

ABSTRACT

Experiences of Workplace Bullying in Church Workplaces: The case of Southeastern Nigeria

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Keywords

Workplace bullying, faith-based organizations, Ubuntu

Workplace bullying as a growing social phenomenon has been intensively studied from various perspectives in the past two decades. What is known about bullying is that it is a complex phenomenon constantly encountered wherever there are social inequities, oppressive policies and power imbalances (Johnson, 2009). While much of what we know in literature on workplace bullying comes from the experiences of workers in non-religious organizations, little is known about the practice, nature, prevalence, and impact of bullying in Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs). The focus on Southeastern Nigeria (SEN) and church FBOs is predicated on the fact that Nigerian culture is steeped in religion and tradition. More importantly, SEN is chosen because Christianity is the dominant religion there. Through the establishment of schools and hospitals with employment opportunities, Churches have demonstrated the capacity to integrate social and economic values. Therefore, investigating cases of bullying in such a setting is aimed at expanding the frontiers of knowledge on what constitutes bullying, and what its impact is, in the experiences of church workers from Igbo population. This research will create awareness and develop a policy framework on workplace bullying for a safe work environment. This study is a qualitative design with semi-structured interviews and a purposive sample of 30 participants recruited from 11 FBOs. The first research question focused on church workers' lived experiences and understanding of workplace bullying. Relying on a hermeneutic phenomenological approach as the philosophical underpinning of this study, and using thematic analysis, three significant findings emerged from the first research question. Workplace bullying is associated with labour exploitations through poor remuneration, work overload, and miscarriage of justice, which are symbols of slavery within Igbo culture. In this presentation, I will discuss poor remuneration from the perspective of Ubuntu which considers workplace bullying as a moral infraction.

Reference

Johnson, S. L. (2009). International perspectives on workplace bullying among nurses: a review. *International Nursing Review*, 56(1), 34-40. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1466-7657.2008.00679.x>