

WORKPLACE BULLYING AND ITS HIDDEN IMPACT ON TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG APPAREL EMPLOYEES IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the effect of workplace bullying on turnover intention among operational level workers in the garment industry in Kandy District, Sri Lanka. The conceptual framework was developed through literature review, focusing on turnover intention as the dependent variable and workplace bullying as the independent variable, which was divided into three dimensions: work-related bullying, person-related bullying, and physical intimidation. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed among a sample of 380 respondents working in the garment industry in Kandy District, selected using the stratified sampling method. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23, employing both descriptive and inferential statistics. The correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between work-related bullying ($r = 0.751$, $p = 0.000$), person-related bullying ($r = 0.705$, $p = 0.000$), and physical intimidation ($r = 0.694$, $p = 0.000$) with turnover intention. Further, the regression analysis indicated an R squared value of 0.637, suggesting that 63.7% of the variance in turnover intention can be explained by these forms of bullying. Regression analysis further confirmed the significant positive effects of work-related bullying ($\beta = 0.455$, $p = 0.000$), person-related bullying ($\beta = 0.206$, $p = 0.000$), and physical intimidation ($\beta = 0.108$, $p = 0.002$) on turnover intention. The study concluded that workplace bullying significantly impacts turnover intention among operational level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry, with work-related bullying having the strongest effect, followed by person-related bullying and physical intimidation. To address these issues, organizations should implement comprehensive anti-bullying policies, conduct regular training and awareness programs, and establish support systems such as counseling services and confidential reporting mechanisms. By implementing these recommendations, organizations can create a safer work environment, reducing turnover intentions and improving employee retention. While the study focuses on the garment industry in Sri Lanka, its findings may be applicable to other industries. Future research should consider using a qualitative analysis method and incorporating different variables. The study's reliance on one-time cross-sectional data may limit responses from operational-level employees, suggesting the need for a more durable method. Future researchers might also explore bullying and harassment among female employees.

Keywords: Apparel industry, person-related bullying, physical intimidation, turnover intention, work-related bullying.