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Introduction to Data Science DSC500-T301

Week 6.3 Assignment

Bullying in the Workplace

The topic which I searched in Google Trends and will discuss throughout this project is “bullying in the workplace.” I chose this topic because it resonates with me and has happened within several different companies that I have worked for or with. There has been a rise in this particular topic over the last year. Though, one question I ask is, what change has there been that has caused this topic to increase over the previous year?

After looking at the statistics in Google Trend, I noticed that within the last few months, it has also increased how many times this topic was researched. Please see below the graph screenshot from that search.Graphical user interface, chart, application

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However, I looked more into this analysis and was able to see exactly how many times it was inquired into by extracting that data into an excel spreadsheet. In January 2022, it reached the 100 mark, and recently, in July 2022, it reached the 96 mark. What does this mean exactly? In Google Trends, these numbers represent the interest level of individuals investigating this topic during that month or time frame. Inside Google Trends, you can also see which area or subregion had the highest interest levels in this topic. Please see below the graph screenshot from that search. Graphical user interface, text

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I thought this was very interesting that the state I currently live in is number three on this interest topic search. As you see from the screenshot above the interest level was higher in both California and Oregon. Does this signify that this topic is being researched more because it is happening more often than it did before?

           Throughout this paper, I will go through five common questions for workplace bullying, and provide resources to stand with the research behind those questions. The five questions that I will be addressing are as follows:

1. What exactly is workplace bullying?
2. How common is it in the workforce today, and how is it compared to before?
3. What are the forms or types of workplace bullying?
4. How can it be handled?
5. Can it cause any mental or physical problems to the individual affected by workplace bullying?

**What exactly is workplace bullying?**

According to (Workplace Bullying, n.d.), “workplace bullying can be defined as the

repeated less favorable treatment of a person by another or others in the workplace, which may be considered unreasonable and inappropriate workplace practices.” Another definition of workplace bullying (What is workplace bullying?, n.d.) is health-harming mistreatment by one or more employees of an employee with abusive conduct that takes the form of verbal abuse. These harmful mistreatments can be directed towards an employee(s) and usually comes from someone in a position of power. Workplace bullying is often done in front of others as a target to undermine individual rights to dignity at work which becomes an ongoing behavior.

**How common is it in the workforce today, and how is it compared to before?**

According to the statistics from (Workplace Bullying, n.d.), results show that about 30% of adults are bullied at work. There is a total of over 76.3 million workers that have been affected in the United States. Of the employees that work from home, 43% of them are bullied, and 63% are same-gender bullying (women bullied women). However, over 34% of workers are unaware that they are being bullied. Text

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From our search on Google Trends, it is an issue that is growing more interest in being searched for results or answers. Most individuals will research the topic before presenting it to someone within the workplace. Other individuals will research the topic and never present it to anyone in their workplace due to fear of losing their jobs.

**What are the forms or types of workplace bullying?**

Throughout all of the resources researched (which are listed below in references), all examples of workplace bullying were common. Some of those familiar behaviors that a bully may conduct are as follows:

* Threatening
* Intimidating
* Humiliating
* Work Sabotage
* Singling Someone Out
* Giving impossible deadlines
* Retaliation
* Using insulting or offensive language

All of these behaviors from a bully are usually done in front of other people or co-workers. Though from personal experience, I had these done to me through emails, phone calls, or one-on-one meetings behind closed doors. Who is considered to be a bully? A bully is likely a supervisor, a co-worker, a colleague, or a manager. What are some early warning signs of bullying? The most common warning sign that an employee or individual is being bullied is isolation or exclusion. Either the employee or individual is keeping themselves away from the line of target. Or being intentionally isolated to not be included in the team or group activities.

**How can it be handled?**

All companies should have a policy and procedures handbook that is provided to you when you start a new job. Collectively companies should provide to you during orientation with the HR department before you start. The company's policy and procedures should align with the proper ways to handle workplace bullying. Though if your company does not have that outlined, the best actions are as follows: (Workplace Bullying, n.d.) (Workplace Bullying: Know Your Rights, n.d.)

* Document everything – keep emails, write down everything that happens, and take audio records (depending on state laws and consent)
* Keep dates, and times, including everyone that was around, and the place where the situation happened
* Bring the situation to your supervisor or next in command, or HR.

**Can it cause any mental or physical problems to the individual affected by workplace bullying?**

Yes, bullying can have a significant effect on both physical and mental health (Raypole, 2019). The physical effects of bullying can include; high blood pressure, insomnia, digestive issues, mood changes, panic attacks, and stress (Gordon, 2022). The mental effects of bullying include; anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, dreading work, self-doubt, and losing interest (Raypole, 2019). Through my experience, I had less drive to work adequately. My decision-making skills went down due to a lack of confidence in myself, and always doubting my actions. The stress became overbearing causing me to start having anxiety or panic attacks that I never had a record of doing. Towards the end, I started dreading going to work. It became hard for me to push myself to come into the office to do my work, and wanted to just stay at home to work because I felt safer out of the line of target.

As stated at the beginning of this paper, this is something that has happened to me within my current company, and with several prior companies. However, at those times, the policy and procedures did not have the best action steps on how to appropriately handle the situation. Instead, with my last company, it just got dismissed resulting in my termination. With my current company, I followed the policy and procedures and provided all of my documentation to the HR department. I spoke with a higher manager about the situation to become aware of the situation. However, instead of resolving the issues that were presented, conversely, it intensified the animosity and resentment between me, the bully, and my department. Therefore, I removed myself from that department with another opportunity in a different department. Could these situations have been handled or addressed better? Of course! However, after the issue has been addressed the change needs to begin with the managers or supervisors, move down the command chain, and end up with the HR department. With all the data and resources we have today, continuous improvement on the processes is increasingly being adjusted from the research and analysis. Companies' HR Departments are doing their best to update or adjust those results or answers each year in their Employee Handbook Policies and procedures.

In conclusion, bullying in the workplace is becoming more noticeable and acknowledged by employees. Employees are wanting their voices to be heard, rather than be silent. The Human Resources department of each company should provide the new employee with a company handbook that lists the policies and procedures of how that company deals with this issue and the actions to adequately address this situation. Furthermore, each workplace should improve its policies and procedures and keep up with the proper processes to handle these situations. As with any topic or situation, some individual(s) always finds new research or learn better opportunities for something to be addressed. As indicated, this is just another way the topics we research are improving through the data that is analyzed and the data science behind it.

# References

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