Post Publication Review

Al-Saggaf, Y., & Ceric, A. (2017). Bullying in the Australian ICT workplace: the views of Australian ICT professionals, *Australasian Journal of Information Systems*, 21. doi: 10.3127/ajis.v21i0.1322

Review

This is a timely and important contribution to information systems (IS) literature that gives insights into bullying in the information and communication technology (ICT) workplace. It reveals the extent of the problem in the Australian context, through the largest survey of Australian ICT professionals yet conducted. With 27% of respondents identifying bullying as an issue that is not being effectively addressed at present. Interestingly their findings revealed that bullying concerns were the most significant amongst mature respondents, such as those in managerial roles.

I find that the single biggest drawback of this article is that nowhere does it define what the authors mean by 'professionalism'. There are numerous definitions of the term in the literature. Particularly in relation to ICT the definitions have evolved over time (Berleur et al., 2008; Bowern, Burmeister, Gotterbarn, & Weckert, 2006; Burmeister, 2015, 2017). Even now, the International Federation of Information Processing are exploring changing it again, due to their efforts to create an international certification standard that will be portable across borders, for ICT professionals, either developing systems that cross borders, or for those whose work requires them to work in multiple countries. However, the authors appear to assume that the definition of professionalism is fixed and that all readers will know what that is. Thus they refer to 'professional status' (Section 2 and 4.2.2), 'unprofessional behaviour' (Section 2), and 'permanent professionals' (Section 7) without defining what to them professionalism means, whilst spending considerable space in the paper to define other terms, particularly those related to bullying behaviours.

Another area which the authors could have explored in more depth is that of moral repair. In Section 4.1 concerning their findings and in Section 3.2 which draws on UK literature, the authors show that women who have been subjected to bullying behaviour frequently avoid the situation 'by leaving the organisation'. It would have been interesting to know if there are moral repair strategies which management can employ, to avoid losing valuable employees. This is particularly important because some of the literature they pointed to shows that not only do women leave the organisation, but some leave the ICT sector altogether. Our sector is one in which we have low female participation and many efforts are engaged in to attract more women into our profession. It is all the more important therefore to ensure we do not lose women from the sector and explore what measures can be taken to effect moral repair.

Finally, I declare a conflict of interest. Namely, I was acknowledged in the paper as having contributed to some of the data gathering for the research, and the authors of (Al-Saggaf & Ceric, 2017) are colleagues of mine. I have published with both previously (Al-Saggaf & Burmeister, 2012; Al-Saggaf, Burmeister, & Schwartz, 2017; Al-Saggaf, Burmeister, & Weckert, 2015; Burmeister, Phahlamohlaka, & Al-Saggaf, 2015; Vella, Burmeister, Ceric, & Barnden, 2016).

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Author Response

The authors were contacted but failed to provide a response.

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