



EAWOP SGM “Workplace bullying research 2.0: leverage for interventions”

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Bundle of abstracts

Organizing Committee:
Cristian Balducci – University of Bologna, Italy
Elfi Baillien – KU Leuven, Belgium
Alfredo Rodriguez-Munoz – University Complutense de Madrid, Spain

Support:
Chahida Azzarouali – KU Leuven, Belgium

KEYNOTE

**Construct Validity in Workplace Bullying Research:
A Methodological Challenge for Researchers and Interventionists**

Guy Notelaers, University of Bergen, Norway

Scholars are largely in agreement (up to 90%) about two definitional issues: bullying is repeated and systematic negative social behavior that endures over a longer period of time (Notelaers, 2011). However, when scrutinizing to what degree inferences can be legitimately made from the operationalizations in workplace bullying and harassment studies to the theoretical constructs on which those operationalizations were based, a review study found that construct validity was largely threatened in quantitative studies (Notelaers & van der Heijden, 2021). In this contribution I first will define bullying and sketch its different stages. Thereafter I will summarize empirical findings with respect to construct validity. Next, I aim to highlight some pitfalls when designing studies and interventions. Finally, I will debate some strategies to avoid these.

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Development and validation of Bystander Typology Scale (BTS)

Kara Ng & Karen Niven

Alliance Manchester Business School, UK

Background and hypotheses

Developments in workplace bullying have highlighted the need to understand its social context. One exciting area within this gap is the role of bystanders, as research consistently indicates that bystanders can play an important role in the progress of bullying and in target experiences (e.g., D’Cruz & Noronha, 2011; K. Einarsen et al., 2020; Paull et al., 2012). While there is a growing body of empirical bystander research, tools for measuring bystander responses remains unstandardised, with most studies using ad hoc scales (e.g., Mulder et al., 2014).

In this study, we develop and validate the BTS to measure bystander responses to workplace bullying. The BTS is based on Paull and colleagues’ (2012) taxonomy of workplace bullying bystanders, which proposes that bystander responses can be categorised as active or passive (i.e., whether the behaviours address the bullying) and constructive or destructive (i.e., the extent to which behaviours seek to ameliorate or worsen the situation). Therefore, we propose four bystander types: Active constructive, active destructive, passive constructive, and passive destructive. These types will be reflected in our scale as four factors.

Methods

Our scale development consists of three phases. In phase 1, we develop theoretically-sound definitions of each bystander type and generate items that accurately reflect each type. We developed an initial list ($N = 37$) of behaviours by reviewing relevant bystander literature, in both workplace bullying and related phenomena (e.g., sexual harassment, school bullying), and consulted with academic subject matter experts (SMEs).

In phase 2, we refined our items by asking academic ($N = 17$) and practitioner ($N = 5$) SMEs the clarity and relevance of our definitions and items. Items that averaged below our cut-off criteria were removed or discussed between the research team. We also added items we believed addressed missing behaviours, after which 36 items remained. Next, we assessed the scale's initial psychometric properties by conducting exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. We recruited 600 participants via Prolific, of which 588 responses were usable. Following best practice, we split the sample so that the EFA's item-to-participant ratio was 1:10 (EFA $N = 360$). This left 288 responses for the CFA, above the recommended minimum sample size of 200 (Robinson, 2018).

We have just finished phase 2 at the time of writing and will move on to phase 3, where we aim to test the nomological validity of our items. We will test the relationships between our bystander types and theoretically-relevant constructs utilised in previous bystander literature. For example, we propose that sympathy for the target will be positively related to constructive responses and negatively related to destructive ones, whereas schadenfreude will display the opposite pattern of relationships. We expect that self-efficacy will be positively related to active responses and negatively related to passive responses, while (external) locus of control will display the opposite pattern.

Results

Phase 1 produced a set of items reflecting the four bystander responses. Example items from each type are: "I alert a supervisor/manager of the perpetrator's actions" (active constructive); "I empathise with the target's experiences" (passive constructive); "I make the target aware that I agree with the perpetrator" (active destructive); and "I focus my attention away from such situations" (passive destructive).

Phase 2's initial validation indicated that the BTS possessed good psychometric properties. In the EFA, we followed conventional recommendations used principal axis factoring with a Promax rotation (e.g., Fabrigar, 1999; Schaarschmidt et al., 2021). Both the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (.90) and Bartlett's tests ($p < .001$) indicated excellent suitability for further analysis. Items were dropped if they cross-loaded or were $< .50$. The CFA produced good model fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.862$; RMSEA = .06; CFI = .92; TLI = .90; SRMR = .07). The final 21 items showed good internal reliability, with Cronbach alpha values ranging from .80 - .87. All construct correlations were less than the square root of the average variance extracted, suggesting discriminant validity.

Phase 3 will be conducted shortly, with the aim of sharing findings during the SGM.

Theoretical and practical implications

By drawing upon a pre-existing theoretical framework (Paull et al., 2012), the BTS is one of the first scales to be developed with theoretical and scientific rigour. We believe this scale can be used in both academic research and practical settings, notably in intervention studies seeking to develop more constructive bystander behaviour, thereby filling an important gap by providing a standard way to conceptualise and capture bystander responses.

Working Anytime, Anywhere, and the risk of workplace cyberbullying: The impact of transformational and laissez-faire leadership

Rita Berger & Jan Philipp Czakert
University of Barcelona, Spain

Background and hypotheses

This study aimed at integrating the role of leadership and its potential to influence the social climate as well as the blurred boundaries of work (BB) with the emerging phenomenon of workplace cyberbullying (WCB). The increasingly BB context comes with emergent occupational risk factors, and bullying in particular (ILO, 2020). WCB is a prevalent phenomenon (Czakert et al., 2020) that has only recently gained attention (Forssell, 2020; Oksanen et al., 2020), although linked to severe outcomes for both organizations (e.g., Coyne et al., 2017) and individuals (e.g., Farley et al., 2015; Snyman & Loh, 2015). For organizations, it is important to understand which leadership styles might contribute to and which leadership styles might deter WCB. Facing BB around space (office vs. home) and time (work vs. off-work), it is crucial to update current actions around harassment to include conducts that originate – anytime and anywhere – from work (De Stefano et al., 2020, p. 32). It is key to understand how leadership might enable protective measures to tackle border-crossings of WCB into the nonwork domain. While previous research found that destructive leadership such as passive-avoidant leadership has been found to predict perceived exposure to WCB in both Spain and Germany (Czakert et al., 2020), constructive leadership has not yet been linked as a potential resource to deter WCB. Building on Leymann's work environment hypothesis (1996), which emphasizes that workplace bullying is rather predicted by a toxic work environment than by individual characteristics, this study tested the following hypotheses: H1) TFL negatively affects perceived exposure to WCB through improved team climate and decreased BB. H2) Laissez-Faire (LF) leadership increases perceived exposure to WCB both directly and indirectly through adverse team climate conditions and BB.

Methods

Participants and procedure

A cross-sectional sample with $n = 236$ Spanish and $n = 334$ German workers answered from June 2018 a public web-based survey which was open during around three weeks. Project partners sent the survey link to their network using the snowball effect. Furthermore, in Germany the link was posted using social media. The study was carried out in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. Participants were given informed consent, information about the project and anonymization of the data was assured.

Measures

WCB: A six-item adapted version of the cyberbullying questionnaire short version (CBQ-S, Jönssen et al., 2017), previously validated and found to measure culturally- invariant and unidimensional WCB in Spain and Germany (Czakert et al., 2021). Example item: "negative online comments upon own job performance". Cronbach's alpha: Germany = .93, Spain = .94.

TFL: Eight-item Human System Audit Short-Scale of TFL (Berger et al., 2012; Berger & Antonioli, 2019), unidimensionally. Example item: "My leader promotes the use of intelligence a means of overcoming obstacles". Cronbach's alpha: Germany = .95, Spain = .98. LF: Three-item scale based on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Example item: "supervisor who avoids getting involved when important issues arise". Cronbach's alpha: Germany = .89, Spain = .93. BB: Three items based on Tarafdar et al. (2007) and Carstensen (2015). Example item: "blurred temporal boundaries regarding work (working at the weekend, working after-work etc)". Cronbach's alpha:

Germany = .74, Spain = .86. Negative team climate: Three items based on the Job Stress Survey (JSS; Vagg & Spielberger, 1999). Example item: "colleagues not doing their job". Cronbach's alpha: Germany = .82, Spain = .87.

Analysis

We tested multiple mediation models with 5000 bootstrap samples and 95%-confidence intervals using PROCESS Macro in SPSS (Hayes, 2018).

Results

H1 was partially supported: TFL decreased WCB through decreased negative team climate and blurred work-nonwork interference in Spain. In Germany the path to BB was insignificant. H2 was partially supported: LF increased perceived exposure to WCB only indirectly through increased BB and negative team climate in Germany, in Spain LF increased perceived exposure to WCB directly and indirectly through negative team climate, the path to BB was insignificant.

Theoretical and practical implications

Theoretically, this study implied that leadership sets the tone for a WCB-prone working culture. The inconclusive results indicate that in some samples, leadership – whether constructive or destructive – might not significantly BB, which might be explained by the fact that supervisors might differ in their ability to modify work settings related to connectivity expectations off-work, which might in some cases be regulated on higher levels such as on HR level or organization-wide levels (e.g., Bakker & De Vries, 2021). Practically, we provide leverage for intervention levels on three contextual areas: For HR, clear boundary setting for work might help against WCB. For leaders, promoting a transformational style might set resourceful conditions that deter WCB. For teams, effective team development intervention might tackle WCB.

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Beyond the Personal to the Organizational: Workplace Courage Underpins Effective Anti-bullying Diversity and Inclusion Interventions for LGBTs

Ernesto Noronha¹, Nidhi S. Bisht², & Premilla D'Cruz¹

¹IIMA Ahmedabad, India

²MDI Gurgaon, India

Background

Research on workplace bullying of sexual minorities is limited but the extant literature highlights the extreme psychological distress lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals (LGBTs) experience (Hoel et al, 2021). We explore the experiences of Indian LGs at work through the lens of fear and courage which underlies their engagement with identity, authenticity, disclosure and secrecy and their experiences of mistreatment.

Method

Adopting an iterative hermeneutic phenomenological approach (van Manen, 1998), our study included 35 employed lesbians and gays (LGs) based in New Delhi/National Capital Region and Mumbai, India. Data, focusing on participants' lived experiences, were gathered in 2 phases, over a 3-year period, through in-depth, individual, in-person/telephonic interviews and were subjected to sententious and selective thematic analyses. Emergent findings from phase 1 served as the basis for data gathering during phase 2.

Findings

Our findings highlight that, despite heteronormative and anti-homosexual attitudes in their workplaces, LG participants attempted to move from fear to courage to live authentic lives. For this, they assessed societal and organizational risks and displayed courage by making micro-disclosures, despite being closeted. To attain full positivity and sustain these disclosures, they expressed the need for an inclusive ethical organization that infused them with courage. Participants emphasized that personal courage is necessary but insufficient to be authentic and to fight bullying. The crucial element to counter the hostile homophobic social climate which triggered and perpetuated mistreatment at work is courageous leaders and top management who create and maintain courageous workplaces. Such work environments where diversity and inclusion are not mere rhetoric but valued realities spur and reinforce personal courage. Inclusive ethical organizations which embody courage not only design but also ensure the effectiveness of anti-bullying diversity and inclusion interventions.

Contributions/Implications

Our study makes several contributions. Theoretically, it advances the workplace courage literature beyond the extant focus on individual disposition (Schilpzand et al, 2015) to organizational and social dimensions. By emphasizing context, it addresses criticisms that positive organizational scholarship (POS) – of which courage forms a part – is essentially individual-based (Rayner, 2021). Substantively, it furthers the category-based harassment literature in workplace bullying, deepening insights into the much-neglected sexual minority group (D’Cruz et al, 2021). It adds to the almost non-existent academic literature on homosexuality and homosexuality at work in India. Practically, it underscores that anti-bullying diversity and inclusion interventions will be effective and LGBTs’ disclosure and authenticity will be possible only in the presence of workplace courage, initiated and fostered by leaders and top management who make inclusive ethical organizations a reality. Workplace courage is essential to safeguard the dignity of LG employees through its facilitation of authenticity and tackling of bullying (D’Cruz et al, forthcoming).

Workplace intervention against workplace bullying and harassment: A bystander approach.

Kari Einarsen ^{1,2}, Morten Birkeland Nielsen ^{1,3}, Jørn Hetland ¹, Olav Kjellevoll Olsen ^{1,2},
Lena Zahlquist ¹, Eva Gemzøe Mikkelsen ⁴, Justine Koløen ^{1,5}, and Ståle Valvatne Einarsen ¹

¹ University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway,

² BI Norwegian Business School, Bergen, Norway,

³ National Institute of Occupational Health, Oslo, Norway,

⁴ University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark,

⁵ Aker Solutions, Stord, Norway

Research goals

Workplace bullying (WB) is an important and prevalent risk factor for health impairment, reduced workability and lowered efficiency among both targets and observers. Development and tests of effective organizational intervention strategies is therefore highly important. This abstract presents an overview of a bystander intervention and the participants satisfaction evaluation of the intervention. The intervention study is a cluster randomized controlled trial evaluating the effectiveness of an organization-wide intervention on preventing WB that focus on promoting active and constructive bystander involvement. The main overarching goal is to develop an easy-to-use and

standardized organizational intervention based on theory and research on bystanders' role in bullying situations.

Theoretical background

The intervention is based on existing literature and empirical research on bystander behavior (e.g. Paull, et al, 2012; Ng, et al, 2019; Pouwelse, et al, 2018). The main theoretical assumption is that the actions of bystanders in situations where coworkers are exposed to acts of WB, can either escalate or reduce WB. Hence, stimulating early, active, and constructive involvement by bystanders should prevent further escalation and possibly create an anti-bullying climate.

Therefore, the overall theoretical hypothesis of the intervention is that

- 1) if bystanders intervene constructively in bullying situation, such intervening will then potentially eliminate further escalation of bullying situations, and
- 2) if bystanders start intervening constructively in bullying situations, then such intervening will have a preventive effect on counterproductive behavior, i.e. bullying behavior in the organization.

Thus, developing a psychosocial climate in the organization where the norms welcome positive bystander behavior, and at the same time enhance the employees' perceived bystander behavior control, is crucial in combating WB in organizations.

Design/Methodology/Approach/Intervention

Using a full RCT design, this intervention project empirically tests the outcomes of an intervention program targeting bullying as the main distal outcomes and perceived behavioral control and helping behavior among bystanders as the main proximal outcome. A one-year cluster randomized controlled design is utilized, in which controls also receive the intervention. About 1500 workers from two different locations of an industrial company are randomized into one intervention group and two control groups with at least 400 workers in each group. A survey based on the constructs of the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) are conducted electronically, totally three times. The three assessments have a time interval of four months over 12 months. Thus, the data collection will take place at baseline, completion of the intervention and at four months follow-up. Also, a survey evaluating the participants satisfaction with the intervention will be sent out immediately after their participation in the group sessions (i.e. the intervention).

The intervention is based on an existing, tailor-made for the public sector, workplace intervention developed by researchers and practitioners in Denmark (Mikkelsen & Høgh, 2019). The present intervention is customized to a Norwegian industrial setting by the authors, representing both researchers and practitioners. The intervention program contains three elements: a *planning meeting*, a three-hour *group session*, and a *follow-up session* with department managers.

Results

The preliminary results show that the intervention was positively evaluated by the participants, yet somewhat less so by bullying victims. However, those bystanders with experience of intervening in bullying situations were even more positive than others.

Limitations

The survey instruments are all self-report measures, and the project is thus subject to limitations specific to self-report instruments such as response-set tendencies. The survey data are also measured from the same source, yet at different timepoints. As such, common method variance may inflate the relations between constructs somewhat (Podsakoff, et al. 2003).

Research/Practical Implications

This study primarily aims to develop, implement, and evaluate an intervention based on the abovementioned features with the aim of reducing the prevalence of WB, by focusing on bystanders. The preliminary result of the intervention shows that there are some factors predicting the satisfaction of the intervention, namely, being a bullying victim, and prior experiences as an intervening bystander in bullying situations. Given the scarcity of evidence on effective interventions for preventing and managing workplace bullying, this study is important and timely, and may enhance our knowledge on how organizations may focus their efforts and resources in combating workplace bullying.

Originality/Value

This project address important knowledge gaps in research on workplace interventions against workplace bullying, focusing on the role of bystanders in a preventive intervention. By examining mediating and moderating variables in the relationship between perceived bystander behavior control and outcomes, this project will generate novel knowledge important for extending and developing the theoretical basis of our understanding of bystander behavior.

Exploring the role of supervisor stress preventive management competencies in the relationships between working conditions, employee exposure to bullying behavior and workplace phobic anxiety: A weekly diary study

Cristian Balducci¹, Michela Vignoli², & Dina Guglielmi³

¹ University of Bologna, Italy

² University of Trento, Italy

³ University of Bologna, Italy

Background and hypotheses

Increasing high-quality evidence suggests that workplace bullying is a strain phenomenon, developing due to distressing working conditions (role conflict, workload, organizational restructuring). Although most of the evidence has been based on between-person research rather than on the observation of within individual dynamics and trajectories, there is indeed agreement among scholars that job stress can be not only a consequence of bullying but also a crucial antecedent. Given the above state of affairs, managerial/supervisory competencies in stress prevention and management – i.e., the organizational and interpersonal skills that managers and supervisors have to deal with distressing working conditions – may play a protective role in the development of bullying. Thus, we assessed whether the chain of relationships between exposure to distressing working conditions, bullying, and its health consequences (workplace phobia*) holds at both the between- and the within-person levels and whether stress preventive managerial competencies moderate it.

Methods

A weekly diary study has been conducted on a heterogeneous sample of employees (N = 159, for a total of 954 observations; gender = 60% females; age: 37 years [SD = 12 years]) coming from different organizations. In addition to weekly surveys administered on Monday each week for six weeks, employees responded to a general questionnaire used to derive a socio-demographic and work-related profile. We measured exposure to a number of working conditions (i.e., role conflict, workload), workplace bullying (target perspective) and work-related phobia with well-established measures. We also measured stress preventive managerial competencies by including three subdimensions (i.e., proactive management of workload, managing conflict and taking responsibility

for resolving issues) of the Stress Management Competency Indicator Tool (SMCIT; see Toderi et al., 2015). Example items of the SMCIT are the following: My line manager: “When necessary, stops additional work being passed on to me”, “Acts as a mediator in conflict situations” and “Follows up conflicts after resolution”. Data were analysed by implementing multilevel modelling with SPSS and Mplus.

Preliminary results

Data analysis is ongoing. Preliminary results focusing on role conflict as independent variable supports the hypothesis that workplace bullying partially mediates the relationship between role conflict and workplace phobia at both the within-person (weekly) and the between-person levels. We also found supporting evidence for a moderating role of stress management competencies, indicating that when employees attribute higher levels of such competencies to their supervisors, there is a weaker relationship between role conflict and workplace bullying. However, the examined moderation only holds at the between-person level.

Theoretical and practical implications

The emerged within-person relationships between role conflict, workplace bullying behavior and workplace phobia suggests that the link between these phenomena does not regard only simple covariation at the between-person level, but it is also valid within the same individual across time. In other words, we showed that in weeks in which the experience of role conflict is higher, the employee also reports exposure to more workplace bullying behavior and higher workplace phobia than in weeks where exposure to role conflict is lower. Additionally, the moderating role of stress preventive management competencies on the examined relationships strengthens the idea that workplace bullying is a strain phenomenon. Importantly, the latter result also suggests an original avenue for bullying prevention, that is, interventions aimed at improving stress management competencies and skills in individuals holding supervisory positions. The main limitations of the study are the type of data, which were entirely self-reported, and the kind of analyses implemented, which only considered cross-sectional covariation between the investigated phenomena.

* Workplace phobia is a classical phobic anxiety reaction concerning the stimulus workplace. It occurs in a panic-like reaction with physiological arousal when thinking of the workplace or approaching it. The person shows clear avoidance behaviour towards the workplace (Muschalla, 2009).

Can HRM break the cycles of employee mistreatment? Exploring revenge cognitions and retaliatory CWB

Al-Karim Samnani, & Jacqueline Power
Odette School of Business, University of Windsor

Background and Hypotheses

In this paper, we have chosen to focus on an understudied group of vulnerable employees, young part-time employees. Young workers although they represent a sizable portion of the workforce, have received little attention in this field. We examine the relationship between work mistreatment and deviant behavior directed towards others. Extending frustration-aggression theory, we explore possible mistreatment cycles. Specifically, we examine how mistreatment can stimulate revenge cognitions, which can lead to individual-directed counterproductive workplace behavior

(CWB-I). Moreover, we examine how perceived HRM practices, as a possible intervention, may potentially attenuate revenge cognitions and CWB-I. High performance HRM practices, which typically include mechanisms for voice and participation, teamwork, and performance management practices may reduce employee retaliation to mistreatment for several reasons. Employees may feel more comfortable reporting mistreatment when HRM encourages voice and participation. Furthermore, employees may perceive greater risk of retaliating to mistreatment when high performance HRM practices are present. Employee revenge can impact collective performance in team-based job designs and reflect poorly in performance reviews when strong performance management practices are present. Hence, we expect employees to be less likely to retaliate.

H1. Workplace mistreatment will be positively associated with revenge cognitions.

H2. Workplace mistreatment will be positively associated with individual-directed counterproductive workplace behaviors.

H3. Perceived HRM practices will moderate the relationship between workplace mistreatment and revenge cognitions whereby the relationship between workplace mistreatment and revenge cognitions will be weaker when the organization is perceived to have high-performance HRM practices.

H4. Perceived HRM practices will moderate the relationship between workplace mistreatment and individual-directed counterproductive workplace behaviors whereby the relationship between workplace mistreatment and individual-directed counterproductive workplace behaviors will be weaker when the organization is perceived to have high-performance HRM practices.

H5. Revenge cognitions will be positively associated with individual-directed counterproductive workplace behaviors.

H6. The mediated relationship between workplace mistreatment, revenge cognitions, and individual-directed CWB will be moderated by HRM practices, whereby revenge cognitions will mediate the relationship between workplace mistreatment and individual-directed CWB when employees perceive high-performance HRM practices.

Method

Based on a sample of 315 young part-time employees, we test a moderated-mediation model in which the mediating role of revenge cognitions between workplace mistreatment and CWB-I is moderated by perceived HRM practices.

Results

Our results reveal that employees who perceive high-performance HRM practices are less likely to develop revenge cognitions ($\beta = .15$; $p < .01$) and less likely to engage in CWB-I ($\beta = .15$; $p < .01$) when targeted by acts of workplace mistreatment than those who do not perceive high-performance HRM practices. In support of Hypothesis 6, revenge cognitions does mediate the relationship between workplace mistreatment and CWB-I when high-performance HRM practices are perceived (95% CI = .03; .18).

KEYNOTE

Organisational Interventions for Workplace Bullying: Theory and Practice

Professor Michelle Tuckey, University of South Australia

Though bullying behaviour takes place between individuals, bullying is undoubtedly an organisational issue. Many common interventions – such as workplace bullying policies, training, reporting, and complaints investigation – focus on the behaviour itself, overlooking risk factors inherent in the organisational system and weighting the responsibility for bullying prevention and response towards individuals. Going beyond a behavioural focus, addressing the organisational risk factors holds the possibility for ‘designing out’ bullying from organisations to provide a safe and healthy work environment.

Though there are several well-established general principles regarding the antecedents of bullying at work, the body of knowledge regarding workplace bullying interventions is in its infancy. There is, however, a wider evidence base on organisational interventions that can serve as a guide to workplace bullying researchers and practitioners. Organisational interventions aim to change workplace policies, practices, or procedures through collaborative action in order improve the health and well-being of employees (Nielsen & Christensen, 2021). At their core, organisational interventions target how work is organised, designed, and managed. In the case of bullying, an additional goal is to transform the organisational conditions relevant to bullying (Murray, Branch, & Caponecchia, 2020).

This keynote presentation will overview the development, testing, and evaluation of an organisational intervention for workplace bullying that addresses work organisation practices as a root cause of this form of mistreatment. Work organisation refers to the ways in which work processes and activities are structured and managed to coordinate individuals and tasks as part of an overarching system of work (Cordery & Parker, 2007; DeJoy et al., 2010). Work organisation practices – such as those used for rostering, distributing workloads, assigning tasks, and appraising performance – offer clear, concrete, modifiable focal points for sustainable and effective bullying prevention by mitigating risks embedded in the organisational context.

The importance of work organisation practices as an enabler of workplace bullying emerged through the analysis of 342 bullying complaints lodged with a state work health and safety regulatory agency; this analysis underpinned development of a conceptual framework for the intervention. A series of additional studies created a risk audit tool – a behaviourally anchored rating scale survey – to assess 10 work organisation practices, then validated these as root causes of bullying at work in a multilevel multisource study. Since then, a series of applied research projects using the risk audit tool have been used to test and refine an intelligence-led organisational intervention that aims to improve the ways in which work is organised, coordinated, and managed and reduce the organisational risk factors for bullying at work.

The work organisation intervention process will be described in detail during the keynote presentation. The five intervention phases follow the problem-solving approach typically adopted in organisational interventions (cf. Nielsen & Noblet, 2018).

- *Preparation*: building awareness of and readiness for the intervention;
- *Diagnosis*: identifying which work organisation practices to focus on;
- *Solutions*: co-designing strategies to change the focal areas of work organisation;

- *Implementation*: consolidating the strategies into an action plan, then implementing the strategies at multiple levels within the workplace; and
- *Evaluation*: measuring changes in outcomes and learning about implementation success factors.

The outcome (effect) and implementation (process) evaluation evidence for the work organisation intervention will also be summarised. The evaluation evidence draws on multiple data sources across multiple studies, including: risk audit tool scores; proximal and distal outcomes (e.g., workplace bullying, job demands, job resources, respect, team cohesion); intervention exposure and success factors (e.g., management commitment, management support, organisational priority, communication); organisational records of distal outcomes (e.g., absenteeism, engagement, and customer experience); focus groups and interviews regarding intervention implementation; and implementation meeting notes and records.

Finally, to bring together theory and practice in this area, the presentation will highlight links between the applied research case study examples and the foundational literature on organisational interventions and, where possible, the literature on workplace bullying interventions.

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How do team support, team psychological safety, and team mindfulness influence coping responses to incivility? A multi-level investigation

Samuel Farley¹, Lynda Song¹, Rebecca Pieniazek¹, Kerrie Unsworth¹ and David Wuwei²

¹Leeds University Business School, UK

²Renmin University, China

Background

In this paper, we extend research on how employees cope with incivility by examining how three distinct team climates (team psychological safety, team support and team mindfulness) shape specific coping responses. We frame our hypotheses using social information processing theory (SIP; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) which argues that employees use the social information available to them to understand their work environments and to formulate attitudes and behaviours. According to SIP theory, individuals who experience incivility at work will use cues from their immediate social

environment to appraise it and formulate an appropriate coping response. Since team climates are a central aspect of one's social environment at work, we contend that they influence the choice of coping strategy that individuals adopt.

Specifically, we argue that team psychological safety will be positively related to active coping and planning that directly addresses the incivility (hypothesis 1), as individuals in psychologically safe teams will feel comfortable voicing their incivility experiences and seeking resolution with their teammates. We contend that team support will positively relate to instrumental support seeking (hypothesis 2), as members of supportive teams are more likely to reach out to their colleagues when they encounter incivility. Finally, we contend that team mindfulness will be positively related to positive reframing and negatively related to venting and behavioural disengagement when individuals encounter incivility (hypothesis 3). Team mindfulness involves focussing on the present moment and processing events in a receptive, open, and non-judgemental manner (Yu et al., 2018). Therefore, members of mindful teams are less likely to respond to incivility by venting, or disengaging behaviourally, as mindfulness encourages attentional stability and control (Yu et al., 2018). Instead, by processing uncivil events in an open and non-judgemental way, members of mindful teams are more likely to reinterpret incivility in a positive light by using positive reframing.

Method

Data were collected from 526 nursing, administrative and pharmaceutical employees of a large Chinese hospital who were organised into 73 teams. Survey data were collected at three time points, separated by a month. In the first survey, employees were asked about their age, gender, and incivility experiences. In the second survey, they were asked about their team psychological safety, team support, and team mindfulness. In the third survey, they were asked about the strategies they used to cope with incivility, including the extent to which they engaged in active coping, planning, instrumental support seeking, venting, behavioural disengagement, and positive reframing. All variables were measured using validated scales.

Results

Multi-level modelling was undertaken to determine the impact of the team climate variables using Mplus version 8. ICC(1) values showed that between 9.4% and 17.8% of the variance in the coping variables was attributable to the team-level. We therefore examined the fixed main effects of team climate on coping by fitting a series of models that controlled for the within-level effects of age, gender, and incivility (age and incivility were group mean centred). Hypothesis 1 was supported as a positive fixed main effect was observed between team psychological safety and both active coping (.33, $p < .05$) and planning (.31, $p < .05$). Hypothesis 2 was not supported as team support was unrelated to instrumental support seeking (.03, $p = .82$). Hypothesis 3 was only partially supported as team mindfulness was significantly negatively related to both venting (-.94, $p < .01$) and behavioural disengagement (-.86, $p < .01$), however it was unrelated to positive reframing (-.11, $p = .59$). To further investigate whether the team climate variables had a differential effect, we examined how they related to all coping outcomes. Psychological safety was unrelated to instrumental support seeking, venting, positive reframing, and behavioural disengagement. Furthermore, team mindfulness was unrelated to active coping, planning, and instrumental support seeking. However, interestingly team support was positively related to active coping (.39, $p < .01$), planning (.39, $p < .01$) and positive reframing (.36, $p < .01$), but unrelated to behavioural disengagement and venting.

Discussion

To date, the research on coping responses to incivility has overwhelmingly taken place at the individual level (Hershcovis et al., 2018). Our research contributes to this literature by examining how

team climates influence coping responses. The pattern of results suggests that the three distinct team climates generally have a positive impact on how individuals cope with incivility at work. However, their impact varies in nature, as psychological safety and team support enhanced problem-focussed responses to incivility, whereas team mindfulness reduced negative emotion-focussed responses.

The development of COBHRA

A concise risk assessment tool for workplace bullying and harassment

Chahida Azzarouali¹, Elfi Baillien¹, Hans De Witte¹, & Guy Notelaers²

¹ KU Leuven, Belgium

² University of Bergen, Norway

Purpose

While scholars and practitioners have repeatedly underscored the importance of a thorough risk assessment for effective prevention of workplace bullying and harassment (WBH), the current status regarding such assessments shows some obvious gaps. First, from a scientific perspective, most of these instruments are developed by instances (e.g., consultancy firms, occupational health practitioners, ...) applying a more commercial angle to the assessment. Consequently, many of the tools at hand lack a sound underpinning in terms of their psychometric qualities. Most of them lack a validation procedure and some of them even fail to adhere to item-theory standards. And, many tools apply outdated or inadequate statistical methods, therefore providing inaccurate feedback for risk prevention. Moreover, many of the existing tools miss out on crucial risk factors because they were not developed based on a scientific research protocol. Notably, also, they predominantly look at risk factors within the job or organization, missing out on the interpersonal, social context displayed in personal relationships between team members. Consequently, the instruments tend to explain rather low variance in WBH. Second, from a practical perspective, the tools that do aim to respect psychometric and statistical requirements are often lengthy, time consuming, and costly. Moreover, they can often only provide feedback after weeks to months, which challenges a swift prevention program from assessment towards interventions. In reply, we aim to develop COBHRA (i.e., Combat Bullying and Harassment Risk Assessment) that is (1) valid and (2) short, (3) includes the interpersonal aspect of WBH, (4) applies adequate statistics and (5) provides direct feedback. This project is funded by KU Leuven with the aim of providing the instrument to a broad range of Belgian companies.

Methodology

First, potential risk factors of WBH and its measurements were identified based on a thorough review of the current literature, including more recent publications tapping more social and interpersonal factors. Second, a pilot study (N = 354) was conducted to assess the psychometric properties of the preliminary questionnaire. Currently, a two-wave data collection is on-going (N = 8168 at T1): these data will be used to identify the prominent risk factors on Time 1 for WBH on Time 2. Through ROC-analyses we will identify their cut-off points in terms of primary prevention (i.e., incivility) and secondary prevention (i.e., LCA-determined victims). Meanwhile, we are in contact with several important stakeholders from the practitioners' angle to design the most suitable instrument for easy application.

Results

In the session we would like to present the overall framework of the project as well as the results available at that point. These entail (a) the first results of the ROC curve analyses as explored on Time 1 measurement and (b) the input-so-far collected from the practitioners' stakeholders. We would also like to launch a call to the attendees of the SGM to participate in our last part of the project, being an international validation of our final tool.

Limitations

The longitudinal study is carried out during the pandemic. Therefore, we need to take into account the potential impact of several factors that could currently be at stake in the work environment and could determine our results (e.g., related to the pandemic specifically, such as for example safety climate and interpersonal conflicts regarding following the rules).

Research/Practical Implications

The results allow to determine the relative importance of work-related antecedents of WBH. This fosters the development of adequate interventions for the primary and secondary prevention of WBH. A call is made for collaboration with international scholars to validate COBHRA in other countries than Belgium.

Originality

COBHRA aims to be the first of its kind risk assessment for WBH specifically, by combining current voids from both a scientific as a practical angle.

Trajectories of workplace bullying and its impact on strain: Evidence from two intensive longitudinal studies

Alfredo Rodríguez-Muñoz¹, Mirko Antino¹, Paula Ruiz-Zorrilla¹,
Ana Sanz-Vergel², & Arnold B. Bakker³

¹ Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain

² University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

³ Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Theoretical background

The current research focuses on temporal changes in workplace bullying patterns. Previous longitudinal research has focused mainly on long-term effects, but few have been concerned with change and temporal patterns in the bullying process. For this aim, intensive longitudinal data are suited to explore individuals' changing experiences over time. However, as pointed out by McCormick et al. (2020), several studies have failed to incorporate specific temporal relationships in their hypotheses, and thus basically mirror "between-person findings using a within-person design" (p. 3). Only a few exceptions included temporal hypotheses in their models (Hoprekstad et al. (2019, Rodríguez-Muñoz et al., 2020).

We based our hypotheses on Conservation of Resources Theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989, 2001) to shed light on the bullying process by examining short-term temporal patterns. We examine (1) trajectories in bullying across four waves and (2) the association over time of each trajectory with strain indicators (i.e., insomnia and anxiety-depressive symptoms).

Methods

This research is based on intensive longitudinal data from two different studies conducted in Spain (Study 1: N = 286, four waves over a month; Study 2: N = 278, four waves over eight months).

We used a latent class growth analysis (LCGA; Muthén, 2004) to identify classes of individuals in different trajectories of workplace bullying across four waves. After we determined the model with the best fit, repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to investigate class differences on strain.

Results

Results of latent growth modelling showed that, in the first study, three trajectories could be identified (a non-bullying trajectory, an inverted U trajectory, and a delayed increase bullying trajectory). A significant interaction between time and trajectories when predicting insomnia and anxiety/depression was found, showing each strain a differential pattern with each trajectory. It seems that the negative effects on insomnia are long-lasting and remain after bullying has already decreased. In the case of anxiety and depression, when bullying decreases these strain indicators also decreases. However, in the second the results were not confirmed. Although three trajectories were found, the pattern was not the same. There was not a significant interaction between time and bullying trajectories, and only appeared differences between clusters for insomnia.

Research/Practical Implications

To our knowledge, our study is one of the first to examine trajectories of bullying at work overtime and their associations with strain indicators, providing new insights into the temporal dynamics of workplace bullying. We identified three trajectories of bullying in both studies. However, in each study bullying trajectories showed a differential pattern concerning strain indicators. These results may be related to the different time lags.

To help or not to help, is that the (only) question? Putting co-worker reactions to workplace bullying in context.

Caroline Bastiaensen, Elfi Baillien, & Lieven Brebels
KU Leuven, Belgium

Workplace bullying is a social phenomenon. The bulk of knowledge stems from the target's perspective, including the role of the work environment. Studies have, to a lesser extent, also looked at the perpetrator. More recently, scholars focused on co-workers as witnesses, developing a more nuanced view on how workplace bullying unfolds in the social group. Indeed, understanding the responses of witnesses can be a valuable tool in preventing the (escalation of) bullying (Pouwelse et al., 2021). However, while the research stream on witnesses is thickening, we see aspects that may challenge getting 'the most' out of our studies. In fact, not paying attention to these points could result in biased findings hampering effective guidelines for practice. Therefore, we want to apply a critical lens on research by discussing these aspects from the wider perspective of psychological and work organizational research; to offer leads for practically optimizing our future studies.

Bullying in the eyes of a bystander. From studies with targets (Leymann, 1996), researchers established a definition of workplace bullying as frequent, systematic, and enduring exposure to negative social behaviour resulting in a power imbalance between target and perpetrator. While such a scientific definition is clearly needed, studies have limitedly examined whether (and when) co-workers appraise allegations based on this definition as bullying. As our understanding of how co-workers respond to bullying depends on their own perception, we first need to gain insight in the defining elements (e.g., moderators) for co-workers to perceive a certain incident as (part of) bullying. Additionally, we need to build knowledge on whether and how this perception varies depending on

contextual features. In sum, our research stream will thrive by adopting a critical angle to our own fixed definition.

Helping in the broader social context. Scholars see a grand preventive role in ‘helping’, generally conceptualised as supporting the victim, retaliating against the perpetrator, or indirectly/passively by informing a person in charge. While there are arguments for this from the target’s angle, a pitfall is its normative view that may not always account for the wider context. Insights in the line of, amongst others, person-environment fit (Edwards et al., 1998) or scapegoating (Gemill, 1989) could point at other constructive responses that do not necessarily entail full agreement with the target. In all, our research stream will thrive by taking a nuanced stance towards ‘helping’ including its situational context.

Research methods. Besides the issues described above, mapping co-workers’ responses to any bad/unethical situation is challenging. Research methods such as vignettes or surveys are likely to mold socially desirable answers with respondents reacting normatively (Ahmad et al., 2014). Consequently, they hardly identify so-called ‘destructive’ responses (Ng et al., 2021) leading to restricted variance and validity. Because of self-serving bias, participants tend to evaluate themselves in a favorable manner, overestimating their ‘would-do’ good behaviour (Forsyth, 2008). Moreover, people respond to questionnaires and hypothetical scenarios in a way that fits their ‘should self’, whereas what really determines their responses in a real situation is their ‘want self’ (Tenbrunsel et al., 2010) In other words, people respond in a way that is more ethical, but in reality their behaviour is mainly motivated by self-interest, rather than ethical considerations. In all, our research stream will thrive by exploring innovative methods for better capturing the true behaviour of witnesses.

During this contribution, we will discuss these points more in depth and formulate suggestions for improving our research. This will ultimately enhance the generalisation of our findings and strengthen their usefulness for both theory and practice.