

Bullying in the 21st Century Global Organization: An Ethical Perspective

*Michael Harvey
Darren Treadway
Joyce Thompson Heames
Allison Duke*

ABSTRACT. The complex global business environment has created a host of problems for managers, none of which is more difficult to address than bullying in the workplace. The rapid rate of change and the ever-increasing complexity of organizational environments of business throughout the world have increased the opportunity for bullying to occur more frequently. This article addresses the foundations of bullying by examining the ‘nature’ (i.e., bullying behavior influenced by the innate genetic make-up of an individual) and the ‘nurture’ (i.e., individuals learn to be bullies and environments allow the behavior to perpetuate) arguments for the occurrence of bullying behavior. In addition, guidelines are presented for managers in global organizations to use in assessing and monitoring bullying activities in global organizations.

KEY WORDS: increased diversity, harassment, ‘nature’ vs. ‘nurture’ impact on bullying activities, Combating bullies in the 21st century global workplace

...signs of bullying include declining morale, decreased profits, decreased productivity, lower work intensification, declining commitment, low job satisfaction, and motivation...leading to decreased profits (Sheehan, 1999)

Introduction

Bullying in organizations will continue to be an important consideration in the management of global organizations (Einarsen and Raknes, 1997), as it has detrimental effects on productivity (Keelan, 2000), financial bottom-line (Field, 2003), and employee morale (Olafsson and Johannsdottir, 2004). Yet, bullying is often a misunderstood, misdiagnosed, and

a mismanaged behavior in work environments. Table I illustrates the differences between peer conflict and conflict arising out of bullying behavior. Many victims of bullying suffer from a form of social stress that is similar in nature to post-traumatic stress syndrome that can have a debilitating impact on the individual (Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996; Wilson, 1991). Thus, the bullied individual can have social, psychological, and psychosomatic dimensions, which can manifest itself in a negative impact on the individual’s self-efficacy, and ability to perform his/her job (Einarsen, 1999; Einarsen and Raknes, 1997). The question arises, exactly what is bullying.

Bullying is repeated acts and practices that are directed at one or more workers, which are unwanted by the victim(s) which, may be done deliberately or unconsciously, but clearly cause humiliation, offence, and distress, and may interfere with job performance and/or cause unpleasant working environment (Einarsen, 1999, p. 17).

Bullying can fall into one of the following five categories in a work environment: (1) Name calling by a bully in public (Andersson and Pearson, 1999; Averill, 1983); (2) Using a scapegoat by placing the fault for failure on a stigmatized individual or group in the organization (Mikula et al., 1990; Robinson and Bennett, 1997); (3) Increasing work pressure to perform on one individual/group beyond the level of expectations of others in the organization (Robinson and O’Leary-Kelly, 1996; Youngs, 1986); (4) Sexual harassment of co-workers generally by individuals with a power differential (Baron and Neuman, 1996; Bies and Tripp, 1998; Tata, 1993; Terpstra and Baker, 1991); and (5) Physical abuse or harm to a stigmatized individual or group (Brotsky, 1976; Einarsen, 1999).

TABLE I
Comparison of peer and bullying conflict

Peer conflict	Bullying conflict
Equal power	Imbalance of power (positional and/or personal)
Past relationship(s)	Repeat & negative interactions
Conflict – Accidental	Conflict – Intentional & poses serious threat or emotional harm
Equal emotional reaction	Strong emotional reaction from victim & minimum emotion from bully
Not seeking power or attention	Seeking power & control
Not attempting to escalate conflict	Attempting to gain control through conflict
Remorse	Remorse – Varying Degrees
Takes responsibility for actions	Blames victim
Concerted effort to resolve problem/conflict	No effort to solve problem/conflict

Each of these, can create stress and apprehension, thus effecting the motivation, commitment, mental health, and ultimately the performance of the individual that is the target of bullying (Niedl, 1995; Sheehan, 1999; Tepper et al., 2001; Wilson, 1991; Zapf et al., 1996).

As organizations evolve into global organizations, one could expect that there could be an increase in the frequency and severity of bullying behavior in the organization for a number of reasons (Berkowitz, 1993; Chen and St. Eastman, 1997). First, there can be an increase in the diversity of employees in the organization (Lin, 1999). It is anticipated that there can be an increase frequency (i.e., increasing number of foreign employees) as well as the degree of cultural novelty (i.e., cultural distance of employees from those of the home country) of foreign employees (Harvey and Novicevic, 2001). Diversity in an organization stimulates the concept of in-groups/out-groups as well as stigmatizing groups that are not central to the general population (Giacalone and Greenberg, 1997; Calhoun, 2002). Stigmatization of foreign employees is generally focused on some recognizable differences in characteristics, such as race, weight, (dis)ability, gender, or nationality (Link and Phelan, 1999; Zebrowitz, 1996).

The second issue that underlies the potential for an increase in bullying behaviors in global organizations is the remote, asynchronous nature of the environment of the foreign assignments. Given the loosely coupled nature of global network organizations and the detached characteristics of global assignments has the potential for reduced levels of management

surveillance. This allows for the formation of a variety of organizational cultures and subcultures that may have less tolerance for diversity or different cultural norms from that of the home country organization. In addition, a 'spiral of silence' (Noelle-Neumann, 1977) can emanate from global network organizations, in that, foreign managers and employees that are not as attuned to cultural standards or norms, become ideal bullying targets (i.e., out of sight, out of mind). This was evidenced in the number of multinational corporations that are accused of contracting with sweatshops in emerging economies to make products that are sold in home markets. While there is little evidence of intent to employ minors or to have deplorable working conditions, sweatshops still exist and operate under a 'spiral of silence' (Glynn et al., 1997; Gonzenbach, 1992; Taylor, 1982).

A third reason why bullying could occur at a higher rate in global organizations is the variety of legal environments in emerging economies, standards for recourse by the bullied individual could be significantly different. Protecting employees against abuse is a relatively recent occurrence in developed economies (i.e., Australia, United Kingdom, United States (Yamada, 2003)), but has garnered less attention in the emerging economies in the world. With the lack of supervision and absence of legal remedies available to workers, it is a reasonable assumption that organizational cultures could be ripe for bullying to occur. The 'rights of workers' is an evolving standard that has yet to become well-established in developing/emerging economies of the world. "The globalization of markets has created complex moral and

legal issues concerning working conditions around the world” (Yamada, 2003, p. 407). Therefore, the occurrence of bullying has a strong potential to occur as organizations globalize their operations.

The intent of this article is to explore bullying in a global organizational context. First, a theoretical basis, normative ethical behavior, for assessing bullying behavior will be introduced. Second, the development of a model of bullying in global organizations that incorporates the characteristics of the bully, those being bullied, those knowing of the bullying activities, and the acquiescent environment that ‘encourages’ bullying activities to take place will be analyzed. Third, the ‘nature’ argument (i.e., antisocial behavior is innately wired) of bullying will be discussed. Fourth, the ‘nurture’ contention (i.e., environmental conditions stimulate or create bullies) will be examined as an alternative and/or combinative explanation for the innate/nature theory of bullies. Finally, a proactive means to address bullying activities in global organizations is introduced. Each of these topics will be discussed in the following sections of this article.

Theoretical support for the development ethical assessment of global bullying

Examining bullying as an unethical act helps focus on the issues associated with bullying activities. A normative approach to ethics is thought to be derived from descriptive ethics (i.e., compares different moral systems, beliefs, principles, and values), in that it attempts to explain and justify the morality standard for a society. Many of the popular theories on ethical behavior are captured in the normative ethics literature. The utilitarianism as well as deontological approaches are the two of the most common perspectives used to explain moral reasoning (DeGeorge, 1999). The deontological approach states that duty is the basic moral imperative, independent of the consequences of the action. In utilitarianism, behavior is deemed moral or immoral by examining the impact or consequences of the action on others in the organization. Both of these ethical orientations could be useful in examining bullying behavior in a global context.

In most cases, the utilitarian and the deontological approaches to the moral evaluation of bullying

activities will result in similar moral conclusions (DeGeorge, 1999). Both perspectives can be used to take a systemic approach to explaining moral judgments about bullying in global organizations. Both theoretical orientations begin with the premise that the basic moral norms, which state that certain actions are morally right and others are morally wrong (e.g., bullying). Brady (1985) developed a model, which viewed both theories as being complementary, with utilitarianism being oriented to the future (i.e., seeking perspective that would give the best possible results according to what it means to be human) and deontology examining the past (i.e., examining the cultural heritage established by law, language and tradition, and assessing the relevance and adequacy of the store of knowledge). These ethical theories are useful in giving information for analyzing everyday ethical dilemmas relative to bullying in global organizations.

Business ethics is made-up of the rules, the standards, the principles, or the codes that give guidelines for morally right behavior and truthfulness in specific situations in an organization (Lewis, 1985). Business ethics examines the morality of business even when it is conducting business outside the home country. The goal of business ethics is to understand why individuals and corporations behave in certain ways when confronted with principled dilemmas regardless of the contextual (e.g., environment or laws) of a foreign country. The use of self-interest theories to examine why individuals in organizations behave unethically is common. Agency theory (Becker, 1976; Holstrom, 1979), reinforcement theory (Trevino, 1986), social exchange theory and neoclassical economics theories (Grover, 1993) have all been used to demonstrate that individuals can act in an aggressive, egoistical way toward others in the organization. Even though ethical decision-making is, by its nature, a social phenomenon, it needs to be researched in terms of relationships particularly when there are a number of different cultures represented in the organization, as will be the case in global organizations.

It has been noted that social network perspective illustrates that social relationships have a three-way interaction with issues/environmental characteristics, the individual, and the organization in producing unethical behavior (Brass et al., 1998). Therefore, unethical behavior occurring among individual actors will be limited if their relationship is of a long

duration, healthy, and systemic in nature relative to balancing power which most bullying acts are not. Other members of an organization (i.e., bystanders and/or observers of bullying acts) can deter unethical behavior, as will the possibility that due to mutual friends/coworkers may find out about the focal individual's unethical behavior, due to a concern over reputation. Thus, employees solve ethical dilemmas based on their individual characteristics, the organizational culture in which they are embedded and the resulting 'realities' of the work environment, and their relationships with others in the organization. If any of these elements are deficient or aberrant behavior in nature bullying can occur. Moreover, if the situation is not adequately addressed by management, bullying can become an accepted 'ethical' behavior in global organizations.

Interaction among individuals in an organization relative to their ethical behavior suggests that accountability will have an effect on the occurrence of bullying. Accountability is considered to be the perception of defending or justifying one's conduct (e.g., bullying) to an audience that has reward or sanction authority, and where rewards or sanctions are perceived to be contingent upon audience evaluation of such conduct (Tetlock, 1985, 1992). Accountability theory states that a pivotal role for interpersonal expectations by emphasizing the importance of the consequences of compliance that links aberrant interpersonal dynamics (e.g., bullying) to the ethical/unethical nature of individual behavior (Cummings and Anton, 1990; Ferris et al., 1995; Frink and Klimoski, 1998; Schlenker et al., 1994). Individual expectations are strongly influenced by skills, knowledge, abilities, and the actors personality, as well as the past interactions of the various actors with each other within the organization (Frink and Klimoski, 1998). Therefore, if bullying is 'tolerated' in a global organization as acceptable/ethical behavior, then it can become an ethical norm in the organization. This implicit endorsement of dysfunctional behavior reduces the 'healthiness' of the organizational environment and more than likely will have an adverse impact on productivity.

Interpersonal relationships may be one of the most important consideration relative to the acceptance of unethical behavior, subject to the realities of work interdependence and organizational, as well as, job norms. Therefore, negative workplace behavior

such as bullying takes place in a social system and is based upon mutual expectations, influence processes, understanding, and predictable behavior (Frink and Klimoski, 1998). While many organizations have formal code-of-ethics, there are individuals who are possibly more salient to the individual (e.g., someone in close contact with the individual that is bullying and getting away without intervention by someone in management). In fact, there are times when individuals, faced with an ethical dilemma, want to do the right thing based on their own values, but are overwhelmed by social forces to comply with the values of others in the organization (i.e., pluralistic ignorance) (Brief et al., 1991). Once again, by developing a quality organizational culture and supporting normatively acceptable behavior, accountability would lead to less bullying activities.

Research on unethical behavior in global organizations is to determine why individuals behave as they do when confronted with an interpersonal ethical dilemma like bullying. It has been discovered that management should recognize that there are employees who will act ethically most of the time and there are certain instances where most people will behave unethically. Given these individual differences in the ethical stances of individuals, then organizations should attempt to use this information when hiring individuals. However, at the same time, management should understand what characteristics of the organizational culture might directly influence ethical behavior (Hegarty and Sims, 1978), or ethical codes-of-conduct (Cressey and Moore, 1983; Laczniak and Inderrieden, 1987; McCabe and Trevino, 1993). A Limited number of employees behave ethically all the time and few ethical dilemmas lend themselves to easily identifiable answers; many researchers suggest that ethical decision-making around such topics as bullying involves a complex interaction between the individual, organization, and the act of bullying (Jones, 1991).

A model of bullying in global organizations

In an effort to gain a better understanding of bullying behavior in global organizations, a model is proposed that delineates the key aspects of a bullying event (see Figure 1). The foundation of the bullying

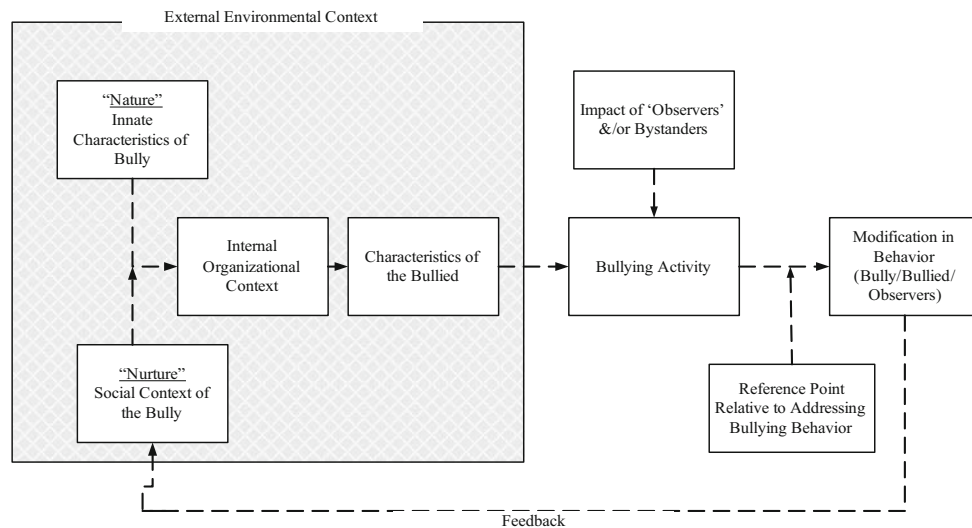


Figure 1. A model of bullying in global organizations.

model can be found in the external environment as an overarching context for the members of a group/organization. This cultural backdrop provides the predispositions toward accepting bullying activities in an organizational context. The cultural syndromes (e.g., cultural complexity, cultural tightness, relative individualism versus collectivism, active versus passive nature of the culture, ascription versus achievement characteristics, and diffuse versus specific orientations) (Triandis, 1994, 1995, 1996) all help to determine the conduciveness to bullying acts taking place and being condoned in a culture.

The innate and social characteristics of the bully can also be key dimensions in better understanding and predicting bullying behavior in a global organization. The crux of the issue is to what degree is bullying behavior 'caused' by 'nature' (i.e., one is born with innate characteristics/genes that produce tendencies to be a bully) versus 'nurture' (i.e., an individual learns to be a bully and the environment is supportive of such behavior). The 'Nature' Perspective on Bullying in Global Organization Bullies represent 7–15% of school age population with 10% of the students being considered as both bullies and victims and with the victim category being significantly higher for male students (Pellegrini, 1998; Smith and Brain, 2000; Smith et al., 1999). Natural 'causes' that play a role in one taking on bullying tendencies appear to center on gene defects and the

absorption of essential hormones in the brain (Raine et al., 1994). This contention that there is a biological connection between inherited characteristics and aggression is supported by a collection of longitudinal research programs in a number of countries (e.g., Denmark, Holland, Sweden, Great Britain, Australia, Japan, Canada, and the United States). Bullying behavior may suggest that there can be a greater genetic influence on aggressive as compared to nonaggressive antisocial behavior particularly among males (Eley et al., 1999).

There is a well established body of research which concludes that there are innate/biological inherited characteristics that encourage bullying behavior and this 'tendency' is supported by a number of environmental conditions (for example see Jean et al., 1995). This is not to say that bullying is predestined, rather that there is a strong connection between inherited genes and the propensity for individuals to become aggressive in certain environmental contexts. Aggressive antisocial behavior is seen in one-third to one-half of all cases referred to child and adolescent psychiatric clinics and these are the same individuals who go on to be adults in the workforce (Marwick, 1996). Aggressive antisocial behavior is represented by physical acts of aggression whereas nonaggressive behavior are interactions that are more latent and not viewed as confrontational by others (Eley et al., 1999; Loeber and Hay, 1997).

There appear to be three leading biological influences on the propensity to exhibit aggression behavior:

- (1) *Brain related issues*: the frontal lobes of the brain are thought to influence self-control, maturity, judgment, tactfulness, reasoning, and aggression. The prefrontal cortex uptake of glucose (i.e., the fuel for the brain) is significantly lower for pathological antisocial aggressive individuals (Raine et al., 1994),
- (2) *Mutation of specific genes*: researchers have discovered in impulsive aggressive males a mutation in genes that code for an enzyme, monoamine oxidase A (MAOA). This gene metabolizes the brain chemicals serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine. If the gene malfunctions and does not metabolize the appropriate amount of these chemicals, high levels of aggression and antisocial (e.g., bullying) behavior can occur (Cases, 1995). It is also thought that genotypes can moderate children's sensitivity to environmental stress and insults that might lead to antisocial bullying in group settings on their part (Caspi et al., 2002), and
- (3) *Overly developed immune system*: researchers have found that aggressive behavior is associated with a strong immune system with aggression-immunity association strongest for CD4 cells and B-lymphocytes (Granger et al., 2000). However, it should not be concluded that individuals with these conditions would automatically become bullies; rather these biological conditions appear to coincide with a certain percentage of individuals that exhibit bullying tendencies.

Given the scientific evidence and decades of research throughout the world, it would be difficult to disregard the biological foundation of aggressiveness, which can manifest itself in bullying in adult stages of life. Individuals with these conditions may have a tendency to exhibit bullying characteristics; yet, there is minimum certainty to the prediction. At the same time, there is a compelling set of arguments which state that environment conditions directly influence the propensity to become a bully and that the increasing occurrence of bullying

in the workplace is primarily due to environmental conditions. These arguments need to be examined within the context of the biological, 'nature' arguments presented above.

The 'nurture' perspective on bullying in global organizations

Whereas, the 'nurture' argument relative to bullying occurring centers on the social context of an organization's willingness to accept bullying behavior and through limited supervision and sanctions of bullies (Keashly et al., 1994; Tepper et al., 2001; Zellars et al., 2002). The organization's cultural norms provide the basic parameters of acceptable and unacceptable behavior in the work setting; which in turn, defines the level of acceptance of deviant behavior, such as bullying (Andersson and Pearson, 1999; Brodsky, 1976). An organization's culture is the definition of reality as far as the organization is concerned being reflected in the organization's: (1) standard operating procedures (SOPs); (2) norms of behavior; (3) rules of conduct; (4) values held as being important; (5) symbols and totems in the organization of representing things of value and importance; (6) taboos both symbolic as well as real; (7) heroes or key personalities that define the nature of the organization; and (8) the daily climate or civility with in the organization (Schein, 1992, 1999). These cultural 'signposts' provide the operating code for interaction in the organization.

The bullied individual may be a 'willing' target of the bullying activities, in that they have the characteristics of 'prey.' These individuals can appear to be passive and not well connected in the organization or not a part of an existing in-group (Aquino, 2000; Aquino et al., 1999). This lack of identification with political or social power bases signals to the bullying that these individuals are likely targets of bullying behaviors. This situation can escalate into a learned helplessness of the bullied individual perpetuating the bullying/bullied cycle (Kelly et al., 1999).

The reaction of 'others' (bystanders) to bullying behavior can define the parameters of acceptance and reaction to the bullying behavior. The frame-of-reference might be based on experience in the same organization or other organizations to which

they were members. However, the key to ‘others’ observation of bullying is their acceptance of behavior that may encourage bullying to continue in the organization. The ‘others’ ethical expectations relative to the bullying act becomes the fulcrum that is used to determine the level of acceptance and/or severity of the deviant behavior. Thus, the bully, the bullied, and the management have ethical standards as to the acceptability of bullying in the organization. To the degree that these ethical standards are the same, the greater the likelihood that bullying may be tolerated, whereas, if each group has a different ethical expectations, conflict can arise as to the acceptability of bullying behaviors.

Antisocial behavior during childhood is one of the strongest predictors of adult antisocial behavior (Loeber and Dishion, 1983). Aggressive antisocial behavior appears to be a learned phenomenon that carries over into adulthood and is frequently expressed as bullying (Eley et al., 1999). Social Learning Theory contends that violent behavior is a product of learning, in that, individuals learn to be violent chiefly through imitation of violent role models they observe in and out of the workplace (Bandura, 1973, 1986; Barron, 1977). Therefore, it is contended that the external environment can contribute to the acquisition and maintenance of aggressive and bullying behaviors in groups and organizations (Espelage et al., 2003). Frequently, it is thought that the antisocial behavior of employees can be initiated in childhood when adolescents are exposed to abuse, violent, or authoritarian styles of parenting behavior or by the overt bullying/domination acts of older siblings (Loeber and Hay, 1997; McCord, 1979; Sheline, 1994; Spatz-Widom, 1989).

Indeed, bullying may be an imitation of aggression experienced at home (Haynie et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993; Schwartz et al., 2001). This role model ‘mimicking’ can also take place in business organizations when employees observe managers being abusive to other employees (Keashly et al., 1994; Tepper et al., 2001; Zellars et al., 2002), employees exhibiting tyrannical/uncivil behavior toward one another (Ashforth, 1994), or through overt bullying of others in the organization (Hoel et al., 1999; Rayner and Cooper, 1997; Zapf, 1999). Given their childhood experiences, employees may be predisposed to bullying regardless of what

behaviors they observe in the workplace (i.e., When Charles Manson comes to the workplace, Segal, 1994). However, the combination of the two social contexts (home and work) would seem to encourage overt bullying behavior on the part of adults in a work environment (Espelage et al., 2003).

There appears to be four prominent contextual factors that stimulate and/or elicit bullying behavior in a work environment:

- (1) *Deficiencies in work design*: lack or improper supervision or the conditions in which individuals are required to work (i.e., physical environments conducive to allow bullying to occur such as isolated areas) or the actual process of completing the work (i.e., lack of supervision),
- (2) *Deficiencies in leadership behavior*: inadequate supervision or lack of training of supervisors/managers on how to address bullying behavior observed in the workplace and, what constitutes appropriate/inappropriate behavior with peers and subordinates, and/or the potential consequences of their bullying behavior,
- (3) *A socially exposed position of the victim*: weaknesses of a fellow employee or in management processes are known to the bully and are acted upon to take advantage of the social inequities in the work environment - conditions suffered by undocumented workers and the ‘power/influence’ that can be abused by managers/supervisors given the employees peerless legal position and inability to complain, and
- (4) *Low morale standard in the department*: the culture and climate within the organization has over time learned to accept substandard treatment and therefore, bullying is not only tolerated but expected (i.e., demoralization similar to prisoners of war) (Einaresen, 1999; Leymann, 1993; Morrill, 1992).

At the heart of the bullying phenomena, could be the low-esteem of the bully in conjunction with the low-esteem of the victim (as perceived by the bully), eventually creating a potential vicious self-perpetuating cycle of abuse similar to spousal abuse. One’s perception of oneself even at an unconscious level

can inevitably frame one's behavior and interaction with others in a work environment (Luzio-Lockett, 1995). Coupled with the lack of a clear set of policies or 'official' stance on bullying in the organization, the culture will help to sustain the social environment in the workplace to perpetuate bullying. Simultaneously, 'others' observe and either learn to become a bully themselves or take on the mantle of learned self-helplessness of future victims. The social context of bullying can escalate from sarcasm, threats, verbal abuse, intimidation, bad-mouthing, manipulation, duplicity, unpleasant assignments, demeaning jobs, exclusion, isolation, and in extreme cases of physical violence or forced resignation (McCarthy et al., 1995; Sheehan, 1999).

Recommended means to proactively address & monitor the occurrence of bullying in global organizations

While it would appear that both the 'nature' and 'nurture' arguments provide insights into bullying behavior in global organizations, it is becoming apparent that management needs to develop a proactive stance in addressing the increasing occurrence of bullying behavior. Given the landscape of a global organization (i.e., geographically dispersed, higher level of diversity, and less direct supervision of employees and operating managers) a model is offered to address the ethical issues associated with global bullying (see Figure 2).

Assessment of present global organizational culture/climate relative to bullying

In order to gain an insight into the variation in the organizational cultures in the various operating units of the global organization, the human resource management department should undertake an assessment of the global cultural environment. This audit would examine the following cultural dimensions of the organization:

- (1) Development of SOPs for the intolerance of hostile, harassment behaviors in the organization (i.e., the foundation of acceptable standards/norms of behavior for employees and managers),

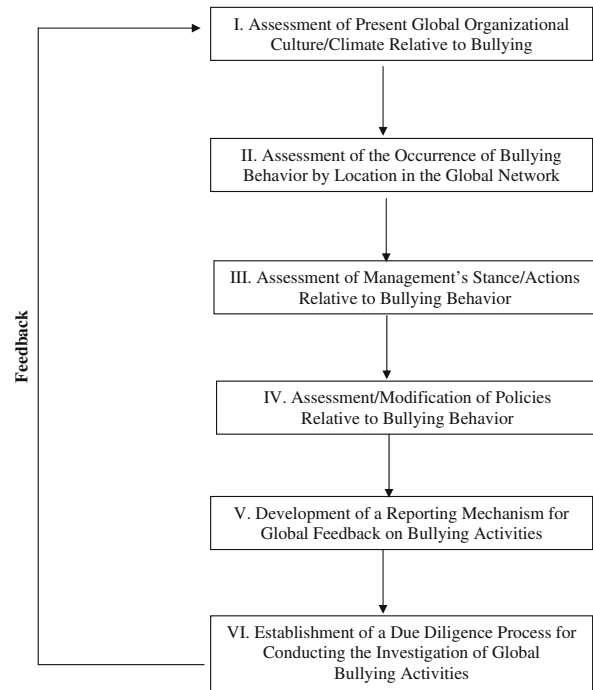


Figure 2. Addressing bullying in global organizations.

- (2) Determination of the organizational unit that is responsible for monitoring/assessing the compliance to SOPs and the timeline of periodic review of the integrity of the system,
- (3) Establishment of a process for reviewing grievances that is 'locally' sensitive but consistent in the global context,
- (4) Formation of a standing committee to serve as system-wide compliance oversight for all grievances brought in the system, regardless of location, and
- (5) Determination of appropriate penalties for accidents that are deemed in violation of the SOPs of the local/global organization to help ensure system-wide consistency.

The key aspect of this stage of the assessment process is the establishment of a system-wide infrastructure to assess the operating units' actions relative to bullying/harassment in the global organization.

Assessment of the occurrence of bullying behavior by location in the global network

Once the basic monitoring infrastructure has been put into place, it would be essential to examine the

occurrence of bullying in the various organizations (i.e., headquarters, subsidiaries, joint ventures, strategic alliance, and the like) to establish a benchmark for the frequency of bullying acts. In this way, the variation in the various environments can be identified, as well as, the sheer volume of incidents can be calibrated. This is of particular importance in the 'shared' culture of joint ventures, partnerships, and strategic alliances. These hybrid cultures can provide conflicting signals to employees, particularly those employees that work where bullying is allowed. The difference in acceptance of aggressive behavior may be culturally inherent and therefore, not considered to be offensive or of a conflicting nature. These integrated cultures could be fertile environments of cultural based bullying and thus create varying standards of what constitutes bullying behavior.

Assessment of management's stance/actions relative to bullying behavior

The resolution to prevent bullying behavior needs to be benchmarked overtime to gain insight to the number and severity of incidents to determine if they are being handled consistently across various organizational environments. At the same time, the resolution of the reports should be examined to assess the appropriateness of the actions taken by the management team. In addition, a case history on the victim would be helpful to determine if the bullying acts had a long-term impact on their commitment, motivation, and willingness to support the mission of the organization. It would also be appropriate to classify bullying activities into categories of acts to ascertain the type of administrative action take by the operating unit's management. A potential problem, given the network visibility of bullying activities through the monitoring system, is that the local management may want to discourage formal 'handling' of the bullying activities in their operating unit. Thus, suppression of the reporting of bullying activities to give the illusion that the company or unit is bully free and well managed. As a result, this behavior could discourage open communication between management and the employees and needs to be anticipated by the human resource management team.

Assessment/modification of policies relative to bullying behavior

Once the benchmark of occurrence of actions taken by management has been completed, it may be necessary to make some modification to the existing system and practices. The goal at this stage is to reduce the variance among the operating units and to help ensure that bullying activities are being 'fully' reported and handled consistently. This phase of the process is important in that employees/managers need to see significant modifications to instill confidence in the infrastructure and reporting system to ensure that they will continue to report and address bullying attempts. Without these changes and hence 'renewal,' the system can lose its relevance and acceptance as a valid control function in the organization.

Development of a reporting mechanism for global feedback on bullying activities

It is essential that employees/managers receive feedback on bullying activities in their operating unit, as well as, for the global system as a whole. The punitive damages to those that bully in the organization should be distributed and communicated to illustrate the organization's position of zero tolerance. Just as with sexual harassment, the greater the exposure of the activity, the more pervasive the assumption of zero tolerance throughout the organization will be. Without the 'light' of intolerance, the tendency may be for others in the system to think that bullying is an acceptable behavior, regardless of the consequences to those directly involved.

Establishment of a due diligence process for conducting the investigation of global bullying activities

One of the hallmarks of a formal bullying monitoring process/system is to establish a due process program *ex ante* for managers/employees accused of bullying activities. Such a program has a legal foundation but should also be viewed in the context of ethical responsibility of the organization to its management/employees. In an effort to provide due

process for those accused of bullying organizations, the following steps should be formally introduced as a SOP: (1) provision for forewarning managers about the organizations policies on bullying and the low tolerance for such actions; (2) the process for review of bullying should establish clear and reasonable rules regarding the abuse of others in the organization by those accused of bullying; (3) the mechanism for reviewing accusations of bullying should be well articulated and objective standards established for what bullying acts entail; (4) the standardized review process of investigation into bullying acts should be established prior to investigation of bullying activities; (5) the range of sanctions for bullying in the organization should be formalized and communicated to managers/employees prior to investigation; and (6) the review process open to a manager/employee found guilty of bullying needs to be articulated to provide the accused a formal review process of the charges as well as the punishment. In addition to these, due review process of the accused bully, the entire bullying standards, and formal review process must be constantly assessed given the diversity of environments and the legal standards found in the countries in which the organization operates.

In order to help ensure a continued due diligence on the part of employees and management throughout the global network of operating units, a formalized auditing process should be developed. This would move the assessment of bullying from an *ad hoc* (case-by-case) system into a fully integrated management SOP. Once again, this may help to elevate the awareness and interest in creating a work environment with reduced bullying and encourage management groups to face the consequences of addressing bullying behavior. By instilling the process of assessing the occurrence of bullying across the system, employees/managers cannot turn a 'blind-eye' or 'deaf-ear' to bullying activity that they know of, observe, or hear about in some part of the organization.

Summary & conclusion

Bullying (co-worker to co-worker and manager to employee) in the workplace has been an ethical phenomenon for as long as there have been formal organizations and there is no reason to believe that

the intensity of this deviant behavior will diminish. In fact, just the opposite is expected, given the growth of global organizations with operations throughout the world where moral/ethical standards can vary for each location and organizational configuration. Therefore, examining the ethical 'variance' among the various macro as well as organizational cultures would appear to be a productive means to examine bullying activities in global organizations. Cultural foundations play an important part in the level and types of causes, as well as, the resolution to bullying acts in global organizations. Therefore, as the expansion of the global organization continues into numerous culturally distant countries, bullying is anticipated to 'thrive.'

In order to gain an insight into the causes and consequences of bullying, one must look to both the innate (nature) and learned (nurture) behaviors of individuals. The physiological make-up of an individual (i.e., genes and chemical balance) can have a direct effect on the behavioral patterns of an individual. The literature supports the assumption that aggression may be a 'wired' part of behavior that individuals have limited control over throughout their life. At the same time, childhood and interpersonal experiences may directly affect one's behavior relative to social or professional counterparts. Aspects of bullying are learned from others and mimicking the behavior of others has been shown to play a part in becoming a bully in the workplace.

This encompassing understanding of 'nature' and 'nurture' (cultural and social dimensions) is needed to establish worthwhile processes to offset this unethical, multidimensional, complex, counterproductive work behavior called bullying. Without formalized SOPs, which draw attention to bullying activities in global organizations, the impact of bullying will continue to be a growing management concern.

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Zellars, K., B. Tepper and M. Duffy: 2002, 'Abusive Supervision and Subordinates' Organizational Citizenship', *Journal of Applied Psychology* **87**, 1068–1077.

Michael Harvey
University of Mississippi,
University, MS, U.S.A.
E-mail: mharvey@bus.olemiss.edu

and

Bond University,
Gold Coast, Australia

Darren Treadway
State University of New York at Buffalo,
Buffalo, NY, U.S.A.

Joyce Thompson Heames
West Virginia University,
Morgantown, WV, U.S.A.

Allison Duke
Lipscomb University,
Nashville, TN, U.S.A.