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RESEARCH PAPER

Horizontal Hostility: A Concept Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of present paper is to discuss the concept of horizontal hostility, a special type of workplace violence among working women. Horizontal hostility has been identified as aggressive behavior inflicted by women towards other women due to gender issues or towards minority group members due to minority issues. Different psychological and organizational level drivers have been analyzed through literature. Horizontal hostility among working women is significant and results in psychological and physical outcomes including stress, low motivation, poor job performance and intension to leave. The need is to provide healthy and peaceful work environment that will enable competent women to achieve objectives of career success. In this regard, Government aims to protect women against violence at social and organizational level through different legislative frameworks. Organizations must eradicate drivers of horizontal hostility and provide women peaceful work environment. In order to develop coping skills, training and mentoring must be provided to them.

| KEYWORDS | Gender Discrimination, Horizontal Hostility, Leadership Role, Oppression, Toxic Work Environment |

Introduction

The phenomenon of Horizontal Hostility discusses unpleasant and belligerent conduct of women towards other women on gender issues or towards individuals of the identical minority or ethnic group related to minority issues. Horizontal hostility happens when predominant system of discrimination and oppression is believed, practiced, or imposed by members of a targeted group (Stone, 2007). Many women, while they want eagerly to succeed and invest invigorated efforts to achieve success, harbor negative feelings for other women to succeed in their career. This phenomenon has been known as Horizontal Violence, Horizontal Hostility, Lateral Violence, Indirect Aggression, or The Tall Poppy Syndrome in Australian culture. Tall Poppy is referred to as a visibly successful individual who attracts envy or hostility due to distinctive characteristics. The tall poppy syndrome (TPS) describes the tendency where high achievers are to belittle or cut down to same level (Funk, 2000). Horizontal hostility is distressing behavior intended by one female worker toward another having same rank within a chain of command that try to find out ways to control the person by disrespecting and waning his or her value as a human being. Horizontal violence refutes another's fundamental human rights and point towards a dearth of respectful behavior and appreciation for other's value and success.

The problem of horizontal hostility, horizontal violence, indirect aggression or TPS has a contemptible history. Psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists have studied the behaviors and attitudes of females in various human societies over generations. Different words have been created by historians and scholars to explicitly describe specific female behaviors and attitudes. In Oxford English Dictionary, in 1600s, the word "cat" was used to designate disrespect and pronounce a backbiting or spiteful woman (Tanenbaum, 2002). In 1919, the term "catfight" first seemed to describe a malicious clash between women in a contemptuous and unpleasant way (Tanenbaum, 2002). The term "catfight" is still in practice today to designate behavior of the females in significantly same perspective as males specifically use this term to refer to unreasonable and highly inappropriate behavior of females (Heim & Murphy, 2001).

Simmons (2002) considered aggression as a powerful indicator of values and norms of a society. Moreover, dominance and physical aggression in boys is considered as fairly normal in western cultures (Harbin, 2000; Heim & Murphy, 2001). Anne Campbell, a sociologist, proclaimed that attitudes towards aggression help to manifest gender roles in a social setup (Simmons, 2002). Boys will express their annoyance with other boys through various physically aggressive behaviors such as beating, punching and propelling. Conversely, such dominance and physical aggression is not culturally acceptable for girls. Their socialization prohibits this type of aggressive behavior and when they are upset, angry and face a competitive situation, they are encouraged to express their feelings non-physically (Chesler, 2001; Heim & Murphy, 2001; Tanenbaum, 2002; Simmons, 2002). Consequently, when girls are distressed, they will express their feelings of anger through more indirect and covert behaviors instead of engaging in explicitly physical or aggressive behaviors. The present paper aims to highlight the psychological and organizational drivers of horizontal hostility and suggest mentoring and training as a remedy to address the problem of female hostility in organizations.

Material and Methods

Data collection for this concept analysis consisted of searching electronic databases. Key terms included horizontal hostility, horizontal violence, lateral hostility, tall poppy syndrome and nurses eating their young. Extensive literature review determined forms or behavioral, psychological drivers and organizational level antecedents of horizontal hostility.

Findings Related to Horizontal Hostility

After review of literature, attributes and surrogate terms were identified. The psychological drivers and organizational level antecedents are discussed and a road map is developed.

Forms and Behavioral Tendencies of Horizontal Hostility

Workplace environment is influenced by various variables. The concept of horizontal hostility is one of those variables that affect workplace environment and results in counter productive work behaviors. Horizontal hostility describes the prejudice or adverse attitude of minority group members directed towards individuals of same minority group that is apparently more mainstream (White et al., 2006). Horizontal hostility completely negates the perception and importance of solidarity. It describes intimidating attitude of a person or group directed towards other persons or groups that should hypothetically share common values. Blanton et al., (1998) described negative behaviors that depict horizontal violence as calling colleagues with demeaning names, use

of expressions, tone of voice, or gestures that degrade or tease them, demeaning their concerns, and pushing them and propelling things. This violent behavior is unidentified and covert where the attacker tries to remain unseen in order to avoid conflict, social disapproval, conviction, or revenge.

Dunn (2003) has identified the ten most common forms of horizontal hostility, also known as lateral violence, in nursing profession. These behaviours include non-verbal insinuation, verbal disrespect, discouragement, concealing information, sabotage, discordance, scape-goating, betrayal, failure to respect confidentiality, and broken promises. Horizontal hostility happens because of suppressed feelings of anger and hatred of oppressed individuals. They express these feelings through negative behaviours including gossip, jealousy, insults, and accusing. Alspach (2007) described lateral violence as threatening behavior such as demeaning language, annoyance, angry outbursts, ignoring or refusing to answer questions, intimidating body language, and physical contact.

Bjorqvist, Lagerspetz, and Osterman (1992) have developed a "Direct and Indirect Aggression Scale" (DIAS) after studying the phenomenon of horizontal violence in Finland for a decade. According to DIAS, following are the indicators of indirect aggression:

- locks out the targeted one out of the group;

- friendship with another for retaliation from targeted person;

- pay no attention to the targeted one;

- gossips about targeted one because of anger;

- articulates fabricated stories about the targeted one;

- secret planning to trouble the targeted one;

- backbiting;

- convincing others for social exclusion of targeted one ;

- providing information to others about secrets of targeted one;

- writes comments where the targeted person is condemned;

- disparages hair or clothing; and

- attempts to convince others for aversion of the targeted one because of anger.

Horizontal hostility is widespread phenomenon in developed and developing countries. In developed countries, writers and researchers (Lorber, 1994; Pipher, 1994; Chesler, 2001; Heim & Murphy, 2001; Simmons, 2002; Tanenbaum, 2002; Coloroso, 2003) have collected a list of implicit attitudes referred to horizontal hostility or indirect aggression as follows:

- gossiping about targeted person;

- socially disrupting by seeking friendship with others as revenge or invoking others to hate a targeted person;

- using ambiguous double meaning words satirically;

- targeting others through misrepresentation of reality for banishment or confrontation;

- talking false stories and spreading rumors in absence of targeted person;

- displaying offended mood and leaving angrily;

- saying insulting or bad comments indirectly or insinuations;

- sabotage and damage of belongings for retaliation;

- social ostracizing of the targeted person;

- ignoring and avoiding eye contact with targeted person

- making insulting and offensive gestures to others;

- name-calling, discourteous, mocking, aggressive; and

- excluding the other.

Psychological Drivers and Outcomes of Horizontal Hostility

Various psychological drivers and outcomes of horizontal hostility have been identified by literature. Most significant of these include lack of empowerment, oppression, learned helplessness and low self-esteem. Hamlin (2000) argues that horizontal hostility among nurses occurs due to lack of empowerment in their profession. They manifest lateral violence on their peers and towards new hires with the least power. Nurses are oppressed as their profession is controlled by external sources or dominated by physicians and administrators and disregarded by nurse managers and lacks empowerment and control over their professional activities (Griffin, 2004; Woelfle & McCaffrey, 2007).

Feelings of jealousy and powerlessness

Gloria Cowan, a psychologist, argues that women who inflict hostility towards their peers do not feel happy about them, have lower self-respect, constructive approach and satisfaction with life as compared to the women who are not hostile toward their peers (Chesler, 2001). The feelings of uncertainty provoke subordinates to inflict horizontal hostility in order to express themselves more powerful (Tanenbaum, 2002). The perceived imbalance of power and influence motivate them to feel better about themselves at the expense of the successful superior. Heim & Murphy (2001) described that when an aspiring woman achieves career success and enhances her influence, self-confidence and power, other woman may get offended and annoyed. They approach other women for help and support to emasculate competitor's success through covert aggression such as gossip. The subordinate female expresses jealousy and hurt due to the realization of powerlessness, lack of confidence and self-esteem. Moreover, feelings of subservience and inequality among subordinates result in indirect aggression or horizontal hostility.

Eichenbaum and Orbach (1987) argued that most of the women perceive success and career development of other women negatively and instead of supporting them, they try to discourage them. This discreet and covert behavior describes another feature of horizontal violence that has expressed by women as young girls. Competent and talented women do not want to appear superior due to fear of social ostracizing and keep themselves from aspiring to excel. Women, who discourage aspiring women, want to have everybody at the same level of hierarchy. They quickly accept true the most unpleasant about each other and will try to control aspiring women through gossip and other ways of

indirect aggression (Chesler, 2001). Heim & Murphy, (2001) described that because of sabotage, work relationships between women lean towards conflict more than their relationship with men. This negative behavior results in less friendly work environment and diminishes the prospects for compassionate and collaborative work teams in the workplace of women.

Oppression

In "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", Friere (1970) introduced the term "horizontal violence" to describe the influence of oppression on minorities and other ethnic groups in developing countries. He explored the aggressive behavior of the individuals of oppressed group who attacks at their peers in reaction to domination rather than confronting their oppressors. DeMarco et al. (2008) described horizontal hostility as an outcome of group level discriminations and institutionalized exploitation of individuals based on their group membership. They have discussed status of women as oppressed self and oppressed group in nursing profession. Oppressed self refers to a person's sentiments of low self-esteem that stop them to share and communicate their ideas freely. Oppressed group refers to a person's negative beliefs about women in general and their behavior towards each other at workplace that refutes their career success. DeMarco et al. (2008) argues that these beliefs and sentiments hinder their success as a group and individual to communicate their ideas and excel in their career. Longo & Sherman (2007) argued that horizontal hostility reduces passion and enhances strain and dissatisfaction in the workplace that result in low motivation, commitment and counterproductive work behaviours. Moreover, nurses who inflict hostility towards their colleagues are designated as having lack of confidence, lack of empowerment and feelings of disrespect from others.

Organizational Drivers and Outcomes of Horizontal Hostility

Most significant organizational drivers of horizontal hostility include sticky floor, glass ceiling, toxic work environment and leadership role. Horizontal hostility occurs due to discriminatory practices that oppress women and minority groups at social and organizational level. Embree and White (2010) explained that hostility among staff nurses originates by implicitly or explicitly directing dissatisfaction towards each other. Origins of hostility at organizational level includes role issues, authoritative leadership, discriminatory work practices and toxic work environment that results in oppression, lack of autonomy, low self-esteem and aggression among women or other minority groups.

Gender Discrimination

Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) refers to the situation where all individuals have same chances to get employment, irrespective of their gender, race, colour and faith. Erik and Ohls (2006) stated that when females are discriminated in employment, trainings and assignments, it refers to sticky floor which is the horizontal discrimination against women. Arulampalam et al. (2007) described that broadening of wage gap between men and women at bottom of distribution is interpreted as a "sticky floor". Secretaries, nurses, or waitresses also called pink collar workers experience sticky floor. Women who experience glass ceilings are highly educated and privileged, working at middle management level as compared to the women who come across sticky floor. Shambaugh (2007) explains that in reality, sticky floors at workplace hinder women's access to achieve full leadership potential. Sticky floors refer to self-limiting convictions, postulations, and behaviors that bound talented women to accomplish their career objectives and significance to their teams and organization. The staff experiencing this discriminatory pattern has low educational qualifications and little prospects of promotion. Gender

inequality at lowest levels of organizations can be more austere than glass ceiling at the top levels of organization.

The metaphor of glass ceiling is used to demarcate institutionalized, patriarchal and generally hidden barriers that prevent women to achieve top level positions in various organizations (Cotter et al., 2001). This term describes that glass ceiling permits women to see through the glass towards top level positions but hinder their career progress and access to these positions. Moreover, even the most commonly occupied positions by females have rather fewer possibilities of promotions, career progress and also these posts are less compensated then the posts occupied by men. As a result of glass ceiling, when limited job positions are available, women become more competitive to other women than men. Therefore, women's lack of executive achievement cannot only be explained with the concepts of glass ceiling. As an alternative, widespread investigation of repressive gendered relations among both men and women is required. Women may compete more aggressively with other women for limited high rank management positions as compared to men. Therefore, horizontal hostility provides theoretical basis for such investigation. Stone (2007) argues that male dominated repercussions of horizontal violence, as a consequence of glass ceiling, advocate that women's lack of progression to high level jobs may be due to competition among aspiring women as the number of top level management ranks for them is limited.

McKenna et al., (2003) argued that women's self-esteem related to their competences at job may adversely affected by well-documented hindrances and constraints. As a result, they often internalize lowered self-esteem and the consequent adverse sensations and perceptions may force them to inflict horizontal hostility (Stone, 2007). Women as leaders are constrained by more than ceilings in their career. These unconscious prejudices create glass walls that restrict women within traditional roles and limit opportunities for development. Raymond Cattell (2001), a psychologist, has developed phrase "coercion to the biosocial mean". Women are punished by society when they depart from traditionally anticipated patterns or push limitations. To explain this phenomenon, every professional woman may communicate their experience by event after event in their lives (McCartney, 2016). If women remain submissive, kind and pleasant by conforming to traditional norms of gender, they are not accepted suitable for leadership positions. When they assume leadership qualities like authoritative, influential and assertive, they are considered too bossy, forceful, persuasive, ambitious and too scary.

Toxic Work Environment

Toxic work environment is characterized by poor people management practices with profit orientation rather than people orientation. Employees become frustrated and dissatisfied at workplace due to contractual jobs, long working hours, lack of empowerment and high job demands. Toxic work environment provides poor psychosocial climate to employees that result in conflicts and aggression (Harder, Wagner & Rash, 2014). Managers in toxic work environment are the leaders who damage the work environment within through their deplorable human resource management practices. They extinguish self-confidence of staff, inhibit cooperation and information sharing and damage employee retention. They become impulsive and disrespectful to their employees and create negative work atmosphere for them (Appelbaum & Girard, 2007). These leaders find brilliance in aggression and control. Hierarchal abuse also provides theoretical basis for the origin of horizontal hostility and this happens due to the importance of status.

Leadership Role

Teamwork can be a positive factor to enhance organizational efficiency but it also enhances the probability that the group will control the individual through aggressive behavior. Barker (1993) argued that this will enhance the risk of revolving some individuals into scapegoats and may be endangering them to hostility. In contrast, leaders can develop a healthy work environment for employees by promoting a collaborative environment based on mutual trust and respect. Empowerment and training can result in positive learning environment. The employees must be educated about suitable professional behavior with the prominence of respect as defined by code of conduct (Lim & Bernstein, 2014).
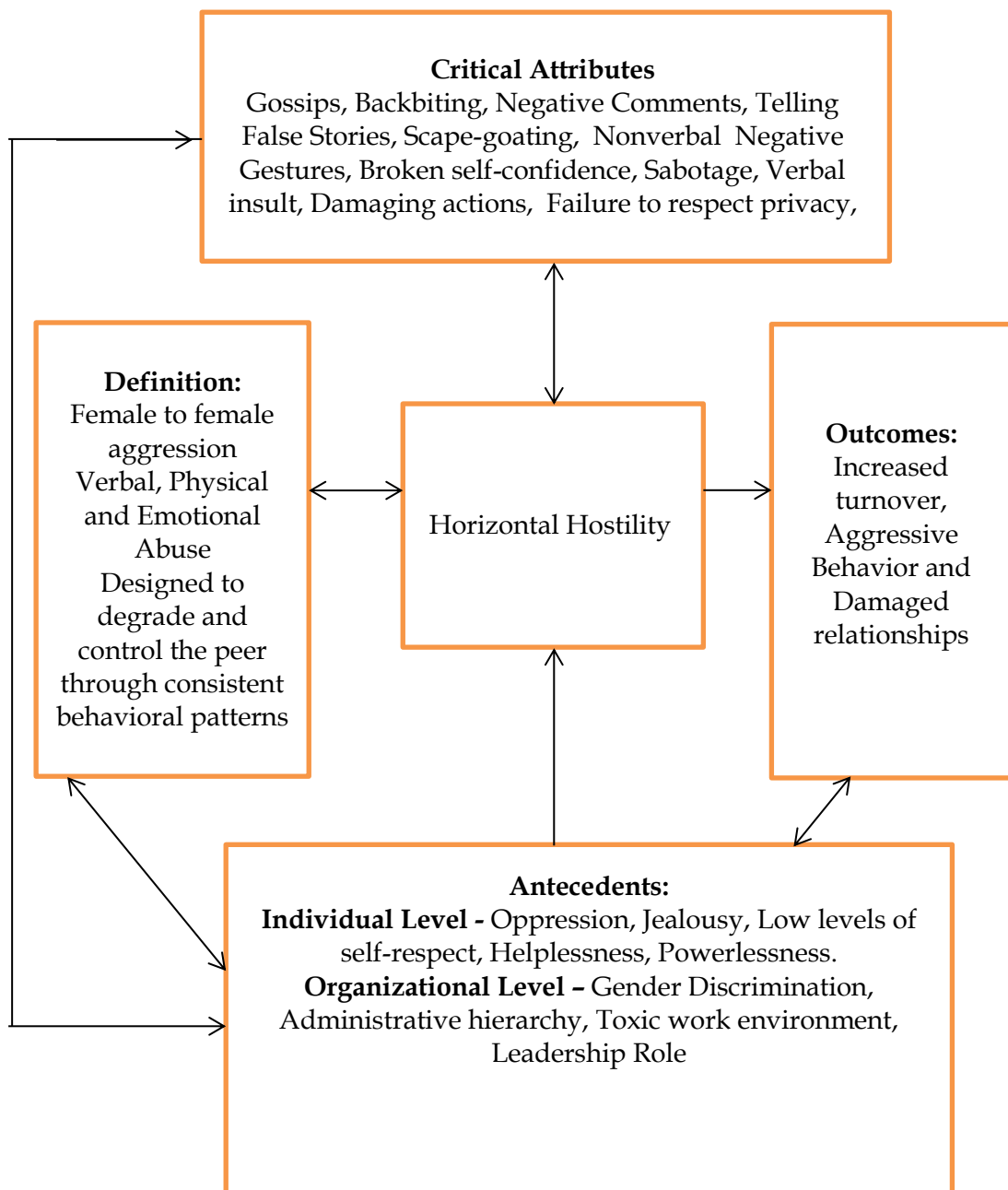
Critical Attributes
Gossips, Backbiting, Negative Comments, Telling False Stories, Scape-goating, Nonverbal Negative Gestures, Broken self-confidence, Sabotage, Verbal insult, Damaging actions, Failure to respect privacy,

Definition:
Female to female aggression Verbal, Physical and Emotional Abuse Designed to degrade and control the peer through consistent behavioral patterns

Horizontal Hostility

Outcomes:
Increased turnover, Aggressive Behavior and Damaged relationships

Antecedents:
Individual Level - Oppression, Jealousy, Low levels of self-respect, Helplessness, Powerlessness.
Organizational Level – Gender Discrimination, Administrative hierarchy, Toxic work environment, Leadership Role

Figure 1: Horizontal Hostility
Source: Embree & White (2010)

Conclusion

Horizontal hostility arises due to psychological drivers including oppression, jealousy, feelings of powerlessness and helplessness and low self-esteem. Gender discrimination (sticky floors and glass ceilings) has been identified as the main organizational level antecedent along with toxic work environment and leadership role.

Recommendations

Discriminatory work practices such as sticky floor and glass ceiling have been identified as organizational driver of horizontal hostility among women in Pakistan. Concrete actions and effective steps are required to promote gender equality at social and organizational level. The need is to ensure the enforcement of legal frameworks by government agencies in order to provide healthy working environment to women by reducing harassment and violence against them.

Government should closely monitor national reforms addressing harassment and gender inequality at workplace by providing employment guidelines and country wide recommendations for equal pay for both genders and representation of competent females at high rank management positions.

Broad policy framework is needed to enhance labour market participation of females both in public and private sector organizations that provide work life balance through flexible working hours and flexible leaves for parents with caring responsibilities of children and other dependents.

Horizontal hostility at workplace can be reduced through effective communication between managers and staff working at different levels. The managers are the leaders who can develop a culture of cooperation through learning, mentoring and mutual respect. They should focus on root cause analysis that results in horizontal hostility. Effective communication helps to understand responsibilities and expectations and reduces stress and frustration. Empowerment at workplace helps to establish a positive learning environment and enhances self-esteem and satisfaction of employees. Leaders should educate employees on suitable professional behaviour with emphasis on respect as described by code of conduct of organization.

Preparing staff to deal with anger and hostility at workplace through education and training is required. For women, their curricula should be designed to make them aware of expected obstacles and hostile behaviours depicted by both males and females in their career development. This will also help them decide about their career choice with more prospects of success and promotion. Through training, they can better learn conflict management skills and techniques to cope with aggression and stressful situations.

Horizontal hostility is the characteristic of individualistic cultures where rewards are distributed on the basis of individual performance. Teamwork can promote inter professional cooperation and collaboration among employees. This will result in cooperative learning and reduction in hostility and frustration.

Organizations should promote aspiring females through Human Resource Practices by providing them career opportunities and promotions based on merit. Organizational code of conduct should protect these females from politics, jealousy and hatred of their colleagues by providing healthy work environment. In developing

countries, the outcomes of horizontal hostility are more adverse than developed countries due to their limitation to traditional gender roles and violence against them in society.

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