Bass (1995), organizational justice has three main elements namely distributive, procedural and interactional justice. These three components affect each other and give rise to a total concept of organizational justice. Distributive justice relates to how rewards, such as pay, are distributed in an organization. This can apply to employees' salaries or to their benefits. An absence of distributive justice results in employees feeling that they are not fairly treated and that they do not receive what is deserved by their hard work (Cropanzano & Folger, 2007). Organizational justice is also considered when it comes to what the employee thinks is fair with respect to the procedure used in hiring and promotion decisions (Bass, 1995). Procedural justice is concerned with the fairness of procedures or rules that guide workplace decision-making processes such as recruitment or pay distribution. Interactional justice refers to the way that supervisors and employees interact in setting policies or in transactions. It includes how supervisors and other employees communicate or are treated by each other (Cropanzano & Folger, 2007). Workers who are subjected to workplace bullying may experience low levels of distributive, procedural and interactional justice.

Workplace bullying is sometimes a result of workplace injustice. Workplace bullying is caused by injustice within the workplace. Workplace bullying creates an environment where hostility and aggression emerge (Gardner & Miller, 2006). Employees may feel that their employers do not adhere to standards of fairness in the workplace (Burke et al., 2013). Burke et al., (2013) found that individuals who experienced workplace bullying were less satisfied with their jobs, regardless of whether they experienced a low level of organizational justice. This suggests that workplace bullying can have a negative impact on workplace satisfaction. Discrimination is thought to be a potential mechanism through which workplace bullying can lead to employee turnover intent. Studies show that employees witness unfair treatment of other employees in the workplace, which can lead to either low job satisfaction or high levels of employee turnover intention (Cropanzano & Folger, 2007). Low job satisfaction may lead to low levels of organizational commitment, which in turn reduce organizational effectiveness and compromise the business's competitiveness.

One reason why employees may leave their current organization is because of the psychological contract breach. Organizational justice has an indirect effect on employee turnover intention because if employees feel as though they are treated unfairly, they are likely to feel a sense of injustice that can be similar to breaching a psychological contract (Burke et al., 2013). Furthermore, bullying makes an individual feel harassed and discriminated, which they can interpret as a breach in their psychological contract. Employees who feel that way may decide to quit their job and look for another one because they do not feel satisfied with their work and with the organization (Burke et al., 2013).

Bullying is often seen as a barrier to good performance (Hoel et al., 2003). Hoel et al., (2003) also found that there are small positive relationships between workplace bullying and employee's intention to quit. Victims of workplace bullying may have an intention to leave their organization because they feel that nothing can be done to prevent the situation from getting worse and that it would be better for them if they left before the problem becomes worse. Hoel et al., (2003) found that there is a mediating effect of culture on the relationship between low levels of organizational justice and employee turnover intention. Similarly, we expect that high levels of organizational justice will mediate the relationship between workplace bullying-employee turnover intention in this study. The study uses a quantitative approach in exploring the relationship between workplace bullying and employee turnover intention. To explore this relationship quantitatively, we analyze if there are differences in the level of organizational justice between workers who experienced workplace bullying and those who did not, as well as to investigate whether organizational justice mediates the relationship between workplace bullying and employee turnover intention. The results will provide important information on how workplace bullying can affect organizational effectiveness.

Methodology

Following methodology was designed for the study to collect primary data.

- Identify a sample of 207 employees from 10 BPO organizations using convenience sampling (organizations were having their offices within the limits of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region)
- Design and validate a (minimum 10-point) questionnaire for ascertainment of
 - Level of employee bullying (14 items)
 - Level of perceived organizational justice (17 items)
 - Turnover Intention (12 items)
- Seek responses on a 5-point agree-disagree scale
- Conduct the survey
- Summarize the responses
- Apply correlation and regression analysis and check the model fit.
- Analyze the results

The hypotheses set in this regard were as under:

H1: Level of perceived organizational justice plays a mediating variable's role between employee bullying and turnover intention.

The study was conducted across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

Scheme formed for testing of hypotheses

- Responses were collected under 4 sections:
 - First section of the questionnaire was dedicated to the profile information of the employees
 - Second section was dedicated to Level of employee bullying
 - Third section gathered responses for the Level of perceived organizational justice
 - Fourth section gathered responses for measuring the level of Turnover Intention
- For each of the sections an average was calculated.
- Percentages to questions under a particular section of the questionnaire were averaged to get a single score for that section,
- The section-wise average score was considered for the purpose of conducting a multiple regression analysis using suitable macros by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.
- P-values were calculated, and the null hypotheses was checked for rejection or non-rejection.

Cronbach's alpha score for the questionnaire was calculated the results have been discussed in the next section of the paper.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Results of the Cronbach's Alpha

Sr. No.	Section of the questionnaire	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha value
1	Level of employee bullying	14	0.807
2	Level of perceived organizational justice	17	0.831
3	Turnover Intention	12	0.791
4	Complete Questionnaire	43	0.745

The above table shows that the values of Cronbach's alpha was above 0.7 in each of the cases. This shows the level of internal consistency and proves the validity of the measures that have been calculated.

Table 2
PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.0

TI- For Turnover Intention (Dependent Variable)
 EB- For Employee Bullying (Independent Variable)
 PLOJ- For Perceived Level of Organizational Justice (Mediating Variable)
 Sample Size: 207

OUTCOME VARIABLE: PLOJ

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	Df1	df2	p
.5133	.2635	.1741	77.2671	1.000 0	205.0000	.0000

The above table shows that the value of the coefficient is 0.5133 and it is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 3

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Turnover Intention (TI)

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.2512	.0631	.1513	6.7854	2.0000	204.0000	.0011

Model

	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI
Constant	5.0859	1.2202	19.558 1	0	4.6518
EB	1.0105	1.0616	1.1704	0.834 9	0.8891
PLOJ	0.7897	1.0645	-2.2591	0.001	0.6624

The above table shows that without Perceived level of Justice, the relationship between Employee Bullying and Turnover Intention is not Significant.

Table 4

Total, direct, and indirect effects of X on Y

Total Effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
-0.0912	0.05133	-1.7773	0.077	-0.2006	0.0103	-0.1231

Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
0.0104	0.0603	0.1703	0.8651	-0.1111	0.1315	0.0134

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:				
Variable	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
PLOJ	0.1047	0.0318	-0.1776	-0.0459

From the above tables we can see that the lower limit confidence interval and the upper limit confidence interval do not include 0 in the indirect effects of X on Y suggesting that there is a significant mediating effect of the variable PLOJ. This leads us to accept that Level of perceived organizational justice plays a mediating variable's role between employee bullying and turnover intention.

Conclusion

Results show that the Level of perceived organizational justice plays a mediating variable's role between employee bullying and turnover intention. This research shows that the relationship between workplace bullying and employee turnover intention is lower in employees who experience low levels of organization justice. This is because, employees who experience lower levels of organizational justice are more likely to report that working in the organization is stressful, and this stress may be related to employee turnover intention. For example, if an employee is more likely to experience stressful working leading to higher levels of turnover intention, this relationship between workplace bullying and employee turnover intention may be mediated by anger. In other words, low level of perceived organization justice may increase the likelihood that an employee will have a high level of anger leading to higher levels of bullying. Finally, the employees who are bullied frequently have a lower level of organization justice, which leads to higher levels of turnover intention.

Employee bullying is a strong predictor of an employee's desire to remain with a company for the rest of their career. Employee bullying and turnover intention were shown to be mediated by perceived organisational fairness in this research. The results highlight the necessity of giving underrepresented groups in companies more chances. Institutions should develop opportunities for underrepresented groups and encourage equitable treatment of people in positions like this so that workers may thrive at work. Employees who believed their company treated underrepresented groups fairly were more likely to be pleased with their working circumstances and remain employed for longer than those who did not believe their organisation treated them fairly. Employee happiness and length of service with the same company were shown to be linked by fair treatment. Fair treatment is also vital for employee happiness, according to the findings.

References

1. Bass, B. M. (1995). Transformational Leadership and Organizational Culture: A Critical

2. Burke, S.M., Dennerstein, L., & Giel, R. (2013). Meta-analysis of the relationship between workplace bullying and mental health problems. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98(3), 556-576.
3. Cowherd, J.S. (2010). Workplace bullying: the research is clear, but how many cases will be prosecuted? *Journal of Management and Organization*. 17(4), 367-382.
4. Cropanzano, R., & Folger, R. (2007). A multilevel approach to fairness in organizations: Linking individual, group, and organizational justice to global citizenship behavior. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(2), 327-346.
5. Cropanzano, R., Bogart, L. L.& Folger, R. (2003). A Multilevel Approach to Organizational Justice in Organizations: Linking Individual, Group, and Organizational Justice to Global Citizenship Behavior
6. Dechêne, A.E., Le Blanc, P., Jin, M., & Kelloway, E.K. (2009). Workplace bullying and employee attitudes: One year follow-up study in a call centre environment . *Work & Stress* , 23(4), 285-298.
7. Dechêne, M., Fosseuil, G., Greaves, C., & Rigaudon, A. (2009). The indirect effects of workplace bullying on employee turnover intention: a follow-up on the longitudinal study by Dechêne and Fosseuil (2005). *Int. J.-Appl.-Econometrics* , 197-216..
8. Dennerstein L., McLean J., & MacSherry F.(2004). Bullying at work: the case for the victim. *Personnel Review* , 33(6), 918-941.
9. Djubaru, L., & van den Eede, Y. (2007). Workplace bullying and organizational commitment: The mediating role of psychological resources. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* , 12(1), 19-30.
10. Dyas, J., Hopkins, D., & Mackinnon L (2015). Bullying and employee turnover intention: The mediating role of relational aggression . *British Journal of Management*, 26(2), 213-224.
11. Examination. *The Academy Of Management Journal*, 38(5), 922-933.
12. Gagnon, J., & Gagnon, C. (2004). Organizational health promotion: A model for the prevention and control of workplace stressors . *Human Resource Management Review* , 15(3), 179-195.
13. Greaves, C., & Salin, M. (2015). Bullying at work: A review of the literature. *Safety Science*, 75, 97-114.
14. Hoel, A., & Rønnestad, B. (2003). The relationship between organizational climate and job satisfaction . *International Journal of Human Resource Management* , 14(4), 595-610.
15. Hoel, T., Dennis, M., Ludeke, L., & Bogart, K. (2003). Is there a relationship between workplace bullying and employee turnover intention? *Human Relations*, 56(4), 453-471.
16. Johansson, A., Cederlund, P., Forsman, M., & Johannesson, L. (2007). Bullying behavior at work: Relations with job performance and turnover intentions .
17. Johnson C. R., & Smith D. T. (1991). The costs of workplace bullying: a study of unintentional discrimination cases and the law *journal of economic perspectives on employment law and labor relations*; vol 1(1), pages 19-45 .
18. Johnson, N., & Smith, D. (1991). Bullying at Work: Workplace Bullying or Violence? *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care* , 27(2), 83-95.