

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON INCREASING SOCIAL UNDERMINING IN ORGANISATIONS: A SOCIO- PSYCHOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

Prof Dr.C.Karthikeyan*

Abstract:

Social undermining happens when negative emotions are expressed against any person/employee or negatively framing issues around a person/employee from achieving their goals in an organisation. The undermining can happen from leaders to subordinates and vice versa. Traits like dislike or anger without any reason, negative evaluations of an employee, by criticizing their actions, efforts or characteristics. Social undermining happens even in relationships between family members, friends, personal relationships and co-workers. Social undermining affects a person's mental health, with possibilities of depressive symptoms. Social undermining happens at organisation in the way of hindering co-worker's ability to establish, or maintain a positive interpersonal relationship, success reputation. Delaying the work of co-workers, to make it bad, slow them down, creating competing traits against co-workers to gain status and recognition, giving co-workers incorrect or even misleading information about a particular job, can be included in social undermining. The leaders need to find solutions on how to curtail, is what this article is to explore.

Keywords: Negative; Workplace; Undermining; Evaluation: Positive; Supervision; Leadership.

*** Director, Adithya School of Business, Adithya Institute of Technology, Coimbatore, Affiliated to Anna University, Chennai**

Introduction: Social Undermining according to (Duffy, Gangster, and Pagon, 2002) is defined as undermining in a workplace is, behavior intended to hinder over time and not allowing a person to establish or maintain positive interpersonal relationships. Social Undermining in the workplace is a challenge against a leader, in subtle ways and gradually develop into an impediment against growth of the organisation. Undermining happens with anyone, and leaders are no exception. Social undermining affects the workplace and particularly it has connection with social interaction and social undermining happens even in the form of interactions with co-workers, supervisors, and sometimes demotivates the employees. Undermining develops irritability, anxiety, depersonalization, depression, and finally damages the work ethics. Social undermining can affect a person's perceptions on co-workers and supervisors.

Objectives of the Study:

- (i) To evaluate the presence of Social Undermining in Organisation and its impact on organisational structure.
- (ii) To examine the reactions of leaders, workers and interrelated issues towards Social Undermining.
- (iii) To examine the Proactive Leadership Style in handling Social Undermining in an Organisation
- (iv) To analyse the importance of followers behavior towards Social Undermining

Methodology: A qualitative analysis of research literature and review of related research literature with Secondary Meta Data.

Data: Secondary Meta Data from Reliable and Authentic Sources

Scope of the Study: To arrive at a realisation of importance of creating awareness on social undermining happening at various levels and can develop with further research profound theories to tackle or curb it.

Limitations: Longitudinal secondary meta data from various parts of the world can include the circumstantial deviations of different kinds of authors, which could have had a significant impact on the derivations made out of the studies.

Review of Literature:

Horwitz et al. (1998) found that spouse undermining was almost twice as large as the effect for support. For example, a spouse that shows behaviors of withdrawal, avoidance and being overly critical can cause psychological distress in a relationship. This in turn causes stress that increases the depressive symptoms on individuals that have endure high levels of social undermining.

Aquino et al. (1999) found that subordinates' negative affectivity and self-determination were related to both indirect victimization (i.e., duplicitous acts such as talking about people behind their back, which are undertaken to cause injury while avoiding detection) and direct victimization (i.e., more overt acts such as cursing at the target). Aquino et al. argue that high-negative-affectivity people report greater victimization because they provoke others to behave aggressively toward them and because they come across as weak, vulnerable, and unable to defend themselves when they are targeted, and that people who are high in self determination do a better job of controlling their interactions with others, including potential victimizers.

Whitener et al. (Whitener, Brodt, and Korsgaard 1998) suggested that organizational factors such as structure, human resource policies and procedures, and organizational culture would affect employees' perceptions of trust.

Cropanzano et al (1998), found that the fairness theory suggests that when individuals face negative situations (such as being undermined by coworkers or supervision) they make cognitive comparisons known as counterfactual thoughts; i.e., they compare what actually happened to what might have been. The results show that social undermining is closely related to attitude and behaviour.

Argandona (1999) found benevolence and history of interaction with the combination of strategy, structure, and internal mechanisms that provide the overall operating logic and resource

allocation and governance mechanisms of the organization. Managers affect trust levels in several ways that work along the lines of the three-factors economics, from a position of distrust, emphasizing the likelihood and/or potential for opportunistic **behavior (Creed and Miles 1996, 19)**.

Tepper's (2000) conceptualization is that abusive supervision falls within the domain of willful behavior, meaning that supervisors perpetrate abusive behavior for a purpose; however, he does not define abusive supervision in terms of the perpetrator's intended outcomes (e.g., to cause harm). Abusive supervisors may mistreat their subordinates to accomplish objectives other than causing injury. For example, a supervisor may mistreat subordinates to elicit high performance or to send the message that mistakes will not be tolerated. Behavior of this sort falls within the domain of abusive supervision, but the perpetrator's proximate or immediate intent is not to cause harm. Possibilities of this sort mean that some manifestations of abusive supervision do not fall under the umbrella of "aggression" as it is traditionally defined (Baron & Richardson, 1994; Bushman & Anderson, 2001).

McCaskill and Lakey (2002) found that adolescents with previous outpatient treatment experience reported both lower family support and higher family stress.

Rosenstein and O'Daniel (2005) investigated the link between gender and abusive physician behavior by asking nurses to respond to the questions: "Do you think that gender influences the tendency to exhibit disruptive behavior?" and "Which gender do you think has a greater tendency to exhibit disruptive behavior?" Similar methods have been used to explore the relationships between abusive physician behavior and future interaction with the abuser, the target's psychological health, the adequacy of care provided, individual and unit morale, and turnover (Cox, 1987, 1991; Diaz & McMillin, 1991; Manderino & Berkey, 1997; Rosenstein & O'Daniel, 2006).

Aquino and Bradfield (2000) and Aquino and Byron (2002) can be interpreted to mean that workplace hostility may be directed against coworkers who are high in aggressiveness and high in domination, respectively. Abuse of subordinates whom supervisors perceive to be provocative

and difficult to get along with may be characterized as retaliatory aggression rather than displaced aggression.

Aquino (2000) found that the perception that one has been the target of direct victimization was positively related to individuals' use of an avoiding style of handling conflict (i.e., the tendency to resolve conflict by ignoring it). The use of an integrating style of handling conflict (i.e., the tendency to use cooperative discussion that reflects the interests of both parties to interpersonal conflict) was associated with indirect victimization and with direct victimization when the target was situated lower in the organizational hierarchy. As in the earlier study, Aquino interpreted the findings as providing support for the thesis that people who present themselves as weak and unwilling to fight back are more likely to be victimized. In addition, it appears that lower level targets experience both covert and overt forms of victimization.

Aquino and Bradfield (2000) found that aggressiveness (i.e., the dispositional tendency to aggress or attack in response to environmental cues) was positively related to both direct and indirect victimization and that negative affectivity was positively related to indirect victimization. The authors argue that the findings provide evidence for the existence in the workplace *Tepper / Abusive Supervision* 273 of two kinds of victims who have been identified in observations of schoolyard bullying: victims who are perceived to be weak and submissive and those who are provocative and unlikable (Olweus, 1978).

Tepper (2000) found that perceived injustice mediated the effects of abusive supervision on subordinates' attitudes, and Schat, Desmarais, et al. (2006) found that the experience of irritation and the fear of future aggression explained these effects. 274 *Journal of Management* / June 2007 This work also addresses the circumstances under which abusive supervision is related to unfavorable attitudes.

Tepper (2000) found that the effects of abusive supervision on work related attitudes were stronger among those who had less job mobility. Tepper attributed this to the notion that abused subordinates who have fewer attractive job alternatives will feel trapped and unable to escape from the source of their stress (i.e., their supervisor).

Tepper (2000) found that abusive supervision was negatively related to life satisfaction and positively related to work-family conflict, and Hoobler and Brass (2006) found that abusive supervision was positively related to family undermining, the extent to which employees express work-related resentment against their family members. This research suggests that abusive supervision influences the well-being of targets' immediate families.

Tepper, Duffy, and Shaw (2001) found that abusive supervision was positively related to subordinates' dysfunctional resistance (i.e., subordinates' refusal to perform supervisors' requests) and that this effect was attenuated when subordinates were high in conscientiousness (i.e., the trait tendency toward responsibility, dependability, responsibility, self-discipline, and industriousness) and agreeableness (i.e., the trait tendency toward altruism, cooperativeness, and trust).

Duffy et al. (2002), who invoked the concept of social undermining from the social psychology literature to explore the occurrence at work of supervisor "behavior intended to hinder, over time, the ability to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships, work-related success, and favorable reputation" (p. 332). **Tepper et al. (2006)** found that supervisors' depression mediated the relationship between supervisors' experience of procedural injustice (i.e., the perception that one's employer has rendered allocation decisions using unfair decision-making processes) and abusive supervision and that this mediated effect emerged only when subordinates were high in negative affectivity (i.e., those with a dispositional tendency to experience negative thoughts and emotions).

Duffy et al. (2002) found that supervisor undermining was positively related to subordinates' performance of counterproductive behaviors and that supportive supervisor behavior exacerbated these effects. **Mitchell and Ambrose (in press)** found that abusive supervision was positively related to supervisor-directed deviance (e.g., acting rudely toward, or gossiping about, the supervisor), interpersonal deviance (e.g., saying hurtful things about, or playing mean pranks on, others at work), and organization-directed deviance (e.g., stealing from the organization). Moreover, the relationship between abusive supervision and supervisor-directed deviance was stronger among subordinates who subscribed to a negative reciprocity norm, the belief that

retribution is an appropriate response to perceived mistreatment. Mitchell and Ambrose interpreted their findings as providing support for a “tit-for-tat” argument (i.e., abused subordinates retaliate directly against the supervisor, the source of their mistreatment) and for a displaced aggression argument (i.e., abused subordinates experience resentment and anger that they take out on their employer and others in the workplace). Two as yet unpublished works report relationships provide further evidence that abusive supervision evokes dysfunctional subordinate behavior.

Zellers, Tepper, and Duffy (2002) found that subordinates’ experiences of procedural justice mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and subordinates’ organizational citizenship behaviors (Organ, 1988), performance contributions that benefit the organization but that fall outside the employee’s job description and are not formally rewarded (e.g., helping coworkers when doing so is warranted, behaving courteously, and not complaining about trivial problems).

Aquino and Byron (2002) investigated the relationship between dominating behavior (i.e., the extent to which people make forceful efforts to influence others, express opinions, and control their environment) and victimization. The researchers hypothesized that dominating behavior would be curvilinearly related to victimization, reasoning that low dominators would present themselves as weak and exploitable and that high dominators would be more likely to violate social norms and to therefore invite retaliatory responses (i.e., victimization would be high when domination is low and when domination is high, and victimization would be low for individuals who are moderate on the domination scale).

Duffy et al. (2002) reported that supervisor support exacerbated the effect of abusive supervision, arguing inconsistent behavior (i.e., combining hostility and supportive behavior) engenders insecurity, diminished control, and low trust and taxes subordinates’ coping resources, thereby producing less favorable outcomes (compared to hostility alone).

Aquino and Bommer (2003) found that organizational citizenship behavior (i.e., discretionary actions that benefit the organization) was negatively related to perceived victimization, but that

this relationship only emerged for White versus African American employees and for employees who were situated lower in the organizational hierarchy versus those who were higher. The authors reason that performing discretionary behaviors that benefit the organization deflects mistreatment by others, but that this effect depends on one's status.

Schaubhut, Adams, and Jex (2004) found that abusive supervision was related to subordinates' performance of interpersonal and organizational deviance and that the strength of these relationships depended on subordinates' self-esteem, the extent to which individuals have positive views of themselves. The researchers found that among subordinates whose self-esteem was low, abusive supervision was unrelated to subordinates' deviance behavior; however, for subordinates with high self-esteem, abusive supervision was positively related to work deviance. The authors explain that abusive supervision poses more of a threat to the self-image of high-self-esteem subordinates than to low-self-esteem subordinates (whose self-image should be unfavorable irrespective of the treatment afforded by their supervisor).

Tepper et al. (2004) found that abusive supervision moderated the relationship between coworkers' organizational citizenship behavior and fellow employees' job satisfaction; the relationship was positive when abusive supervision was lower and negative when abusive supervision was higher. The authors argue that workers respond favorably to their coworkers' performance of pro-social behaviors, but only when the group's supervisor is not abusive. When the supervisor is abusive, employees perceive their coworkers' citizenship to be insincere attempts to curry favor with the abuser—hence, greater citizenship leads to less favorable attitudes. **Abusive Supervision and Subordinates' Resistance Behavior** The results of two studies suggest that exposure to abusive supervision may evoke resistance behavior on the part of subordinates, but that this effect depends on the subordinates' personality.

Grandey and Kern (2004) reported that the effect of abusive supervision was buffered when the employee was employed in a high-power customer-service occupation (i.e., jobs like physician and professor that are perceived to be cognitively demanding and that society generally holds in high esteem). Grandey and Kern explain that employees in higher power occupations have more financial and social resources compared with low-power employees and therefore experience

less threat from supervisor-perpetrated verbal aggression. Abusive Supervision and Family Well-Being There is evidence to suggest that abusive supervision negatively influences employees' lives outside of work.

Inness, Barling, and Turner (2005) found that abusive supervision was positively related to supervisor-targeted aggression and that history of aggression moderated this effect; abusive supervision was more strongly associated with supervisor-directed aggression when the subordinate had a history of being more aggressive.

Aryee et al. (2007), Hoobler and Brass (2006), and Tepper et al. (2006), the model shows that supervisor perceptions of having been treated unfairly or of having the psychological contract with their employer to abusive supervision. However, not all supervisors who believe that they have been the victims of mistreatment abuse their subordinates; the relationship between perceived injustice and contract breach is moderated by subordinate characteristics, particularly victim characteristics (i.e., appearing weak, vulnerable, and/or difficult to get along with), as observed by

Tepper et al. (2006) This body of work provides support for a displaced-aggression explanation for the occurrence of abusive supervision—mistreated supervisors aggress against innocent and available targets, their own subordinates. However, the results of workplace victimization research provide an alternative to the displaced-aggression explanation for abusive supervision.

Thau and Mitchell (2006) found that abusive supervision was positively related to organizationdirected deviance and that these relationships were stronger when subordinates were higher in validation seeking, the dispositional motivation to prove and maintain one's self-worth. Thau and Mitchell argue that validation seekers experience a challenge to their self-worth when confronted with threatening interactions (e.g., exposure to abusive supervisors) and 276 *Journal of Management* / June 2007 that they respond by performing behaviors that are designed to restore their sense of self. However, because validation seekers are poor self-regulators who focus more on themselves than on the effects their behavior may have on others (Crocker & Park, 2004), they often react to threatening encounters with destructive acts that may be at odds with the needs and values of other people (e.g., deviant behaviors). Abusive Supervision and

Subordinates' Performance Contributions In a small number of studies, researchers have investigated relationships between abusive supervision and subordinates' performance contributions.

Bamberger and Bacharach (2006) found that abusive supervision was positively related to subordinates' problem drinking and that this effect was attenuated when subordinates were high in conscientiousness and agreeableness. The authors argue that substance abuse, of which problem drinking is one example, can be interpreted as a form of worker resistance that workers partake in to symbolically revolt against their employer. Abused subordinates may problem drink to voice frustration and anger in the wake of abuse experiences (i.e., hoping that such expressions will provoke change). The neutralizing effects of subordinates' personality that emerged in both studies can be taken to mean that not all abused subordinates engage in resistance behavior; abusive supervision translates into resistance behavior when subordinates are both low in conscientiousness (i.e., impulsive, passive-aggressive, and undisciplined) and low in agreeableness (i.e., hostile, argumentative, and unconcerned about evoking conflict). **Abusive Supervision and Subordinates' Aggressive and Deviant Behavior** Three studies have explored relationships between abusive supervision and subordinates' aggressive behavior.

Schat, Desmarais, et al. (2006) found that abusive supervision was Tepper / Abusive Supervision 275 positively related to subordinates' irritation, which was in turn related to their level of aggression against coworkers.

Dupre, Inness, Connelly, Barling, and Hopton (2006) replicated the relationship between abusive supervision and subordinates' supervisor-directed aggression and also found that employees' reasons for working moderated this effect; the relationship between abusive supervision and supervisor-directed aggression was stronger when employees reported higher financial reasons for working and lower personal fulfillment reasons for working. In two published studies, abusive supervision has been linked with deviant organizational behaviors, actions that violate organizational norms and that threaten the organization and/or its employees (Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

Hoobler and Brass (2006) found that supervisors who experienced psychological contract breach (i.e., the perception that what they received from their employer fell short of what had been promised) were more abusive toward their subordinates, and that this effect was stronger among supervisors who held a hostile attribution *Tepper / Abusive Supervision* 269 (text continues on p. 273)

Aryee, Chen, Sun, and Debrah (2007) found that supervisors who themselves experienced interactional injustice (i.e., unfavorable interpersonal treatment; Bies & Moag, 1986) were more abusive toward their subordinates. The researchers also found that supervisors' authoritarianism, defined as the extent to which people embrace dominance and control as legitimate forms of leadership, moderated the relationship between supervisors' interactional justice and abusive supervision; the relationship was stronger when supervisors were higher in authoritarianism.

Aryee et al. (2007) found that subordinates' interactional justice mediated the relationships between abusive supervision and subordinates' citizenship behavior. Although neither study investigated relationships with individual or group performance, citizenship behavior has been linked with bottom-line performance indicators (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997), suggesting that abusive supervision may have indirect influences on unit performance through its effect on citizenship behavior. In the only study that has investigated the relationship between abusive supervision and job performance,

Covey (2009), effective leaders use 13 behaviors to build and maintain trust: talk straight, show respect, create transparency, right wrongs, show loyalty, deliver results, get better, confront reality, clarify expectations, practice accountability listen first, keep commitments, and extend trust first.

Objective: (i) : To examine the presence of Social Undermining in Organisation and its levels:

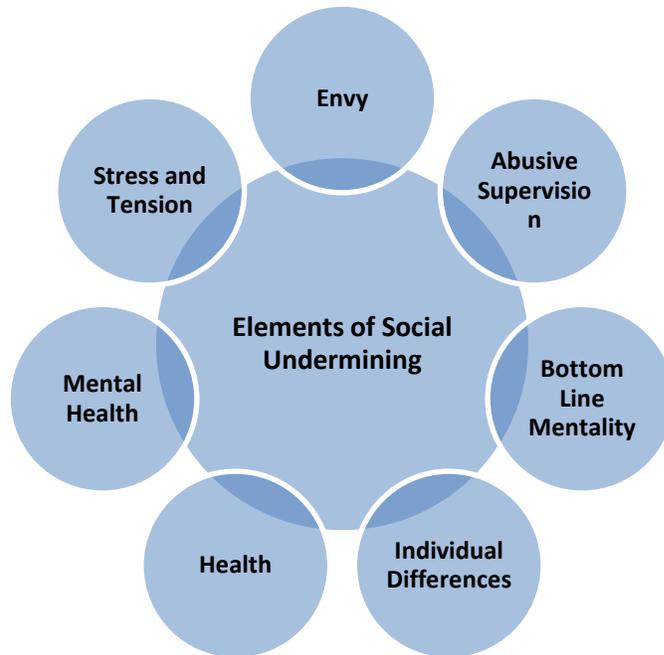


Figure: 1 : The elements of Social Undermining : Designed by Prof Dr.C.Karthikeyan

The elements of Social Undermining for understanding like the figure starts with Envy:

Social undermining brings in envy which can turn positive or negative effects on the employee, developing into aggression or lead to belittling, gossip, withholding information, and giving someone the silent treatment. **Abusive supervision** : Abusive supervision in the household, at school, and at a workplace, can be an antecedent to negative subordinate workplace outcome and even increases workplace violence with a combination of situational and personal factors. (e.g., Barling, 1996). Social undermining arises out of abusive supervision, in the form of demeaning, belittling, or invading privacy of the subordinate with punitive mentality, where individuals tend to project blame on others. Undermining arises with abusive supervision, that affects families, psychological contract violation, and subordinates' reports of abuse. The higher incidence of undermining in home leads to negative affect towards their family where the subordinate starts undermining their family members. The undermining can arise from displaced aggression behavior from a primary to a secondary target" (Tedeschi & Norman, 1985, p. 30). **Bottom-line mentality**: **Bottom line focus** on tend to focus on only the bottom line, and neglect outcomes including interpersonal consequences. Research states bottom-line mentality causes a problem, and cause rivalries within the organization since the employee may feel as if the organization should have a winner or loser when it comes to completing work. Employees with this approach think everyone is contributing to the work that needs to be completed. The

competitiveness is created for the coworkers to attain bottom-line outcomes. Hence they begin to want their co-workers to fail as that consequently means, to them, they, the undermining employee, must be succeeding. The supervisor's BLM causes employee social undermining. This happens because the employees may role-model after the adopted supervisor's BLM. **Individual differences:** Research suggests that whether or not someone engages in social support or social undermining depends upon their own goals. Those with compassionate goals are more likely to be supportive of close others, while those who have more selfish motives believe that people should take care of themselves. When people have goals to preserve their own self-image this can undermine their compassionate goals and make them less supportive. **Health:** Research has shown that social undermining can have an effect on a person's health. It has been shown that social undermining can cause depressive symptoms. Depending on the relationship between a patient and their loved one, the loved one can support or undermine the patient and can even do both within the same interaction, which can increase the depressive symptoms. Creating more social support can improve treatment outcomes of a patient depending on the type of stress level the person is enduring. **Mental health:** Social undermining and social support have opposite effects on a person that can be negative or positive depending on the person or even the relationship. Close relationship can provide a person both social undermining and social typical healthy close relationship has high support and low undermining. Depending on the relationship, patterns change over time based on the characteristics and the situation of the relationship. Social undermining has a greater impact on a person's mental health than social support.

Objective: (ii) : To evaluate the reactions towards Social Undermining:

Emotional and behavioral reactions: Social undermining, increases counterproductive behaviors, reciprocated social undermining, and decreased job satisfaction among employees and leaders. The Negative impact brings in depression, a decreased self-esteem and even psychosomatic symptoms. Victim's perceptions of the offenders intentions relate to the whether the victim responds to the undermining in a negative fashion with feelings of anger and a desire for revenge, or in a positive fashion with a desire to reconcile with the offender. Leaders make mistakes, too. When they make big mistakes, their employees see them and feel the impact of them. The four most damaging mistakes leaders make at times inadvertently are inconsistent communication. Lack of clarity in strategy formulation and goals. Poor accountability. Rewarding

competition instead of cooperation. These mistakes removes trust between leaders and team members. I win, you lose dynamics flare up. They create perceptions of unfairness and make the working teams with less discretionary energy, left for customers and goals without realising these mistakes.

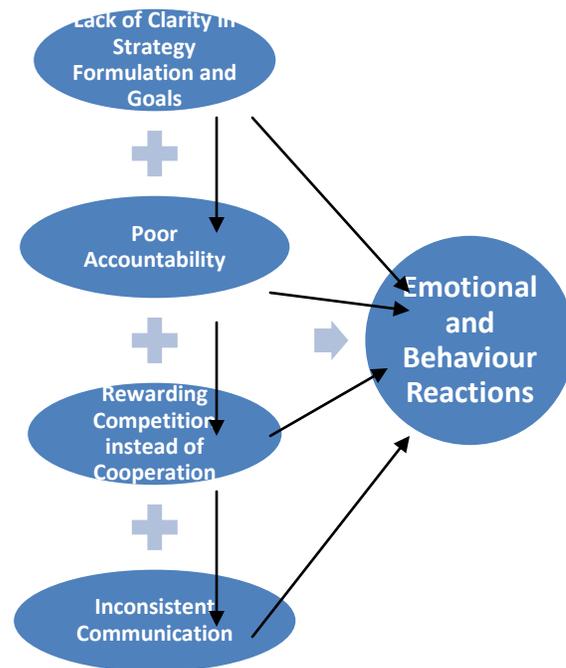


Figure : 2: Reactions to Social Undermining in Organisations: Designed by Prof Dr.C.Karthikeyan

Focusing and formalising the teams for the company's purpose, values, behaviors, strategies and goals needs to be demonstrated by leaders. The leaders can redirect misaligned behaviors with effective communication with variety of ways, regularly, and live them in every interaction. **Connecting** communication channels with variety of players in the team or company and form focus groups to engage a wide range of players with a frequently proactive communication how plans, decisions, and actions align with the team's organizational constitution.

Objective: (iii) : To examine the Leadership Style to handle Social Undermining:

Adopting style of servant leadership is per se is the primary responsibility, and as servant leaders shall get direction, connection and support to help team members thrive in their

roles. Serving others to remove employee frustrations, by praising accomplishment by holding people accountable for their commitments, by delegating authority and responsibility to talented, and engaged team members. The leaders need to develop team's culture, shall refine their behaviors, guide team practices, and enable aligned performance and sanity in their business.

The leaders need to avoid the following mistakes to be effective as a servant leader and stop undermining:

- 1. Setting a tense tone.** Stress and tension are no fun, and displaces makes it Positive or negative, cordial or rude, and people may embrace and spread false image intentionally or not.
- 2. Trying too hurriedly for the Best.** Leader need to be very simple and straightforward. Similarly, business execution requires as few processes and steps as possible to reach critical mass and be effective. Hence need not push too hard just from the word go, can practice little bit wait and watch and better can be proactive.
- 3. Trying to get too much done.** New leaders coming from rank and file senior management where tasks were more executorial, try to expand the same management techniques in a new capacity too and is not aware of the gap to bridge between being a senior manager and being a delegating person rather than action.
- 4. Becoming the “anti-successor.”** Trying or deliberating their own marks on a company's history by erasing their former leader's initiatives and accomplishments by wanting to create value by diagreeing away the successor's style exhibiting selfishness and conceit, whereas strong leaders aim to embrace and build.
- 5. Overlooking People:** A service exists because of the people behind it, and the personalities that attract customers are, the work ethic of the team, concentrating more on the product than the people diminish the results than to flourish, hence leaders need to focus on how to attain, train and retain talent.
- 6. Intolerance towards failure.** Failure is a learning stone towards progress and and is an opportunity to get insights about how it can be improved with individual contribution and as a team for the next time around. Failure is an awesome learning tool and its better to accept the fact rather than being adamant.
- 7. Learning from the past.** New leaders shall learn about yesterday, it can give new case studies to learn from and new insights to grow from them and can create value for good leaders.
- 8. Trying to have answer for everything.** One of the worst mistakes a leader make is that they have all the answers because they're the leader.

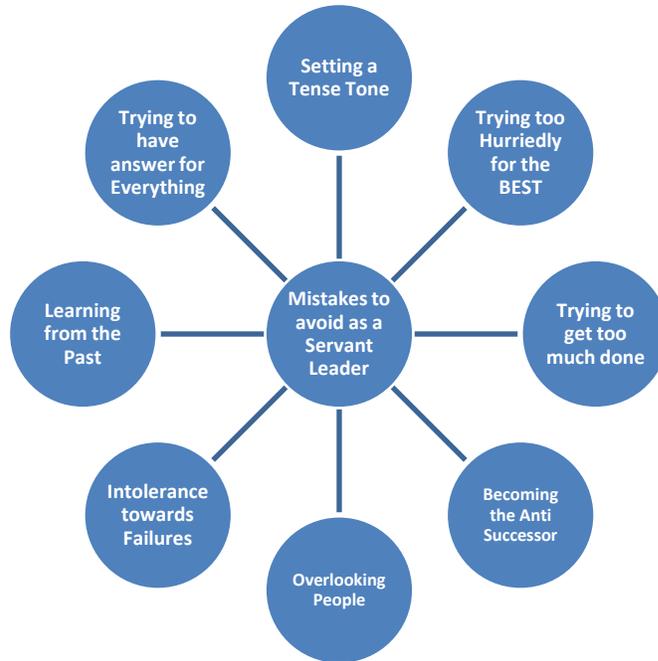


Figure: 3: Mistakes that a Servant Leader Should Avoid: Designed by Prof Dr.C.Karthikeyan

A leader can't know everything but can set the environment that enables information to be shared, by self-critiquing, open mindness to learn from personal success, and flatten out the learning curve etc. The leaders can may feel awkward and uncomfortable talking about the issue, suffer from conflict avoidance, or at times have negative emotional outburst, that leads to distrust. Failing to address the individual's lack of performance can get the type of results they desire, and begin by examining the clarity of their instructions. A **leader can** encourage open communication and discourages from individual workers: Effective leaders learn when people feel comfortable sharing their concerns, and understand that the exercise of openness improves problem-solving and decision-making. Encouraging Open questions to see if the question is understood, to gain commitment or clarify understanding. Asking questions to encourage adjustments to how and what the workers communicate will help adapt the leader's communication to help the person be more successful. Listen to attend. A leaders recognition of non verbal expressions gaining insights about what can contribute a person's success, ability to identify fake talk in the workplace. Leaders shall encourage people of their tasks. Leaders need to listen to what people are telling and it will make people more productive, efficient and successful. This is particularly true in the present flatter, networked organizations and cross-cutting teams of knowledge workers. Reporting relationships are shifting, and new talent-

management tools and approaches are constantly emerging. Rapid changes of cultural and technological ones in particular have influenced subordinates on what and how they behave, especially in relation to their work relation with bosses.

Objective:(iv): To analyse the importance of followers behavior towards Social Undermining:

Leaders Level Playing Field with followers can be defined by their behavior by doing what others want them to do. Subordinates do not follow all the time, they think of themselves as free agents, and not as dependent on commanding voices for those lower down in the social or organizational hierarchy. Kelley and Chaleff, Kelley classified subordinates into five types according to their levels of independence and activity. The followers are classified as **isolates, bystanders, participants, activists, and diehards** who are very different in their aspects in each other for a leader to take them along the corporate affairs. The **Isolates** are completely detached and these isolates can drag down their groups or organizations that are found in large companies, where they can easily disappear in the maze of cubicles, offices, departments, and divisions. Their attitudes and behaviors attract little or no notice from those at the top levels of the organization as long as they do their jobs, even if only marginally well and with zero enthusiasm. **Bystanders** observe but do not participate these free riders deliberately stand aside and disengage, both from their leaders and from their groups or organizations. They may go along passively when it is in their self-interest to do so, but they are not internally motivated to engage in an active way. **Participants** are engaged in some way by making the workplace, act as independent agents, the situation gets more complicated. **Activists** strongly support their leaders and managers because their level of commitment demands an expense of time and energy that most people find difficult to sustain. The **diehards** may be deeply devoted to their leaders, or they may be strongly motivated to oust their leaders by any means necessary. They exhibit an dedication to someone or something they considered worthy.

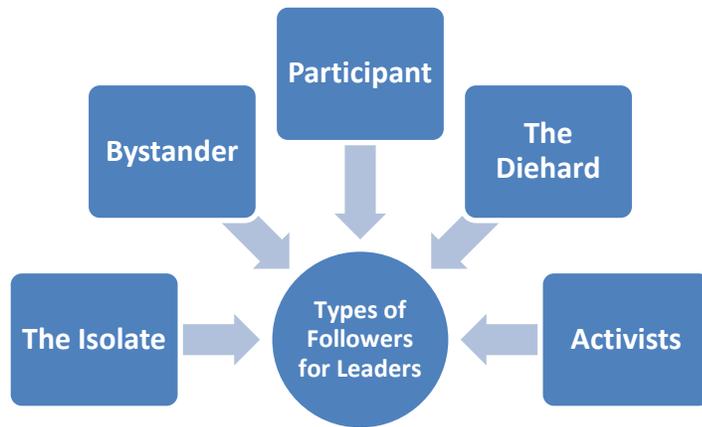


Figure: 4: The major types of followership for Leadership: Designed by Prof Dr.C.Karthikeyan

What leaders should not do: A leaders should not kill the messenger: Using the techniques listen and take the appropriate action in the proper forum. Strong, emotional reaction to a messenger of bad news kills open communication. **A leader need not always be problem-focused:** It is easy as a new leader to focus on solving problems but also should capitalize on new opportunities and future strategies. Looking forward to possibilities allows the organization to solve current problems with a better context. **A leader need not go to big initiatives at once:** A leader needs to be cautious to balance long-term, larger initiatives with the short-term actions. Leader can be more effective with organizational focus on a few long-term initiatives that are completed rather than on too many initiatives that drag on forever. **A leader need not permit hidden agendas:** When people have ulterior motives that are for personal gain or to hide negative consequences for actions and proposals, it undermines clear communication and trust in the organization. **Leaders need to avoid Pocket Vetoes:** A pocket veto is when someone appears to agree but actually does nothing, hoping that the subject will be forgotten. A pocket veto in business is a sign of passive-aggressive behavior. Taking direct action with someone with this behavior will quickly set the tone for everyone that pocket vetoes are not a good idea. **Leaders need to avoid and condone upward delegation:** When a person or team fails to make a decision for which they are responsible and then solicits the leader to make the decision, it is upward delegation. Upward delegation undermines accountability and empowerment. When it occurs, the leader should NOT make the decision for them, but instead provide additional

information or guidance and send them back to do the work. Sometimes working with the person/team to outline three alternatives for solution helps the process. **Leaders are not to blame** efforts on the part of a leader to place blame only serve to make people fearful and unwilling to accept accountability. **Leaders should not abuse positional authority** positional authority is sometimes necessary, but overuse undermines accountability and does not capitalize on the organization's experience. When it is necessary to use positional authority, fully explain the rationale and why you are using it. Leaders are not to **shut Down opposing views while making** quality decisions, it is important to consider all perspectives. Ignoring or closing down opposing views will result in decisions with blind spots, and it will shut down open communication and opposing view to avoid a decision. Leaders should **never assume as the smartest person in the room and is** tempting to assume you have the best perspective, especially if you come from a different company. A leader has to keep in mind that there is almost always someone who has more experience and insight into almost any situation. By engaging with others and everyone has their strengths as a new leader can capitalize on the collective wisdom of the group and encourage open communication and foster accountability. **Avoiding endless discussion without decisions** people confuse lengthy discussions that consider every possible alternative and present limitless data with being effective.

The Leadership Strategies for Curtailing Social Undermining: A leader can notice any patterns in the undermining employee's behavior. Leader shall quantify the number of instances, and note exact situations when the employee is undermining either the organization or his superiors. Nextly the leader shall discuss the observation and shall outline that the behaviour creates a toxic environment for other employees and whether these acts undermine the company's objectives. A leader shall take the management support in dealing with this undesirable behavior. Document what the witness observed. Garner support from within the organization's higher management. The leader shall approach the employee with a single goal in mind to stop the undermining behavior. Clearly explain to the employee the business' goals, mission and values. Describe how the specific incidents documented undermine the basic tenets of the company. The leader shall explain the negative effects that resulted from each situation and shall suggest the employee to change their behavior. Leader shall facilitate for regular follow

ups with the employee, reinforcing positive changes and identifying slips back into the old pattern of undermining. The leader shall give prompt feedback and shall appreciate future performance reviews will gauge his improvement or digression. The leaders need to do uplifting, empowering bit of encouragement that needed changes. Show your confidence in his ability to stop undermining behaviors. Factors facilitating growth of Social Undermining among colleagues in organizations: Undermining by Colleagues: Here are 13 signs that a colleague is undermining you at work:



Figure; 5: Signs and Symptoms of Undermining of Colleagues at Work: Designed by Prof Dr.C.Karthikeyan

Being overly competitive: an under miner usually is overly competitive, and try to beat out everyone. They may actively undermine and try to make the leader fall in particular. The two aren't mutually exclusive, but it's still an important distinction. **They are always on the defensive:** **They** tries to put the leader or the manager on the defensive and might be baiting for the leader to slip up. **They are not alone:** Under miners typically don't stick to just one victim but would have burned others in the past, it's probably best to hold them at arm's length. **They gossip a lot:** Every employee gossip and sometimes, it's the only way to figure out what's really going on at the job which is not a good circulating around the office. Basically, if the coworker is a gossip-monger, who's to say, they aren't talking about the leader behind the back? **They try**

to distract: A constant distract from job, which may be innocuous and slightly lonely procrastinator and intentionally attempting to derail productivity means, that's a problem. **They leave everyone out:** They forgot to invite the leaders to big project meeting. They forgot to include leaders on important emails. They forgot to pass on that message from the boss and the coworker may be actively trying to keep you in the dark. They spread rumors about the leaders and other workers: The workplace rumor mill is all fun and games until they are the latest scoop. They make nasty rumors about coworker and definitely sabotage the reputation. They take credit for others work: This one's a major red flag. If the coworker is stealing credit for the projects and ideas, they should be confronted against that blatant sabotage. They overstep their rank the colleague present him or herself as superior attempted to poach or misguide r team members in the past? If a coworker's attempting to pull rank that he or she doesn't even have, it's definitely cause for suspicion. They socially undermine other employees by slightly rude comments, backhanded compliments, and hostile, mocking body language from one particular colleague. Undermining colleague has already gotten to them and by this time they act subtle unlike overt bullying or harassment, undermining can be harder to pinpoint and detect. The under miner never make hostile language or actions to take others down but quietly works to bring them down, which is why it's important to be extra careful around them. Easy getting a bad feeling about them: Leaders while dealing with professional undermining, needs to trust the gut and avoid bad vibes to tread with caution.

Objective : (vii) To assess the leadership strategies adopted to curtail undermining: leader's strategies to curtail under miners and the under mining work:

The Leaders Look for the Signs: The leaders need to make sure behavior intended to hinder, over time, the ability to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships, work-related success, and favorable reputation. **They do it to others:** They make others **feel defensive around them. They're judgmental.** They like to gossip about the lifestyle choices of other friends or family members. They might disguise gossip and judgment as concern. **They're great at backhanded compliments:** Their compliments seem oddly insulting. **They overcompensate:** They oversell themselves as supportive, nurturing, or caring. **They tempt and** steer leaders away from their goals by offering tempting alternatives. Leaders need to Identify the Motive: **Competition** due to

bottom line mentality when people are willing to do whatever it takes to succeed, including getting any competition out of the way. **Projection:** People might also undermine their choices if it reminds them of their own. **Concern:** On the other hand, undermining happens when there's genuine concern. The concern of figuring out how to address social undermining, helps to first understand why it's happening. This way, leaders can pick the best option for dealing with it. Leading from the front always: Better and effective communication should be the first line of defense like a friend, coworker, or boss. **Leaders need to stop Information: A leader needs to** keep up progress, milestones, or successes to self. When someone knocks you down, that can kill your momentum. It doesn't even have to be goal-related. Sometimes, underminers simply try to make you feel bad about the life you already have. Either way, it can help to avoid any topics that bring it out in them. Change the Relationship: If the underminer is a casual acquaintance or a colleague, spending less time together or giving the friendship a break could make or realize friendships should be supportive, not undermining. Leaders can become positive and take what come from it: Many times, underminers will attack the leaders weakest spots, and that can be a good thing, because it can make the leader aware weaknesses that was not know earlier. Many times, the undermining is senseless. But when someone does it now, the leaders seeks truth to it before just throwing it away, however rude it may be. Leaders need to find support: Social undermining is frustrating to deal with, whether it's with a friend, family, or coworker. Even if leaders think it's no big deal and can handle it, the effects of undermining can gradually creep up on and take over. The leader feel insecure, powerless and angry. Taking a little action can help nip it in the bud. At the least, it helps leaders manage it and feel more in control. **Undermining takes away the competence in workplace as well as** time and efforts on employees, with performance issues or problems but worry much about the competent employees who appear to be doing well assuming that everything is fine. This is unfortunate fact of workplace life that the same competent employees rely on targets of abusive and negative behaviour from their co-workers with negative, sometimes aggressive, behaviour. These negative behaviours are a way of compensating for feelings of envy, shame, and lowered self-esteem. **Negative behaviour towards competence;** Undermining involves making derogatory comments, belittling a person's ideas and withholding needed information. These negative behaviours are easy to engage in.

Whilst non-confrontational, these negative behaviours and comments (often made to another teammate or work colleague) can be quite serious. They can also undermine the competent employee's reputation or relationships and damage them permanently – not to mention the performance of the team as a whole. **Task conflict morphs into relationship conflict:** This task conflict can quickly turn into more personal relationship conflict aimed at the highly competent team member. Disagreements about personal taste, values, and interpersonal style are examples of this second form of conflict. Relationship conflict in teams reduces both effectiveness and satisfaction of team members and can also create unhappiness. The presence of this type of conflict in teams can create major problems as the team spends their time and energy focusing on each other rather than the job at hand. **Friends, not colleagues** can happen for two reasons. First, social ties such as friendship are based on liking, trust, and emotional closeness. These ties tend to provide support between colleagues, which can help offset feelings of envy or threat. Additionally, people generally prefer to be friends with others who they see as similar to themselves. When we view someone as similar to ourselves, we are less likely to want to harm them. So, what can organizations do to help prevent highly competent employees from becoming the targets of negative behaviour? Here are three basic recommendations: **Communicate to** highly competent employees regularly and assuring them to feel comfortable bringing their issues or problems by keeping the lines of communication open is essential. **Intervening quickly.** Manage any instances of negative behaviour or conflict in work teams quickly and can be resolved satisfactorily, and avoid official problems to degenerate into personal animosity. Stepping in early also lets employees know that negative behaviour will not be tolerated in your workplace. **Encouraging camaraderie:** Provide employees with opportunities for social interaction outside of their day-to-day work. Once a month, holding a 'celebrate our successes' party or other activity which facilitates relationship-building. Encouraging workers to form friendships that keep employees from feeling threatened by their highly competent co-workers.



Figure: 6 : Suggestions for avoiding Undermining by Colleagues: Designed by Prof Dr.C.Karthikeyan

Envy isn't enough. Connections matter. People who felt envious were significantly more likely to act on those feelings when their relationships with their co-workers were weak. **Strong connections reduce sabotage.** Those who felt envious but who had strong relationships with their co-workers were less likely to undermine other employees. **Workplace culture is important.** The researchers found that some workgroups were relatively tolerant of students who sabotaged others, while others didn't permit it. Not surprisingly, those workgroups that seemed to sanction sabotage saw a whole lot more of it. But someone who didn't feel any envy was extremely unlikely to sabotage someone else, even if they were disconnected from the group and the group turned a blind eye to bad behavior. *Be assertive* Try to separate the just from the unjust. We all need to learn from our mistakes, even if the rebuke was unreasonable. If harsh words are spoken, accept them and move on. *Talk it over* First of all, it's best to talk it over with someone you can trust. Sometimes, what seems like undermining might not be. *Take no further action* If the undermining is an isolated event, you may not want to take any action. This should be on the understanding that it doesn't happen again. The underminer must realise their actions, explain their point of view and offer an apology. *Speak to the perpetrator;* If the behaviour does happen again, speaking to the perpetrator can be very effective. Some undermining isn't deliberate. Arrange a meeting in private and take along a trusted companion. Plan what you're going to say beforehand to explain how their actions made you feel. Stay calm and polite.

Afterwards, make a written record of the date, time, venue, persons present and what was discussed at the meeting. *Write it down*; Make a note of each episode of undermining and any associated meetings. Collect any documents that may back this up, especially emails. This will be valuable evidence if the undermining persists, and will also allow you to reflect on the events. *Speak to a senior colleague* Before pursuing a formal complaint, try talking to a senior colleague. This can be any of the following, depending on where the undermining occurs:

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