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Research Paper



Loneliness and Workplace Bullying: Unravelling the Role of Organisational Climate among Employees

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at the complex interactions between organisational environments, bullying behaviours, and feelings of loneliness in part-time and full-time work settings. Bullying behaviours, which include a variety of kinds of aggressiveness and abuse, can lead to a hostile work environment, negatively influencing employees' mental health and job satisfaction. Loneliness is investigated as a subjective emotional state in terms of its frequency and relationship with the organisational environment and bullying in both parttime and full- time workers. The study aims to find the effect of organisational climate on workplace bullying and loneliness in part-time and full-time working employees. The tools used in the study are the Workplace bullying scale (2019), UCLA loneliness scale (1978), and Organisational climate questionnaire (Likert, 1967). A sample of 100 people out of which various of them from different organisational sectors were chosen from all over Bangalore, with the age group ranging from 18 to 30. A convenience sampling technique was employed for selecting the samples. The results indicate the degree to which the organisation tends towards a participative and human-oriented as compared to an automotive and highly structured climate which influences bullying and loneliness. The quantitative analysis reveals that there is an effect of the organisational climate on bullying and loneliness. The findings suggest that the nature of the organisational climate plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences of employees, impacting their perceptions of workplace bullying and loneliness.

Keywords: Organisational Climate, Workplace Bullying, Loneliness, Employees

he term "organizational climate" refers to the overall tone, atmosphere, and psychological landscape within an organization. It encompasses the shared beliefs, dispositions, and actions of people at work that add to the whole experience of working in a specific organizational setting. Like the environment outside, the atmosphere inside an organization affects how people feel, behave, and work. One of the main areas of study in modern industrial and organizational psychology is organizational climate. There are, however, many different conceptual and practical definitions, measurement techniques, and results—some of which are in conflict with one another. About ten years ago, Gilmer (1966) carried out an evaluation of the literature on organizational climate. It reviewed the

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key definitions, conceptualizations, and measurement techniques for organizational climate, discussed their implications, and offered suggestions for further research (Gilmer, 1966).

Workplace loneliness has received little attention despite a wealth of research on the subject. Because social connection and belonging are fundamental human needs, it can be detrimental to an organization's performance to the well-being of its employees as well as their productivity when these needs are not satisfied at work. Moreover, a multitude of factors can contribute to workplace loneliness, such as remote work arrangements, an unwelcoming corporate culture, limited professional relationships, and insufficient support systems (Ertosun and Erdil, 2012).

Bullying at work is a widespread issue that affects individuals across all organizational levels and in a range of professions. According to Johan Hauge et al., bullying can result in psychological distress, a decline in job satisfaction, a decrease in productivity, and a rise in turnover rates. 2007,). Comprehending the essence of workplace bullying is imperative for establishments seeking to cultivate a secure and encouraging milieu. This introduction lays the groundwork for an in-depth analysis of the causes, consequences, and strategies for intervention and prevention related to workplace bullying. By tackling this important issue, organizations can create an inclusive and respectful culture that enhances worker satisfaction and productivity.

Bullying is characterised as persistent acts of violence and harassment committed by subordinates, supervisors, or colleagues (Einarsen, 1999). Even though individual instances of bullying or disrespectful behavior at work are minor, they can have long-term effects on the victim (Cortina et al. 2011). Severe bullying can take many forms, from physical abuse to derogatory looks, threats, and yelling (Bowling and Beehr, 2006). Bullying and loneliness at work can have a significant impact on employees as well as the overall culture of the organization. Research indicates that these challenges may result in decreased output, a hostile work environment, and negative consequences on the mental health of employees. Some contend that resolving these problems can improve workplace morale, cultivate a more encouraging atmosphere, and eventually increase employee satisfaction and retention. In terms of the organizational environment, we will examine the advantages and disadvantages of managing workplace bullying and loneliness in this article. Finding the degree to which organizational climate intersects with other domains is a key focus, both within the organization and among individuals (James & Jones, 1974). Non-work support has a variety of effects on workplace loneliness and is significantly linked to bullying at work. This suggests that workplace environment has an impact on both workplace loneliness and global loneliness. (Wright, 2005).

Employee morale, performance, and job satisfaction are all greatly impacted by the attitudes, perceptions, and expectations that make up an organization. These factors include hierarchy, resources, goals, skills, and attitudes. Mathew and Selvi (2007) define organizational climate. It is unclear whether the term "organisational climate" refers to the organisation or the individual when discussing characteristics of the work environment (Guion, 1973). Bullying and loneliness at work are significantly impacted by the organizational climate. According to studies, bullying at work is closely associated with a hostile work environment that is marked by mistrust and hostility (Erdil & Ertosun, 2011). According to Vilas-Boas (2019), there may be a vicious cycle at work whereby a hostile environment raises the possibility of bullying, which in turn breeds even more hostility at work. Moreover, unfavorable emotional environments and a dearth of assistance from colleagues and

managers may exacerbate feelings of isolation at work (Rosander and Salin, 2023). Conversely, a supportive network and a feeling of community within the workplace can foster a positive social climate that lessens loneliness and enhances employee wellbeing (Wright, 2005; Einarsen, 2003). Thus, resolving interpersonal issues and enhancing the psychological workplace can improve workers' social and emotional wellbeing (Qureshi et al. 2014). According to a different study that examines the connection between workplace wellbeing and organizational climate, units with generally unfavorable work environments have lower employee well-being (Viitala et al. 2015).

Lastly, the interconnected dynamics of bullying, loneliness, and the workplace environment emphasize how complicated work experiences can be. It is essential to identify and address these components collectively in order to establish happy and healthy work environments where employees can contribute to the fullest extent possible while feeling supported, socially connected, and free from the damaging effects of bullying. The study aims to provide valuable insights and practical implications for organizations seeking to create cultures that foster strong interpersonal connections, lessen loneliness, and prevent workplace bullying by dissecting these processes.

Most research is either based on Organisational climate and workplace bullying or organisational climate and loneliness but these factors are researched together very less which is considered to be a gap. Another gap is that all these factors are extensively researched in the western regions making it less relevant in the Indian demographics. Lastly, this study aims to research both part-time and full-time employees of various organisational sectors. These gaps can be covered through this research study by implicating these factors and making the relevance of the study in the field of organisational psychology. Several strong reasons support the necessity for a study of the role of organisational environment in bullying and loneliness, including the potential influence on both individual and organisational well-being. Bullying and loneliness in the workplace have been connected to poor mental health outcomes, such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Understanding how the organisational environment contributes to or alleviates these challenges is critical for improving employee well-being. Workplace bullying and loneliness can have a negative impact on work performance, productivity, and overall organisational success. Examining the impact of organisational climate in these dynamics might provide solutions for creating a healthy work environment that improves both individual and collective performance. Understanding the impact of an organisational environment in bullying and loneliness can aid in the creation of tailored prevention efforts. A study on the interconnection of organisational environment, bullying, and loneliness supports a comprehensive approach to organisational reform. Organisations may utilise the data to make systemic changes that address fundamental issues and improve workplace health. Addressing organisational climate concerns proactively may help to foster a workplace culture that values respect, inclusivity, and strong interpersonal interactions. To summarise, research on the impact of organisational climate in bullying and loneliness is critical for improving our understanding of workplace dynamics. The findings can help to shape evidence-based treatments and contribute to the development of healthier, more supportive organisational cultures that prioritise employee well-being and build strong interpersonal connections.

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the problem

The study aims to find the effect of organisational climate on workplace bullying and loneliness in part-time and full-time working employees. It further extends to explore the gender differences, age and differences between part-time and full-time employees in regards to the variables being tested.

Objectives

The objective of this study is as follows:

- To measure the effects of organisational climate on workplace bullying and loneliness among part time and full-time employees
- To evaluate the difference between part time and full- time employees based on the levels of organisational climate, workplace bullying and loneliness.
- To explore the gender and age differences in the organisational climate, workplace bullying and loneliness among full time and part time working employees.

Hypothesis

- There will be significant influence of organisational climate on workplace bullying and loneliness among part-time and full-time employees.
- There are significant correlations between organisational climate and workplace bullying as well as loneliness among part-time and full-time employees.
- There are significant differences in the levels of organisational climate, workplace bullying, and loneliness between genders and age among both part-time and full-time employees.
- There are significant differences in the levels of organisational climate, workplace bullying, and loneliness based on employment status among both part-time and fulltime employees.

Tools Used

In order to test the spelt-out hypotheses, a number of questionnaires were used to assess Organisational climate, Workplace Bullying and Loneliness. The following standardised questionnaires were used in the study with the personal data sheet which explores the demographic variables of the participants.

- Workplace Bullying Scale (WBS) is a 21 item scale developed by Anjum and others (2019) designed to assess workplace bullying. Scale is designed according to a five factor Likert scale with five response choices: "Never", "Rarely", "Monthly", "Weekly", and "Daily" with a scoring range from 1 to 5 for each subsequent response. Cronbach's alpha acquired in the present study was 0.87, and 0.77 for Person-related bullying and work-related bullying, respectively, and 0.91 for the total WBSS scale (Anjum et al., 2019).
- UCLA Loneliness Scale developed by Russel and others (1978) is a 20-item scale designed to measure one's subjective feelings of loneliness as well as feelings of social isolation. Participants rate each item as either O ("I often feel this way"), S ("I sometimes feel this way"), R ("I rarely feel this way"), N ("I never feel this way"). The scoring ranges from all O's =3, all S's =2, all R's =1, and all N's =0 keeping the scoring continuous (Russell et al., 1978). This measure is highly reliable, both in terms of internal consistency (coefficient a ranging from .89 to .94) and test-retest

reliability over a 1-year period (r = .73). Convergent validity for the scale was indicated by significant correlations with other measures of loneliness.

• Organisational Climate Questionnaire (OCQ) was developed by Likert (1967) to measure an employee's long-lasting perception of the working environment and culture of the business they work for. The questionnaire contains 18 items and it measures 6 dimensions of organisational climate:Leadership (items 1,2,3), Motivation (items 4,5,6), Communication (7,8,9,10), Goal Setting (11,12,13), Decision making (14,15), Controls (16,17,18). The responses indicate the degree to which the organisation tends towards a participative and human oriented as compared to an automotive and highly structured climate. The items are scored by adding the responses given by the individuals in the response column. The total score for each of the dimensions is calculated. The total organisational climate score is the sum of the scores of all the dimensions. A high score indicates that the employees perceive the organisation more favourably (Likert, 1967). The test-retest reliability coefficient for the different dimensions of organisational climate are as follows: Dimensions Index of Reliability are- Leadership 0.48, Motivation 0.51, Communication 0.60, Decision making 0.95, Goal setting 0.53, Controls 0.48.

Sample

The sample consists of 100 people, who are males and females working part time or full time in Bangalore, India. The organisational sectors like Retail, Corporate/IT sectors, Educational and Healthcare institutions were selected for the sample and the inclusion criteria was that mode of work should be onsite or hybrid (a combination of onsite and work from home). The age range of 18-30 was chosen for the sample. The Convenience sampling method was employed to select the samples for the study. The research tools were circulated via online forms and the data has been drawn from employees working in various organisational sectors and the data was analysed using parametric tests.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: showing the correlation coefficients between the organisational climate and workplace bullying and loneliness.

Variables	Organisational Climate	Workplace Bullying	Loneliness
Organisational Climate	-	217*	427**
Workplace Bullying	217*	-	.426**
Loneliness	427**	.426**	-

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tail)

The correlation coefficients between organisational climate, workplace bullying, and loneliness give valuable information regarding the possible interplay of these factors in the workplace. Understanding this associations can provide insight into the dynamics of workplace interactions, employee well-being, and organisational culture. Here's the correlational analysis of the findings, It can be observed that the negative correlation coefficient (-.217*) between organisational climate and workplace bullying indicates a weak inverse association between perceived organisational climate quality and workplace bullying occurrence. This research suggests that in circumstances where employees perceive a more favourable organisational climate, workplace bullying may be reduced slightly. This might be due to open communication routes, supportive leadership, and a culture that values respect and teamwork. The slight negative correlation coefficient (-.427**) between organisational environment and loneliness points to a greater inverse link. This shows that in

circumstances where the organisational climate is seen to be more favourable, employees' experiences of loneliness are reduced. A healthy organisational environment frequently generates a sense of belonging, community, and social support among employees, reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation. The modest positive correlation coefficient (.426**) between workplace bullying and loneliness indicates a significant association between the two variables. This suggests that employees who have experienced workplace bullying are more likely to report feelings of loneliness. Workplace bullying may destroy social ties, harm interpersonal relationships, and foster a hostile work environment, all of which lead to heightened feelings of isolation and loneliness among those impacted (Einarsen, 1999).

Table 2 Shows the Influence of organizational climate on workplace bullying and loneliness.

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value
		В	Std. Error	Beta	
Workplace Bullying	Organisational Climate	52.67	8.887	-0.217	-2.197**
Loneliness	Organisational Climate	52.36	7.563	-0.427	-4.676**

The regression analysis looks at how employees perceive workplace bullying and loneliness in relation to organizational climate. In this analysis, organizational climate is the independent variable, whereas workplace bullying, and loneliness are the dependent variables. When all other variables are held constant, the unstandardized coefficients (B) show how the dependent variable—bullying or loneliness at work—changes when the independent variable— organizational climate—changes by one unit. By considering the scales of measurement, the standardised coefficients (Beta) show the relative relevance of each independent variable in predicting the dependent variable. Beginning with workplace bullying, the unstandardized coefficient (B = 52.678) indicates that the perception of workplace bullying declines by roughly 52.678 units for every unit increase in organizational climate. The standardized coefficient (Beta = -0.217) adds more weight to this negative link by showing that workplace bullying tends to decline as the organizational environment improves. This relationship's t-value (-2.197) indicates that, at the 0.05 level, the link is statistically significant. On to loneliness, where the analysis reveals a similar trend. According to the unstandardized coefficient (B = 52.365), there is a 52.365-unit drop in perceived loneliness for every unit rise in organizational climate. The negative correlation between organizational climate and loneliness is supported by the standardized coefficient (Beta = -0.427), which implies that employee sentiments of loneliness decrease as organizational climate improves. The correlation's t-value (-4.676) suggests a strong association and that the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (Hauge et al., 2007).

Table 3: showing the Mean, SD and t-value for organsational climate, workplace bullying and loneliness of employees on the basis of gender

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Organisational Climate	Male	59	35.9	5.37	1.749 NS
	Female	41	38.2	7.85	
Workplace Bullying	Male	59	33.48	15.4	0.033 NS
	Female	41	33.5	16.5	
Loneliness	Male	59	17.6	13.9	0.099 NS
	Female	41	17.3	15.5	

NS- Not significant

The presented table shows the association between organisational climate, workplace bullying, and loneliness, separated by gender. Females had a higher mean score for organisational climate (Mean = 38.2, SD = 7.85) than males (Mean = 35.9, SD = 5.37). The t- value of 1.749 suggests that gender differences in organisational climate are not statistically significant (NS). This suggests that there is no substantial difference in the impression of organisational climate between males and females. This implies that, regardless of gender, individuals in the examined sample view the organisational environment equally. The mean scores, albeit somewhat higher for girls, do not differ substantially from those for males. Similarly, the study shows no significant difference in reported workplace bullying between males and females (t-value = 0.033, NS). Both genders report similar mean scores for workplace bullying, showing that gender has no impact on the occurrence of bullying behaviours in the workplace within the study sample. The mean loneliness ratings are comparable for males (mean = 17.6, standard deviation = 13.9) and females (mean = 17.3, standard deviation = 15.5). The statistical analysis reveals that there is no significant difference in reported loneliness levels between men and women (t-value = 0.099, NS). Despite slightly differing mean ratings, the difference is not statistically significant, suggesting that gender has little effect on participants' experiences of loneliness in the job (Erdil & Ertosun, 2011).

Table 4 showing the Mean, SD and t-value for organizational climate, workplace bullying and loneliness of employees on the basis of age

Variables	AGE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
	group				
Organisational Climate	18-23	55	36.0	6.72	1.333 NS
	24-30	45	37.8	6.31	
Workplace Bullying	18-23	55	34.2	15.2	1.333 NS 0.535 NS 0.875 NS
	24-30	45	32.5	16.6	
Loneliness	18-23	55	18.6	13.8	0.875 NS
	24-30	45	16.1	15.3	

NS- Not significant

The table above displays the t-values for the variables of organisational climate, workplace bullying, and loneliness across two age groups: 18-23 and 24-30. For the 18-23 age group, the mean organisational climate score is 36.0, with a standard deviation of 6.72. In comparison, the mean score for those aged 24 to 30 is significantly higher at 37.8, with a comparable standard deviation of 6.31. The t-value of 1.333 indicates that the difference in organisational climate ratings between the two age groups is statistically insignificant (NS). Thus, there is no significant variation in perceptions of organisational environment between

people aged 18 to 23 and those aged 24 to 30. Among people aged 18 to 23, the average score for workplace bullying is 34.2, with a standard deviation of 15.2. In comparison, the age group 24-30 had a somewhat lower mean score of 32.5, with a standard deviation of 16.6. The t-value of 0.535 suggests that the difference in workplace bullying ratings between the two age groups is statistically insignificant (NS). Thus, there is no significant difference in reported workplace bullying encounters between people aged 18 to 23, and those aged 24 to 30 (Wright, 2005).

Table 5 showing the Mean, SD and t-value for organsational climate, workplace bullying and loneliness of employees on the basis of type of employee

Variables	Type of	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value		
	employment						
Organisational Climate	Part time	68	37.7	6.79	1.855 NS		
_	Full time	32	35.1	5.77			
Workplace Bullying	Part time	68	31.9	14.7	1.384 NS		
	Full time	32	36.6	17.7			
Loneliness	Part time	68	16.1	13.7	1.435 NS		
	Full time	32	20.5	15.7			

NS- Not significant

This analysis looks at the association between three important variables—workplace bullying, loneliness, and organizational climate—and the kind of employment (full-time vs. part-time). Compared to full-time employees (M = 35.1, SD = 5.77), part-time employees' mean organizational climate score (M = 37.7, SD = 6.79) is marginally higher. The t-value of 1.855, however, indicates that there may not be a statistically significant difference (NS). This suggests that there is no discernible difference between part-time and full-time employees' perceptions of the organizational climate, based on the analysis conducted. Fulltime employees report a higher mean score of 36.6 (SD = 17.7) on workplace bullying than do part-time employees, who report a mean score of 31.9 (SD = 14.7). Nonetheless, this difference is not statistically significant (NS), according to the t-value of 1.384. Therefore, this data indicates that there is no discernible difference between part-time and full-time employees' perceptions of workplace bullying. Full-time workers report a somewhat higher mean score of 20.5 (SD = 15.7) for loneliness than do part-time workers, who report a mean score of 16.1 (SD = 13.7). The t-value of 1.435, however, indicates that this difference is not statistically significant (NS), in line with the prior variables. Thus, this research indicates that there is no discernible difference between the degrees of loneliness that full-time and part-time employees report (Bowling & Beehr, 2006).

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that gender, age & employment type had no significant impact on views of organisational climate, workplace bullying experiences, or degrees of loneliness in the study group. These findings emphasise the need of creating inclusive and supportive workplaces that prioritise equality, respect, and well-being for all employees, regardless of gender or age. It is plausible to conclude that a positive organisational climate fosters an atmosphere in which bullying is less likely to occur, but less bullying may also lead to a more positive climate. A healthy organisational atmosphere appears to be associated with fewer incidents of workplace bullying and lower levels of loneliness. However, causal relationships have not been identified. In conclusion, the findings highlight the importance of organisations implementing policies and procedures that foster a healthy organisational climate, reduce workplace bullying, and support employees' emotional well-being across

varied demographics. Organisations that develop inclusive and supportive work cultures can improve employee happiness, productivity, and overall organisational effectiveness.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study was restricted to a sample size of 100 employees which wouldn't be enough to generalise outcomes of this research to the entire populations. The research was conducted to employees of various occupations. Therefore, it would be more accurate and informative if future researchers could examine a large sample.

This survey indicates that some of the demographic variables included in this study have a relationship between organisational climate, workplace bullying and loneliness. Hence, the role of other demographic variables excluded in this investigation can be observed through future researchers. The demographic variables such as place of origin, work experience, type of organisational sector can be further added to the research.

It would be an interesting comparison to assess cultural influence with respect to organisational climate and its effect on bullying and loneliness. Future research could utilize mixed-method approaches, incorporating qualitative data and objective measures to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex factors influencing workplace dynamics and employee well-being. Future researchers could develop new surveys and/or focus groups to acknowledge bullying in a workplace in a qualitative measure. In addition, a large sample size needs to be assessed representing various employees from different occupational organisations in order to gain more valuable evidence.

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Conflict of Interest

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