

Communication Skills Break Down And Workplace Bullying

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Communication can be defined as a two-way process where the participants exchange information, ideas and feelings. In addition, the participants create and share the meaning of the information, ideas and feelings clearly for mutual understanding. It can also be defined as the process in which the sender and the receiver of the message use media to exchange thoughts, ideas and messages by writing, speech and signals. Any communication process must have the basic components, such as the message or the information idea statement, to be conveyed to another party in a written, visual, audio, graphic and oral form. The sender is the originator/creator of the message. The channel is the medium utilized for transmitting the message or signal. The receiver is the person to whom the message is directed. Feedback is the response or reaction provided by the receiver of the idea, statement or information. Context is the environment surrounding the process of communication.

Communication usually takes place every day at the workplace, where the managers, employees and all stakeholders of a company take part in the exchange of meaningful information. Effective communication is important to the success of the operations and the overall success of the organization. However, a breakdown in information can occur resulting in misunderstanding and other adverse effects to the operations and general success of the company. Therefore, it is significant that the people communicating with each other master appropriate communication skills, which will help in making the messages clear to both of the communicators. An appropriate communication skill requires the sender to match their body language, vocal tone and expressions with the messages' contents. On the other hand, the receiver of the message is required to be a good listener who is not distracted by the surroundings. The receiver should be able to provide feedback to let the other party know that they have understood the message or they need further clarification.

Communication Theories

Communication is relevant and significant to most organizations as it defines their organization and determines the organization's success. In an organizational setting, the most relevant theories include one by Weber, which assumes that since organizations have clearly defined responsibilities as well as roles, the communication should be structured, hierarchical and clear. Tompkins and Cheney's organizational control theory states that organizations should have control over their communication processes and the powers exercised. These controls include conservative, simple, bureaucratic and technical controls. In addition, Deetz's managerial theory recommends that organizations include the democratic aspirations of the individuals and the centers of power in the organization in order to control the communication processes (Anderson, 2007; Robbins, 2007). All these theories advocate

for a control system to be put in place in any organization for effective communication and better organizational outcomes.

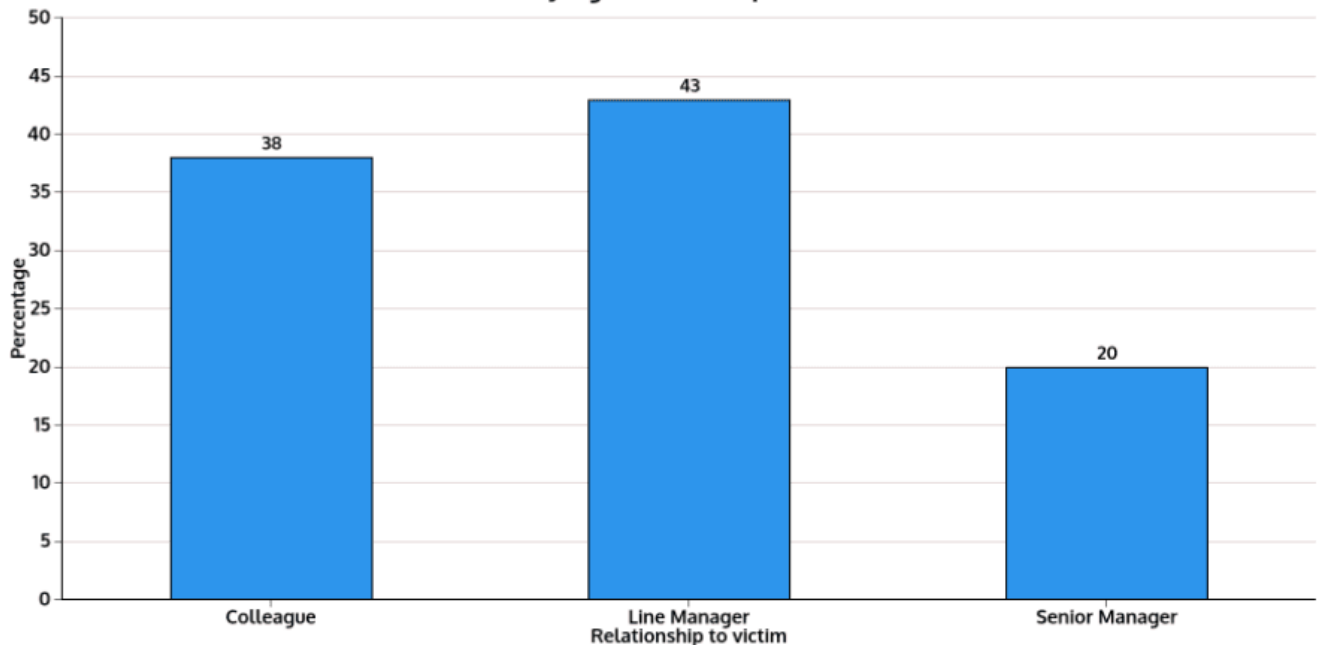
Bullying at the Workplace

Bullying is the intentional and persistent series of actions at the place of work meant to break down an individual's self-esteem. Bullying takes place through the channels of communication in the organization, which are used as tools for domineering over colleagues or employees (Agency Central, 2016). According to the (Ryan, 2016), workplace bullying is repeated mistreatment, conduct or verbal abuse that is threatening, health-harming, humiliating, and intimidating. Thus, Workplace bullying ranges from exclusion, verbal insults, sexual advances, spreading of rumors, preventing the advancement in career, overly criticism and humiliation, among other forms.

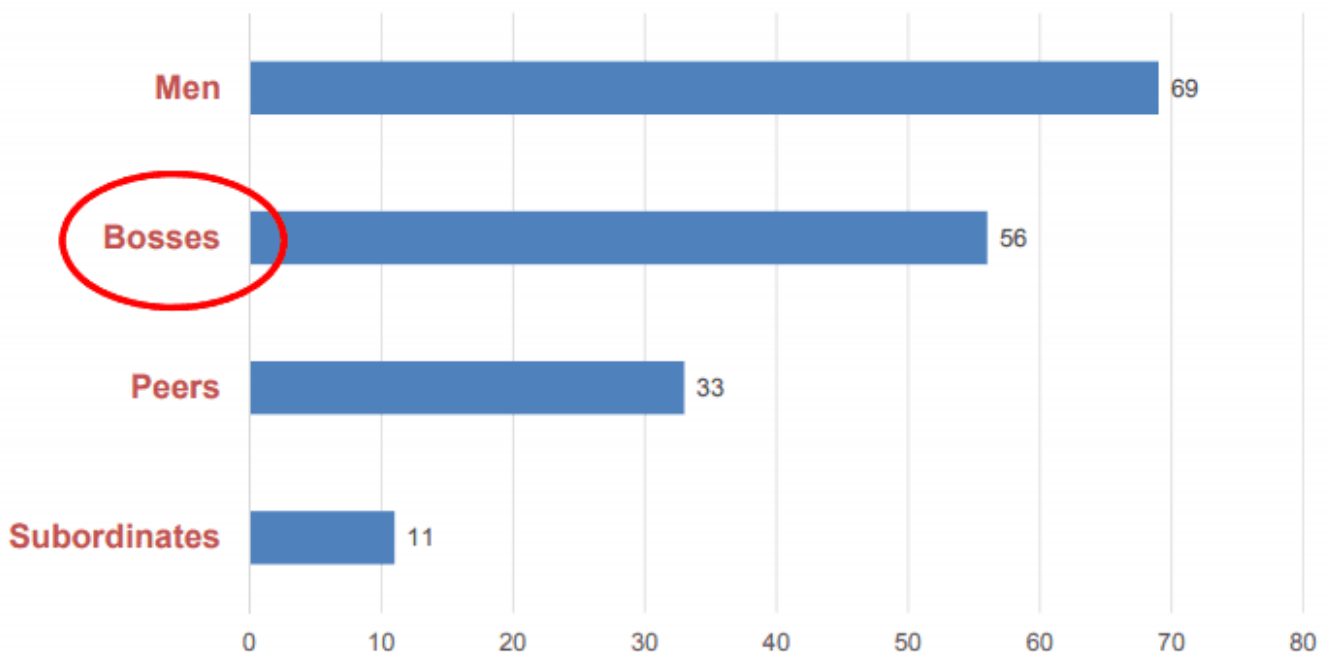
Causes of Workplace Bullying

The financial pressure in the economy is linked to workplace bullying (Samnani et al., 2015). The financial pressure creates uncertainty in the market when it takes a downward turn because of circumstances such as a recession. As a result, the job security of the workers in the company is in the spotlight. The workers are forced to compete and assert domination over others to survive. Thus, through the strategies of other employees trying to assert their dominance over others and their reactions to the pressure, they are exercising workplace bullying over others (Agency Central, 2016). The workplace hierarchy is also identified as one of the causes of workplace bullying. The organizational structure of an organization can play a significant role in how the people in the same organization treat each other. The levels of the organization come with differences in the status of the individuals occupying these roles. In the UK, line managers have the highest probability of instigating workplace bullying in their juniors.

Sources of workplace bullying: UK



Sources of workplace bullying: London



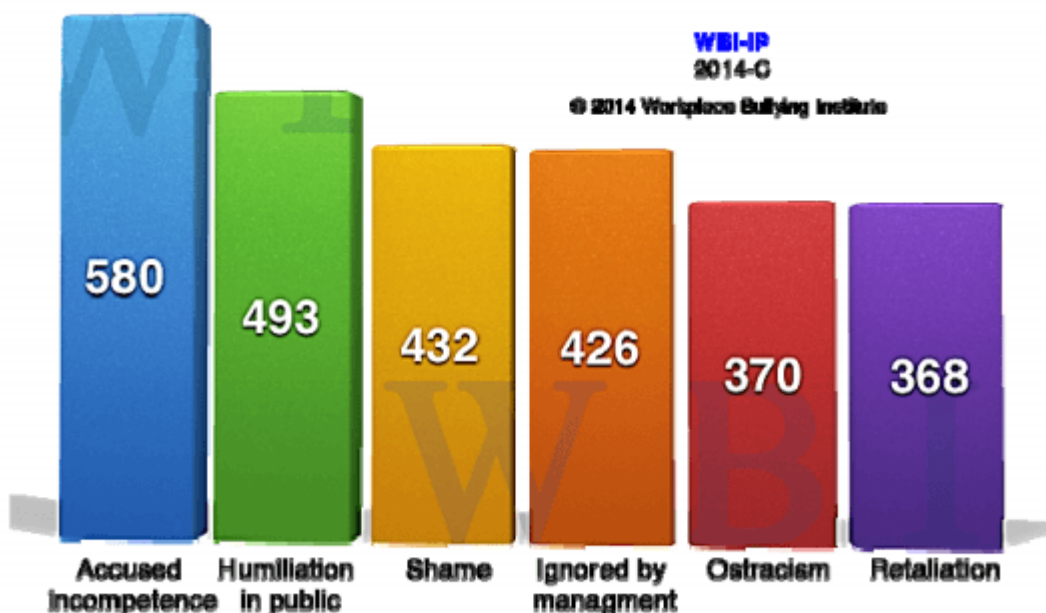
The study carried out by Napoletano et al. (2015) presented its findings, which indicated that 43% of the victims of workplace bullying had experienced bullying from line managers. In addition, 38 percent of the people in the survey reported that they experience bullying from their fellow colleagues at the workplace. Moreover, one out of five employees interviewed reported that they had been bullied by their senior or executive manager. These actions of bullying juniors and colleagues stem from the fact that the higher authority these people have makes them feel that they are indispensable for reprimand. The difference in the hierarchy and the organizational structures in most

organizations make it impossible for the victims of these abuses to report any indecent actions against them while at work.

The organizational culture of any workplace plays a significant role in the execution of workplace bullying. The culture created by the employees in the place of work gives rise to the problem of [bullying in the workplace](#). Some cultures allow bullying to be a way of achieving goals, thus supporting aggression as a motivation (Kelloway, Nielsen, & Dimoff, 2017). Ambition of employees in the organization to perform and be better than others can lead to bullying of the weaker individuals in the organization. Thus, a negative attitude leads to an increase in the cases of bullying in the company and nonreporting of bullying. Pastorek et al. (2015) state that employees fear being ridiculed, terminated or seen as weak by fellow employees. Lenience towards the indiscipline behavior of employees can be a contributing factor to the bullying problem in the firm.

On the national level, the weak bullying legislation, which does not provide a clear perspective of workplace bullying and the protection available to employees, is contributing to workplace bullying (Yamada, 2015). The disordered place of work with no proper organizational structure, policies and objectives can be a stepping stone for the bullies to exact their agendas.

Causes of bullying



Effect of Workplace Bullying on Employees and the

Organization

The people who were bullied at their place of work were mostly women Namie and Namie (2014). Despite workplace bullying not being classified as sexual harassment, it has a significant effect on the employees and the organization as a whole (Eriksen et al., 2016). The consequences of bullying on an individual level include stress, physiological effects and depression. The organization can have decreased productivity, increased rate of absenteeism, sickness and turnover. The employees get discouraged, feel alienated and may feel psychologically and physically unwell. The victims and the witnesses of bullying in the workplace are most prone to experience health problems such as enviousness, stress, disturbed sleep, loss of concentration, short-tempered, being on guard continually, being easily startled, headaches and nightmares as well as flashbacks (Namie, 2014).

The psychological effects of bullying include burnout, depression, prolonged duress disorder, anxiety, lowered self-esteem, panic, psychological trauma, anxiety attacks, suicidal thoughts, substance and alcohol abuse, lack of motivation and other issues that are detrimental to the wellness of the individuals (Murphy, 2013). Bullying does not stop at causing psychological harm to the victims and witnesses; it also causes physical harm to them. According to (Barrow et al., 2013), bullying can cause cardiovascular disease. Moreover, if the illness continues for some time, the employees might be forced to stay at home and also have financial problems with their medication. Consequently, the employees have more stress and their self-esteem, which makes it difficult for them to interact with others and engage in everyday issues at work (Eriksen et al., 2016).

Workplace bullying does not only affect the employees but also has a significant impact on the organization. Namie (2014) asserts that organizations incur great financial costs as a result of workplace bullying. Workplace bullying has cost companies globally millions of Euros in terms of lost productivity and lost time. The high employee turnover increases the cost of operation and reduces the products and services' quality. Consequently, the company experiences an economic drain. For instance, the Harrison associates wasted 180 Euros because of the lawsuits filed by their employees in regard to bullying (Crumpton, 2014). These are the litigation costs and costs of the time and productivity lost while dealing with the bullying issues.

Solutions

The major aspect that may have a significant impact on the bullying problem in the organization is putting in place a proper organizational structure, which will be the driving factor to the success and effectiveness of the organization (Tong et al., 2015). The organizational structure has the capability of developing a positive environment for work. This is because the culture of an organization is the mirror of the leadership of the company. Therefore, the management and the leadership of the company should set up a mission, goals, structures and procedures to govern the organization. The missions, values and goals of the organization will form the culture of the organization, which will be

used for solving both the internal and the external problems (Schein, 2004, p. 26). As a result, problems such as workplace bullying will be solved through the instillation of positive organizational culture into the company through the development of values based on the culture of the organization.

Consequently, a positive corporate culture will support the goals and productivity of employees and the company as a whole, following the leadership's framework (Pilch & Turska 2015). An excellent cultural foundation and Strong leadership have a significant influence on the success and achievement of organizations, as negative behaviors such as bullying will be minimized by strong leadership.

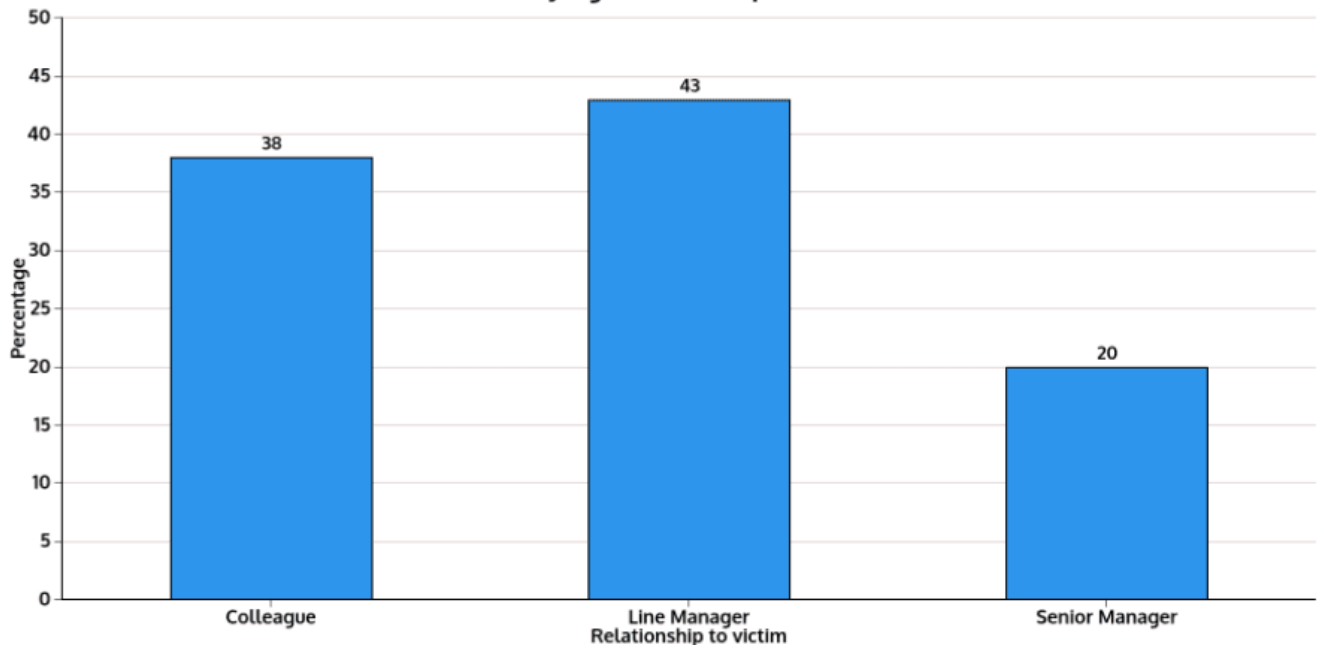
Conclusion

Communication can be defined as a two-way process where the participants exchange information, ideas and feelings. Communication is vital in the workplace where the managers, employees and all stakeholders of a company take part in the exchange of meaningful information. Effective communication is important to the success of the operations and the overall success of the organization. Therefore, it is significant that the people communicating with each other master appropriate communication skills, which will help in making the messages clear to both of the communicators. However, a breakdown in information can occur resulting in misunderstanding and other adverse effects to the operations and general success of the company.

One example is workplace bullying, which can be defined as the intentional and persistent series of actions at the place of work meant to break down an individual's self-esteem. Basically, bullying takes place through the channels of communication in the organization. Some of the causes of workplace bullying are financial pressure in the economy, workplace hierarchy, organizational structure and the general laws of the country governing bullying in organizations. The victims and the witnesses to bullying experience psychological and physical harm, which interferes with their productivity at work and their financial status. The organization also experiences greater financial costs due to the loss of time and productivity. Moreover, the litigation costs can be greater for companies sued for bullying. The major solution to the problem of bullying is putting in place proper organizational structure and leadership which will be the framework for every activity in the organization. As a result, negative behaviors such as bullying will be mitigated as the employees will be following the framework set by the leadership of the organization.

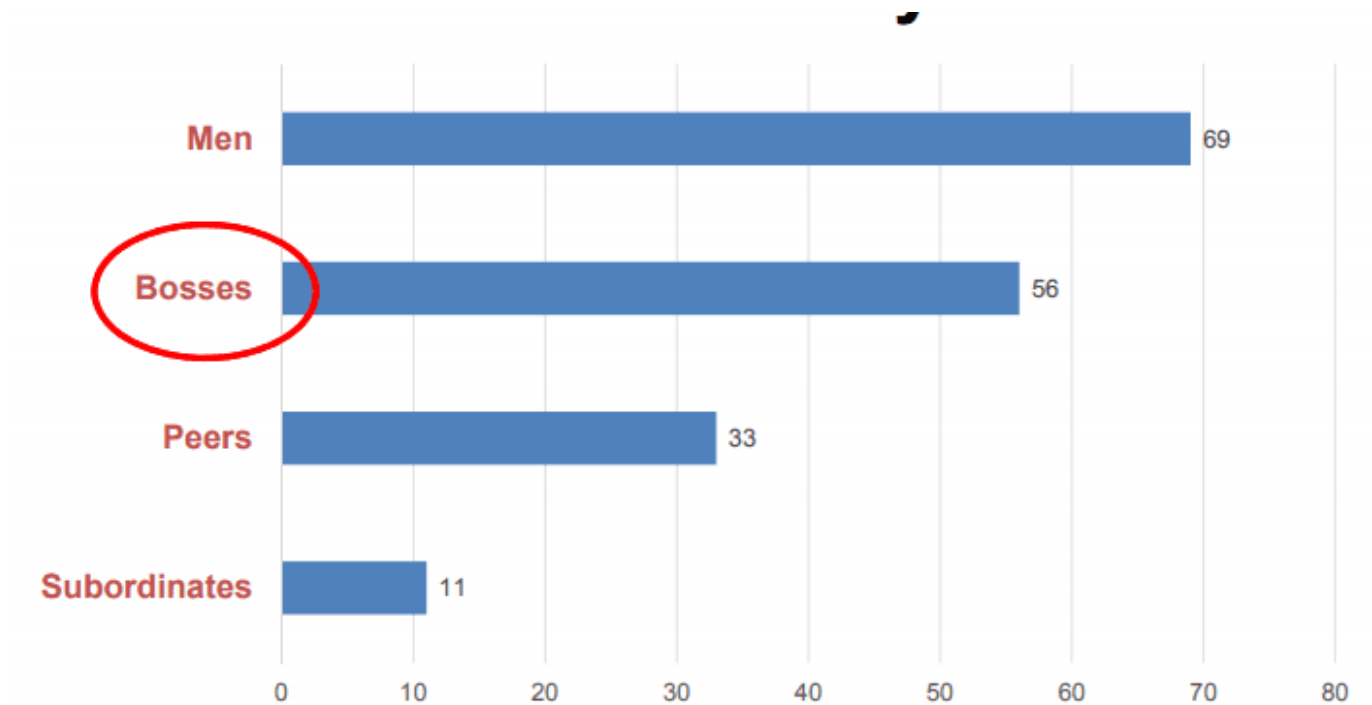
Appendix 1

Sources of workplace bullying: UK



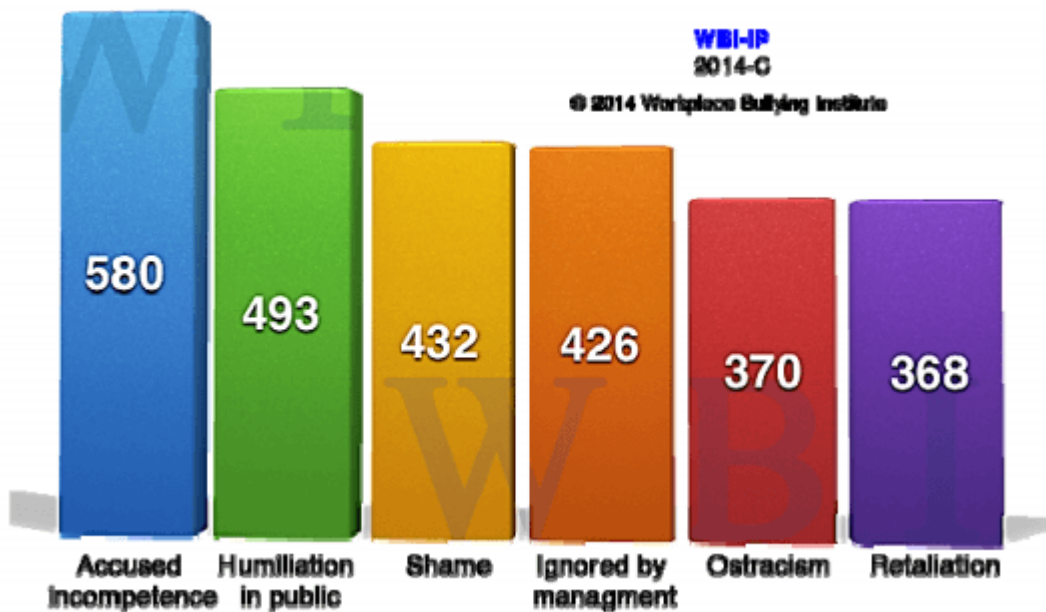
Appendix 2

Sources of workplace bullying: London



Appendix 3

Causes of bullying



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