

The Toxic Workplace Environment and Employees' Engagement among KELAS Al-quran Dan Fardu Ain (KAFA) Teachers in Terengganu

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Abstract

A toxic work environment is the most frequent cause of employee departure. In a toxic environment, stress, negativity, and conflict can flourish. In addition to having a detrimental impact on an employee's physical and mental health, it may also impair productivity and morale. This study tries to quantify the impact of a toxic workplace on Terengganu's Kelas Al-Quran Dan Fardhu Ain (KAFA) teachers' level of engagement. From Terengganu's KAFA teachers, 196 responders in total were chosen. Employees' engagement was found to have a medium to strong correlation with three indicators, including workplace harassment, bullying, and ostracism. The study demonstrates a significant and beneficial relationship between workplace bullying, harassment, workplace ostracism and employees' engagement. According to the study's findings, KAFA teachers should concentrate on reducing workplace bullying because it will increase their level of employees' engagement. The study's research and practical consequences are then examined.

Keywords: Workplace Harassment, Workplace Bullying, Workplace Ostracism, Employees' Engagement

Introduction

Background of Study

The term "toxic workplace environment" refers to the treatment of people in a cruel and frequently violent manner, endangering their safety and health (Rasool et al., 2020). The effects of a toxic workplace environment may be felt throughout every organization, but few employees are willing to lodge formal complaints against such behaviour for a variety of personal reasons. It is challenging for researchers to record and study such occurrences as a result of the avoidance and silence of victims of a toxic working environment (Berquist et al.,

2018).

Additionally, an essential factor in employee engagement is organisational support. There have been numerous studies that look into the psychological processes that encourage employee engagement Odoardi et al (2015) but there hasn't been a clear separation of organisational traits that add to the cognitive processes that support innovation and individual development.

Many technological developments and environmental changes define the current high-speed competition on a worldwide scale. Environmental changes have an impact on all aspects of human life, including politics, economy, law, government, and sociocultural life. (Boye & Gronlund, 2018). This is seen in an environment at work that is supportive and has sound governance. Yet, if the problem with the toxic workplace remains, the firm will struggle to meet its objectives and suffer considerably in terms of productivity, overall performance, and cost.

A toxic workplace environment in small and medium-sized businesses has been demonstrated to have a detrimental impact on employee engagement, and such an atmosphere is a considerable hindrance to employee motivation and engagement (Samma, et al., 2020). Moreover, highly toxic work environment affects employees' mental and physical condition which generating stress and they unable to concentrate on their work and reduces their productivity and affect the success of the project.

Because of this, the study was conducted among Kelas Al-Quran dan Fardu Ain (KAFA) teachers in Terengganu to determine the connection between a toxic work environment and employees' engagement. This research educates KAFA teachers about the toxic work environment that exists there. This enables them to recognise the signs of the toxic environment that exists around them and move quickly to stop similar incidents from happening in the future. While the study aids KAFA teachers in enhancing the calibre of their job and relations with coworkers and the general public.

Statement of Problem

Because it reduced productivity and increased job fatigue, toxic workplace environments had a detrimental influence on the nation and society. The number of employees quitting their jobs has increased globally as a result of it. Shivani (2022) claims that there are some clear indicators of a toxic workplace, such as when staff members need to be on guard all the time to avoid trouble, need to snitch on coworkers to advance their careers, need to be on guard, need to keep their ideas to themselves to avoid being taken advantage of, and are required to work crazy hours for low pay. More than 40% of all employees were considering leaving their jobs at the beginning of 2021, and as the year went on, a record number of people left their jobs. Between April and September 2021, a record-breaking number of Americans left their jobs—more than 24 million—setting a new high. Corporate leaders are still struggling to comprehend the motivations behind the Great Resignation (Sull, et al., 2022).

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to

1. analyze the influence of workplace harassment and employees' engagement
2. examine the influence of workplace bullying and employees' engagement
3. investigate the relationship of workplace ostracism and employees' engagement

Literature Review

Toxic Workplace Environment

A toxic work environment or toxic culture affected employee performance and project success because of the workplace dynamics (Vreja, et al., 2016 as cited in Farida et al., 2022). This occurs when a task or excessive load that is beyond the capacity of the staff must be completed immediately. The employee's emotions are slightly disturbed by this issue, which is worse when the management ignores it. Toxic leadership conduct as a result of this issue is linked to deteriorating business standards and values. When an organization's effectiveness is compromised, talented employees leave and are not quickly replaced (Davis, 2016 as cited in Farida et al., 2022).

Toxic work environments pay attention to both interruptions and the surrounding environment. The amount of job satisfaction and productivity can be impacted by the workplace's physical environment, which includes noise, air quality, light, poisonous surroundings, temperature, humidity, aesthetics, and stress. There is growing evidence that the physical workplace influences employee performance, injuries, behaviour, communication patterns, fatigue, error rate, and physical and psychological stress in addition to job satisfaction. (Applebaum et al., 2010 as cited in Kurniawaty et al., 2019).

Workplace Harassment

Workplace harassment is described as any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or conduct directed towards a person's sexuality through coercion. Sexual violence in the workplace includes rape, attempted rape, and sexual harassment (WHO, 2012 as cited in Jonsdottir, 2022).

Due to their weakness and lack of strength compared to men, women are frequently the victims of sexual harassment. The findings indicate the need for workplace sexual harassment intervention (Maran et al., 2022). Both men and women who witness sexual harassment experience psychological consequences, tiredness, depression, and unpleasant sensations as a result of their experience. The quote indicates that sexual harassment affects both men and women. The victims of sexual assault at work, particularly women, infrequently report their incidents to their employers or file complaints (Latcheva, 2017 as cited in Maran et al., 2022).

Workplace Bullying

Today's society is still plagued with workplace bullying. In a range of contexts, including as the family, at school or work, in the community, or online, bullying or mobbing refers to the insulting or threatening of a person by a group (Burgess et al., 2018). Employees in firms may be impacted by the adoption of innovation by authorities or the government. It has a psychological effect, causing things like tension, annoyance, and unfavourable circumstances. It might make severe occurrences like workplace bullying more likely (Kleizen et al., 2023). For instance, handling changes that are advantageous to organisations but may initially put more stress or burden on personnel.

Bullying is also defined as situations where a person is frequently and over time subjected to harassment, abuse, offences, or social exclusion, leaving the individual in a disadvantageous position where they are unable to defend themselves against unethical behaviour (Einarsen et al., 2011 as cited in Feijo et al., 2019). Bullying at workplace had a bad effect on the business and the staff. Rising stress and sadness, which result in anxiety and

irritation, can diminish productivity. Those who engage little with their coworkers and are frequently absent risk destroying work by doing so (Rasool et al., 2020).

Workplace Ostracism

Ostracism is defined as a worker's experience of isolation at work caused by peers or bosses (Yang, 2018). The workplace exclusion reduces organisational and employee motivation, which in turn reduces job effectiveness (Rasool et al., 2020).

Yang (2020) explained that, due to the lack of resources, workplace exclusion may have a negative impact on an individual's ability to execute tasks. The conservation of resources theory contends that people with few resources will depersonalize, decrease their level of engagement at work, and reduce their performance attempts in an effort to safeguard the resources they do have. The standard of one's performance is likely to decline when that person lacks important resources, including knowledge, criticism, and social support. Ostracism at work has a detrimental impact on interpersonal conduct, and because there aren't as many human resource exchanges, it can also have a bad impact on employee performance. Additionally, it is asserted that isolation has a detrimental impact on one's capacity for self-regulation and reduces cognitive performance.

Employee Engagement

In addition, Anjum and Ming's (2018) study on employee engagement found that leadership, which the public expects the government to organise for good governance, is one of the most crucial challenges in the management of public administration. This desire is reasonable, and the government should be able to satisfy it by putting excellent governance policies in place.

Enhancing employee performance, which is crucial for a company's success. Some sources assert that performance is capable of achieving its objectives. Performance is a term used to express how successfully an activity, policy, or programme has contributed to the accomplishment of the organization's goals, objectives, mission, and vision as described in its strategic plan (George et al., 2019). An organisation must achieve a number of goals in order to conduct its operations. Based on the capabilities of the resources, these goals are established. One of the factors that can increase employee productivity in a company is a positive work environment. In this case, the positive work environment is represented by the workspace, the atmosphere at work, the interactions between coworkers, and the security and safety of the workplace, ensuring that employees always feel secure and at ease. The business must enhance its performance by taking the elements of the workplace into consideration in order to reach the objective (Anjum et al., 2018).

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrate the conceptual framework of this study. There are three independent variables (workplace harassment, workplace bullying and workplace ostracism), while dependent variable is employees' engagement. First, the workplace environment influences the employees' engagement. Second, there is a relationship between workplace bullying and the employee engagement. Third, the workplace ostracism among Kafa teachers may encourage the employee's engagement.

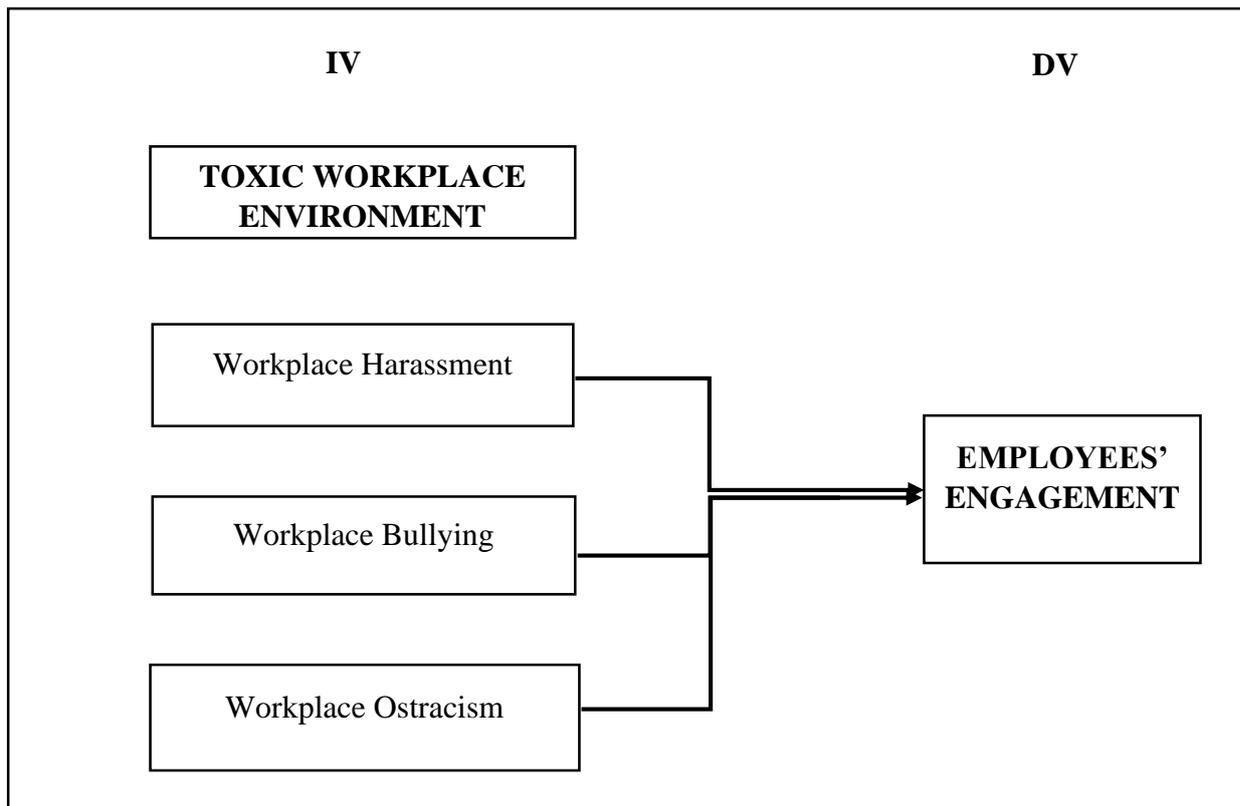


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Methodology

This study employs a correlational analysis to determine whether there are variations in a population's features depending on whether or not its subjects have been exposed to an interesting event in a naturalistic context (Lau, 2016). In the correlational analysis, the relationship between a toxic workplace culture and employee engagement is examined. Based on this study, the respondents who were chosen for this study's sampling frame were a list of KAFA teachers. in Terengganu. 393 teachers were the population of this study's population. Simple random sampling is the method used by the researcher. The researcher first compiles a list of KAFA teachers, then uses random number generation to determine the sample size and distribute the questionnaires in order to evaluate the toxic work environment and employee engagement. The surveys provided by the researcher were completed by the 196 KAFA teachers. The researcher uses primary data in this study to distribute questionnaires and gather data. The Google Form used to distribute the questionnaire to the intended responder using Telegram and WhatsApp. Since most researchers are already familiar with the methods, both media aid in quick distribution.

The questionnaire used in the study were validated and tested for reliability before distributed to the respondent. The validity important to ensure the question measures to what respondent needs for intended to measure. The experts will assess the instrument by making sure that it covers the entire context that needs to be covered in the questions, that the format is appropriate for the data to be obtained, that it covers the scope that is pertinent to the study's goal, and that it satisfies the needs of the respondents to be used in the research. In order to ensure the questionnaire was understood by the respondent, 25 non-respondents from various organizations was selected in pilot-test. The test allows researcher to get initial observation on the instrument selected for the focused study. It is important to

find the value of Cronbach's alpha at 0.60 and above. The questionnaire with 0.60 were accepted for distribution to KAFA teachers (actual respondents).

Findings of Study

Demographic Profile

According to Table 1 below, the first segment in the demographic profile is gender, which represents male and female. The female population is 62.2%, which is greater than the male population's 37.8%. The number of female and male respondents is 74 and 122, respectively.

The second segment carried out in the demographic profile section is age. The 35 to 42 age group had the most respondents, with 31.6% of all respondents. With 61 out of 196 respondents, 31.1% were between the ages of 18 to 25. While the age of 51 to 60 years old have the fewest respondents which is 8 and they represent 4.1% of the total. The frequency of respondents from the age group 26 to 34 years old is 52 respondents, represent 26.5% of the total.

In addition, the third segment shows in Table 5 is status. 3 category of status such as single, married and others need to answer by respondents. The highest category of status is married, represent 118 out of 196 respondents with 60.2%. While, the lowest frequency and percentage is single category with 64 respondents and 32.7% respectively. The status category which is others show 7.1% only with 14 respondents involved.

Level of education is one measurement in the demographic profile section. The table indicates the minimum of respondents are holders of Master Degree with 5% and only one respondent involved. While, the majority in 97 respondents are holders of Diploma and Certificate with 49.5%. Next, the 48 respondents show the 24.5% of them are holders in SPM, and 45 respondents are holders in Bachelor Degree with 23%. The respondent chosen others in education level only contributed 2.6% equal to 5 respondents.

The table 1 shows the last segment in demographic profile is year of respondent's service in KAFA. The respondents work below than 1 year indicates 17.9% (35 people), while 1 to 3 years of services was 13.8% represent 27 respondents. The respondents who worked in 4 to 6 years shows the 25 frequency with 12.8%. The highest group of respondents in year of service is 7-10 years which is 60 respondents, that contributed to 30.6%. The last one, the group of more than 10 years services in KAFA were 25% with frequency 49 respondents.

Table 1
Demographic Profile

N: 196		
Profile	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	74	37.8
Female	122	62.2
Age		
18 – 25 years old	61	31.1
26 – 34 years old	52	26.5
35 – 42 years old	62	31.6
43 – 50 years old	13	6.6
51 – 60 years old	8	4.1
Status		
Single	64	32.7
Married	118	60.2
Others	14	7.1
Level of Education		
SPM	48	24.5
Diploma or Certificate	97	49.5
Bachelor Degree	45	23.0
Master Degree	1	5.0
Others	5	2.6
Year of service		
Below than 1 year	35	17.9
1 to 3 years	27	13.8
4 to 6 years	25	12.8
7 to 10 years	60	30.6
More than 10 years	49	25.0

Reliability Analysis

One of the simplest approaches for figuring out reliability coefficients is to do a correlation analysis between two scores from the same person. If results are collected at multiple times, this method can be used to determine the reliability of retests; the reliability of parallel forms of testing can be estimated using a variety of forms of testing administered on the same day. The consistency and strength of a research strategy's output are gauged by the term "research reliability."

Table 2

Reliability test result

Construct	No. of Item	a Value
Dependent Variable		
Employee Engagement	6	0.988
Independent Variable		
Workplace Harassment	5	0.974
Workplace Bullying	5	0.980
Workplace Ostracism	6	0.986

The researcher developed a reliability test result, which is shown in Table 2 above, to assess the dependability of the study's variables. A 0.988 alpha value is displayed for the DV (employee engagement). The variable explained by Louangrath (2018) that the a-value is more than 0.90, suggesting that it is an outstanding reading value, is a good example of this. As a result, the data is accurate and represents the great accuracy of the measurement device. The reliability test indicates that the IV (workplace harassment) has an alpha value of 0.974, which is outstanding, but it is the lowest value of the other variables (workplace bullying, which has an alpha value of 0.980, and (workplace ostracism, which has an alpha value of 0.986).

Correlation Analysis

Table 3 illustrates the relationships between workplace bullying, harassment, workplace ostracism and employee engagement. The values of the correlation coefficients (rho) tabulated in Table 1 indicate the strength of the relationship between variables. The relationships between workplace bullying, harassment, workplace ostracism and employee engagement were investigated by using Pearson correlation coefficient. The results show that there was a strong positive correlation between workplace harassment and employee engagement ($r = 0.950$, $p < 0.00$). The workplace bullying and employee engagement ($r = 0.940$, $p < 0.00$). Besides, the correlation between workplace ostracism and employee engagement is $r = 0.952$ and $p < 0.00$.

Table 3

Correlation Between Toxic Workplace Environments and Employee Engagement

	Workplace Harassment	Workplace Bullying	Workplace Harassment
Pearson Correlation	.950**	.940**	.952**
Sig.	.000	.000	.000
N	196	196	196

Notes: **correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); *correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); Cronbach's alphas in the parentheses along the diagonal

Conclusion**Discussions**

According to a recent study, toxic work environments exist in all organisations, even in the smallest of details. The toxicity among managers, employees, or consumers highlights personal conflict and illnesses such as major mental illness and bipolar disorder. The study enables them to understand the traits of toxic in order to prevent toxicity from happening.

As businesses continuously monitor tasks, employee attitudes, and workplace dynamics, both employees and employers can identify workplace harassment. Employers can use this circumstance to examine the types of workers they now have. It will lessen and stop sexual harassment, especially of women.

When employees are depressed, dissatisfied at work, or otherwise, they may also be aware that they are being bullied by others. They were demotivated and misunderstood as a result of this form of workplace bullying. In order to ensure their safety and that appropriate action is taken, a victim must disclose the issue to high management or a person they trust. Before acting, get a counselor's viewpoint.

Conclusion

Researchers both inside and outside Malaysia are becoming more interested in and focused on the study of toxic environments. Because there is toxicity everywhere, the study is broad and information is readily available. KAFA teachers participated in a study that looked at the connection between a toxic workplace environment and employee engagement to determine if the business was toxic or not. To ensure that employees are working in a healthy atmosphere, the business must act. The coworkers must be organised in addition to being aware of their surroundings. You can intervene to save those who are playing the victim. The victim of sexual harassment, mockery, or ostracism typically won't speak up about it. The sufferer will get depressed and lose motivation as a result of the impact, which will interfere with the organization's mission. A hazardous work environment must be avoided in order to be productive in service or business.

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