Person-Led Organizations Nurture Bullying Behavior: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract : Workplace bullying is a social phenomenon which has proved to be hazardous not only for employees' well-being but also organizations. Despite being prevalent across geographical boundaries, Indian organizations have failed to acknowledge its vices. This paper aims to understand targets' perception on what makes bullying nurture in organizations. The paper suggests that person-led Indian work settings give birth to bullying behavior as it lacks professional acumen and systems. An analysis of 13 in-depth interviews of employees from the organized sector suggests that organizations, where decision making lies with single individual, may be a hub of hostile behavior due to the culture which promotes 'yesmanship', 'authoritarianism' and/or blind belief of leaders on certain set of employees. The study used constructivist grounded theory approach, and the data was analyzed using R Based Qualitative Data Analysis (RQDA) software. Respondents reported that bullying behavior is taken lightly by the management with 'just ignore it' attitude. According to the respondents, the behavior prolong as the perpetrator have a direct approach to the top authority. The study concludes that person-led organizations may create a family-like environment which is favored by employees; however, authoritative leaders are unable to gain the trust of employees. Also, employees who are close to the leader may either be a perpetrator or a target of bullying. It is recommended that leaders in such organizations need to acknowledge the presence of bullying which affects an employees' commitment towards their job and/or organization. They need to have an assertive check on individuals who hide behind 'yesman' attitude. This may help employees feel safe in such work settings.
Keywords : constructivist grounded theory, person-led organization, RQDA, workplace bullying
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