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Strategies Human Resource and Line Managers Use to Reduce Workplace Bullying

Gregory James Brown
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Gregory James Brown

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Review Committee
Dr. Franz Gottleib, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Gregory Uche, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Mohamad Hammoud, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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by

Gregory James Brown

MS, Grand Valley State University, 1998

BS, Davenport School of Business, 1988

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Workplace bullying is a growing problem that costs companies billions of dollars each year. Human resource leaders who do not employ strategies to reduce workplace bullying may experience poor organizational performance and high turnover rates. Grounded in the organizational culture workplace bullying model, the purpose of this multiple case study was to explore strategies human resource and line managers (HRLM) use to reduce workplace bullying. Participants were five HRLM who managed programs that successfully reduced workplace bullying in Michigan. Data were collected from semistructured interviews and a review of archival documents. Yin's five-phase analytic cycle was used to guide the thematic analysis. Three themes emerged: establishing a desired organizational culture, creating an employee wellness program, and training employees. A key recommendation for HRLM is to implement a symbiotic organizational culture with organizational programs and employee training. Implications for positive social change include the potential to create work cultures conducive to civility, leading to satisfied workers and improving organizations and communities.

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Dedication

My study is dedicated to Noah. Thank you for the great school year together. Stay strong, my man!

Acknowledgments

I need to acknowledge several individuals who supported me through my doctoral journey. First, my family has been most supportive. My wife Laura made endless sacrifices to help me complete my studies, and my young son inadvertently inspired me countless times. I want to thank my classmates, Jules, Ashley, Denise, Fadey, Vanessa, Jef, Myon, Simone, and many others for their friendship, pep talks, brainstorming, and everything else that comes with being classmates. My fellow professors at work provided a support network because I spent most of my time working on my study in my campus office. I would be remiss not to recognize my Facebook family, who were subjected to continuous posts on my progress through this endeavor and offered support time and time again. Mostly, though, I would like to thank my chair, Doc Mike, for the guidance he provided on this journey.

It takes a village!

Table of Contents

List of Tables iv

Section 1: Foundation of the Study 1

Background of the Problem 1

Problem Statement 2

Purpose Statement 2

Nature of the Study 3

Research Question 4

Interview Questions 4

Conceptual Framework 5

Operational Definitions 5

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations 6

Assumptions 6

Limitations 7

Delimitations 7

Significance of the Study 7

Contribution to Business Practice 8

Implications for Social Change 8

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature 9

Conceptual Framework 10

Related and Contrasting Theories 29

Description of Workplace Bullying 49

Research on Reduction Strategies 55
Implications of Literature Review 59
Transition 59
Section 2: The Project 61
Purpose Statement 61
Role of the Researcher 61
Participants 64
Research Method and Design 66
Research Method 66
Research Design 67
Population and Sampling 68
Ethical Research 71
Data Collection Instruments 74
Data Collection Technique 76
Data Organization Technique 78
Data Analysis 79
Reliability and Validity 82
Reliability 82
Validity 83
Transition and Summary 85
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change 87
Presentation of the Findings 87

Theme 1: Establishing the Desired Organizational Culture 87

Theme 2: Implementing Programs..... 94

Theme 3: Employee Training 103

Applications to Professional Practice 108

Implications for Social Change.....110

Recommendations for Action 111

Recommendations for Further Research.....112

Reflections 114

Conclusion 115

References.....116

Appendix: Interview Protocol.....148

List of Tables

Table 1. Frequency of Responses Related to Theme 1 and Subthemes..... 88

Table 2. Frequency of Responses Related to Theme 2 and Subthemes..... 94

Table 3. Frequency of Responses Related to Theme 3 and Subthemes..... 104

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

This study addressed workplace bullying issues. Section 1 begins with a background discussion on why organizations should attend to workplace bullying. I then present the conceptual model, the guiding research question, and the interview questions. I conclude Section 1 with a literature review, defining workplace bullying and highlighting existing reduction strategies.

Background of the Problem

Workplace bullying is a widespread phenomenon that has far-reaching effects on productivity, civility, and culture. Workplace bullying can lead to financial instability and decreased performance for organizations because of poor employee mental health, high levels of absenteeism, employee burnout, employee turnover, and low levels of workplace productivity (Mills et al., 2019). Additionally, organizations can incur mitigation costs to solve grievances and human rights complaints (Rockett et al., 2017).

Workplace bullying is one of the worst toxins that the human resource function is expected to mitigate (Catley et al., 2017) but is challenging to address because their cause may be a complex interaction of work environment factors (Caponecchia et al., 2020). Human resources, an influential element for positive organizational change (Baran et al., 2018), can impact employee and organizational performance (Bilan et al., 2020). With proper training, an organization's human resources and line managers (HRLM) can moderate the adverse effects of workplace bullying (Sheehan et al., 2020). The results of the current study supported HRLM by offering strategies to reduce workplace bullying.

Problem Statement

Workplace bullying signifies a considerable barrier to attaining high organizational and individual performance (Naseer et al., 2018) because it is associated with the deterioration of psychological health, which manifests in the form of intent to leave, lack of commitment, job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and poor mental health in the form of post-traumatic stress symptoms, depression, and anxiety (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). In the United States, 27% of workers are bullied, and in 82% of all reported cases the bullied individuals lost their jobs (Wall et al., 2018). The general business problem was the lack of strategies to reduce workplace bullying causes physical and psychological health problems, the negativity of mood, low morale for employees, and financial and legal problems for organizations. The specific business problem was some HRLM lack strategies to reduce workplace bullying.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies HRLM use to address and reduce workplace bullying. The population consisted of managers from five companies in Michigan who had successfully used strategies to reduce workplace bullying. The results of the current study may contribute to social change by transforming workplaces where bullying behavior is diminished or nonexistent, which could benefit employees and other stakeholders such as employees' families, vendors, and customers. Bully reduction and attenuation strategies could enhance employees' quality of life.

Nature of the Study

Researchers use any of the following research methods: qualitative, quantitative, or mixed (Akimowicz et al., 2018). I used the qualitative method in my research. Qualitative researchers aim to define and interpret unclear phenomena and gain insights and meaning (Fusch et al., 2018). Researchers use a deductive approach with quantitative studies to examine variables' characteristics or relationships through hypothesis testing (Abramson et al., 2018). By joining qualitative and quantitative methods, researchers use the mixed-methods approach to collect and analyze data and integrate data generating new insights (Levitt et al., 2018). Because I was not investigating variables' characteristics or relationships, neither the quantitative nor the mixed-methods approaches were suitable. The qualitative method was an appropriate choice for this study because I intended to identify and explore the strategies that HRLM develop and implement to reduce workplace bullying.

The qualitative designs that I considered for this study were case study, ethnography, and phenomenology. From these qualitative designs, I selected a multiple case study design. Case study research is suitable for studying a complex real-life event (Ebneyamini & Sadeghi Moghadam, 2018). Conducting a multiple case study instead of a single case study will likely produce literal or theoretical replication (Yin, 2018). A multiple case study allows observation and documentation on several programs, creating substantial analytical benefits. A researcher using ethnography situates themselves and explores the field, generating rich descriptive data (Speldewinde et al., 2021). Ethnography did not align with my intent because I planned to explore a business

phenomenon, not integrate myself into the workplace to research the culture. Phenomenology aligns with qualitative methodology when the researcher proposes to understand, discover, and interpret the meanings of participants' experiencing a phenomenon on a personal level (Engward & Goldspink, 2020). A phenomenological design did not align with my intent because I intended to research business systems and the corresponding results, not the personal meanings of participants experiencing a phenomenon. Therefore, I chose a qualitative multiple case study design for this study's identification and exploration of strategies HRLM use to reduce workplace bullying.

Research Question

What strategies do HRLM use to reduce workplace bullying?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to reduce workplace bullying?
2. How effective are the strategies to reduce workplace bullying?
3. How do you measure the effectiveness of these strategies to reduce workplace bullying?
4. What key challenges did you encounter in using the strategies to reduce workplace bullying?
5. How did you overcome the key challenges to reduce workplace bullying?
6. What other information can you share that helps me understand your organization's strategies to reduce workplace bullying?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework I used for this study was the organizational culture workplace bullying (OCWB) conceptual model developed by Pheko et al. (2017). Pheko et al. identified fundamental organizational risk factors for bullying, leading to the OCWB conceptual model's constructs: (a) organizational culture, (b) organizational practices, and (c) the bully's and the victim's characteristics. Organizational leadership practices may mitigate workplace bullying frequency (Francioli et al., 2018), and corporate culture influences potential deviant behavior and the likelihood of bullying (Appelbaum et al., 2007). The OCWB conceptual model may guide managers in developing strategies for catalyzing awareness and direct actions related to workplace bullying behavior, making this conceptual framework appropriate for the current study.

Operational Definitions

Bystander: A bystander refers to those who witness bullying but commonly do not take a side and do not intervene (Camodeca & Nava, 2022).

Dysfunctional organizational behavior: Dysfunctional organizational behaviors include the different forms of intentional actions that could be harmful to the organization or individuals within the organization, such as theft, spreading malicious rumors, fraud, vandalism, aggressive behavior, sexual harassment, and workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017).

Organizational culture: Organizational culture is the set of values, norms, assumptions, and beliefs among corporate members, which influence employee attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Di Stefano et al., 2019).

Workplace bullying: Workplace bullying typically includes frequent and repeated verbal and nonverbal messages characterized by an imbalance of power that creates harmful effects on workers (Goodboy et al., 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

I made assumptions to carry out this study. Assumptions reflect and identify the presuppositions, expectations, and rules that influence research decisions and practices (Ospina et al., 2018). First, I assumed that strategies exist for HRLM to use and reduce workplace bullying. For this study, I assumed the knowledge and training I acquired had given me the ability to analyze and answer the research question. The constructs of a research model can carry disciplinary assumptions about what phenomena matter and for whom they are important (Wolgemuth et al., 2017). I assumed that the OCWB conceptual model constructs were sound and were capable of supporting the research question. To better understand an interviewee's perspective, interpretation of events, understandings, experiences, and opinions, open-ended questions are more likely than closed questions to draw a considered response from the participant (Silverman, 2020). For the interviews, I assumed that a semistructured format would encourage each participant to provide information to answer the research question. To achieve quality research, the researcher depends on quality data (Silverman, 2020). In this study, I assumed that this study's participants would be truthful with their answers by sharing their knowledge and that the data would be valued, informative, and applicable to answering the research question.

Limitations

In my study, I addressed certain limitations. Limitations are potential weaknesses that are usually out of the researcher's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Including limitations in a study identifies the specific scope of a study and allows further research to reduce wasteful dispersion of resources (Reddy & Bhadauria, 2019). One limitation of this study was the narrow geographic region, Michigan, for participant selection. Findings from a case study are from a small sample, and they may not transfer to other settings (Yin, 2018). Another limitation of the study was that participants might not have chosen to disclose company information fully or honestly because they wanted to guard their organization's perceived competitive advantages.

Delimitations

I also addressed delimitations in my study. Delimitations are the limitations chosen by the researcher that set the boundaries or limits of their work to achieve the study's aim and objectives (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The current study was limited to five HRLM participants and constrained to the geographical area of Michigan. The study was limited to organizations from Michigan because of economic considerations and ease of access to research participants. Another delimitation was selecting organizations in which only the HRLM had implemented strategies to reduce workplace bullying in their organizations.

Significance of the Study

Identifying successful strategies to prevent workplace bullying could save organizations avoidable costs by reducing associated employee turnover and lawsuits.

HRLM implementing successful strategies could transform workplaces into more civil environments, which could increase employees' productivity. Identifying successful strategies HRLM implement to reduce workplace bullying could have long-term benefits for organizational success and benefit society in general by creating work environments that are more conducive to the well-being of employees and their families.

Contribution to Business Practice

Workplace bullying concerns leaders and presents a significant problem embedded in employee communication (Goodboy et al., 2017). Workplace bullying has become commonplace, affecting nearly half of all U.S. workers (Goodboy et al., 2017). The current study's findings could improve business practices by increasing awareness of the need to reduce workplace bullying and guide HRLM to codevelop and implement bullying mitigation policies. Information from this study could help HRLM train organizational managers to recognize antecedents to bullying, design employee wellness programs, and create a culture conducive to increasing civil interactions.

Implications for Social Change

Implementing workplace bullying reduction strategies may improve employees' quality of life and facilitate a more favorable human and organizational welfare course. The implications for positive social change include the development of more favorable workplace environments. Successful implementation of workplace bullying strategies may reduce workplace tension and promote safe working environments, leading to employees who can feel more salient connections to their work, careers, and fellow

workers. Workers who are happier and more fulfilled may create better home environments for their families and be more likely to contribute to their communities.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies HRLM use to address and reduce workplace bullying. A literature review provides a comprehensive overview of literature related to a study and synthesizes prior research to strengthen the foundation of knowledge (Paul & Criado, 2020). In this literature review, I describe the conceptual framework used in this study, the OCWB conceptual model, and the model's constructs to develop mitigation strategies. I explain other models and their use in other studies. I also analyze research on the antecedents to workplace bullying, the consequences of workplace bullying on employees and organizations, and the definition and the nature of workplace bullying. In this literature review, I expose the lack of research on practitioners' successes in addressing workplace bullying, which justified the need for the current study.

I organized this literature review into four main sections. First, I present the literature explaining the OCWB conceptual model developed by Pheko et al. (2017), review how the OCWB model was derived, and elaborate on its constructs. I then check the research and application of other conceptual models available, including the social exchange theory, the work environment model, and the job demands-resources model (JD-R). I address the progression of definitions of workplace bullying from prominent researchers and highlight actions and consequences that researchers have recognized. Finally, I summarize the literature on strategies to address workplace bullying and

identify the literature gaps, which justified the current study. This literature review highlights the relevant research regarding workplace bullying.

I used several search engines to find relevant literature on workplace bullying. My search included EBSCOhost, ERIC, Google Scholar, Google, Sage, Taylor and Francis, and Wikipedia. In this study, 97% of the articles I used were peer reviewed, and 70% of the materials supporting the current study were published between 2018 and 2022. One hundred ten peer-reviewed articles were referenced in this literature review. To find relevant articles, I used key search terms and combination phrases such as best practices, bullying, costs, culture, harassment, human resources, human resources leaders, human resources managers, incivility, mobbing, organizational culture, power, resources, victim, and workplace bullying. I also searched the government sites of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Bureau of Labor, and StopBullying.gov. I researched The Workplace Bullying Institute, which presented pertinent information. I conducted a thorough search of the literature to prepare the foundation for this study.

Conceptual Framework

I used the OCWB model as the framework of this study. The OCWB model was developed in response to the increasing prevalence of workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). The importance of this framework was to address the relationship between organizational culture and dysfunctional organizational behavior. This framework also addresses the relationship between organizational culture and a company's practices including organizational changes, recruitment practices, training and development practices, and organizational commitment (Pheko et al., 2017). The OCWB model's

breadth is essential because workplace bullying is seldom explained using a single factor because it is a multicausal phenomenon (Hsu et al., 2019). Addressing the consequences of workplace bullying is an immediate need for a significant percentage of organizations (Pheko et al., 2017). By choosing the OCWB conceptual model, I used the framework to explore the many organizational culture measurements integral to reducing workplace bullying.

The OCWB conceptual model employs many constructs to explore and measure workplace bullying. In the study that developed the OCWB model, the hypotheses were structured to identify the likelihood of workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). The possibility of workplace bullying can depend on how different elements and actions of the organization, like employee training or company programs, are compared to the organization's cultural characteristics (Pheko et al., 2017). Initial OCWB constructs are the measurements of an organization's culture type based on seven categories (Pheko et al., 2017). These organizational culture constructs were derived from Hofstede's (1980) model of culture and Blake and Mouton's (1964) managerial grid model. The remaining constructs include the organization's elements and related workplace bullying phenomenon and how they can interact with organizations based on their cultural measurements.

Two conceptual models were referenced to support the development of the OCWB model. Hofstede's model of culture was created in 1980 (Hofstede et al., 1990) and upgraded by Hofstede (2011). The OCWB model uses Hofstede's (1980, as cited in Pheko et al., 2017) model of culture as a basis for six of the organizational cultural

constructs of the OCWB conceptual model. The basis for the seventh organizational cultural construct used in the OCWB was designed in Blake and Mouton's (1964, as cited in Pheko et al., 2017) managerial grid model. Together, these researchers provided the elements for Pheko et al. (2017) to design the OCWB.

Measuring Individual Cultural Constructs

The seven constructs in the organizational culture portion of the OCWB model measure a characteristic of an organization's culture. The six dimensions from Hofstede's (1980) model of culture that were integrated into the OCWB framework to analyze culture are (a) individualism versus collectivism, (b) indulgence versus restraint, (c) long-term versus short-term orientation, (d) masculinity versus femininity, (e) power distance, and (f) uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2011). Additionally, based on Blake and Mouton's (1964, as cited in Pheko et al., 2017) research, the final dimension (job oriented versus employee oriented) was added to the OCWB model as a seventh dimension HRLM can measure an organization's likelihood to support bullying along these seven dimensions.

The seven constructs relating to culture in the OCWB were derived in different ways. Six of the seven dimensions of culture used were designed based on the Hofstede (1980, as cited in Pheko et al., 2017) model of culture. Hofstede (1980, as cited in Hofstede et al., 1990) developed the dimensions based on a review of 20 European business units using employee information. This initial study was followed by several more studies by Hofstede, including the quantitative and qualitative three-step study in 1990, confirming the legitimacy of the dimensions (Hofstede et al., 1990). Four aspects

(power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism vs. collectivism, and masculinity vs. femininity) were presented in the original model (Hofstede et al., 1990). The fifth dimension, referred to as Confucian dynamism, compares organizations with a long-term orientation to organizations with a short-term direction (Hofstede et al., 1990). Hofstede (2011) used previous research to confirm the first five dimensions and then discovered a sixth cultural dimension: indulgence versus restraint. Hofstede (2011) has continued to upgrade and validate the six aspects of the culture model. Although the original study was specific to cultures of nations (Hofstede, 1980), the dimensional paradigm can be applied at other than the national level, such as at the organizational and occupational levels (Hofstede, 2011).

Power Distance as a Cultural Construct. The measure of power distance in an organization affects the likelihood of workplace bullying. Power distance has been defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power in an organization will be unequally distributed (Hofstede, 2011). Power distance can be measured on a bipolar spectrum ranging from high to low values (Ahmad et al., 2021). In high-power distance societies, individuals perceive hierarchy and power inequality as appropriate and beneficial (Liu et al., 2019). Members of cultures with a high-power distance believe superiors have a social responsibility to protect subordinates and, in return, subordinates owe obedience and loyalty to leaders (Liu et al., 2019). Societies with a low-power distance value equality and eliminate inequalities (Liu et al., 2019). This construct is relevant because an imbalance of power often distinguishes workplace bullying from another incivility (Volk

et al., 2017). An imbalance of power is more likely to exist in an organization where cultural power distance is significant. An organization with considerable power distance is more likely to encounter workplace bullying than organizations with a culture characterized by a low power distance (Pheko et al., 2017).

Uncertainty Avoidance as a Cultural Construct. Another dimension of culture in the OCWB conceptual model is uncertainty avoidance. Uncertainty avoidance describes how members of a society approach the new and the unknown (Mulaomerovic et al., 2019). This construct measures an organization's cultural tolerance for ambiguity (Hofstede, 2011). Uncertainty avoidance refers to the propensity of employees to avoid ambiguous situations due to feelings of uneasiness (Afsar & Masood, 2018). Such employees try to follow the rules, regulations, and organizational policies and simultaneously seek help and guidance from their supervisors to evade uncertain situations (Afsar & Masood, 2018). Employees who have high levels of uncertainty avoidance tend to deal with uncertainty through a detailed understanding of rules, regulations, existing processes, guidelines, and potential constraints (Hofstede, 2001). Although societies with high uncertainty avoidance are more conservative regarding change and new ideas, communities with low uncertainty avoidance are more open to change and new ideas (Mulaomerovic et al., 2019). Cultures with lower uncertainty avoidance are more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to, and have fewer rules (Hofstede, 2011). Organizational cultures with substantial uncertainty avoidance are more likely to encounter workplace bullying than organizations with lower

uncertainty avoidance (Pheko et al., 2017). An organization's outlook on potential change can affect the amount of workplace bullying.

Masculinity vs. Femininity as a Cultural Construct. Cultural tendencies can also be measured by masculinity as a societal characteristic. This construct refers to the distribution of values between the genders (Hofstede, 2011). Masculine versus feminine cultures can be measured on a bipolar spectrum, ranging from high to low values (Ahmad et al., 2021). Organizations with a high masculinity culture appreciate scenarios leading to a sense of personal accomplishment, such as opportunities for high earnings, recognition, advancement to top positions, and challenges (Mulaomerovic et al., 2019). Feminine organizations emphasize relationships, cooperation, desirable living areas, and employment security (Mulaomerovic et al., 2019). Organizational cultures with strong masculinity are more likely to encounter workplace bullying than organizations that do not (Pheko et al., 2017).

Collectivist vs. Individualistic as a Cultural Construct. Another cultural dimension measured when identifying the likelihood of bullying is whether an organization is more collectivist or more individualistic. Collectivist versus individualistic cultures can be measured on a bipolar spectrum ranging from high to low values (Ahmad et al., 2021). A group of people in society is considered more collectivist when they integrate into groups instead of acting individually (Hofstede, 2011). Collectivists tend to consider fulfilling obligations more crucial than seeking personal goals (Yang, 2019). Individuals are more reliant on group relationships in a collectivist society, whereas individualism captures the tendency for individual concern with a

person's needs, goals, and interests (Lu et al., 2021). Organizations with both individualistic and collectivist cultures could support an atmosphere conducive to workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017).

Long-Term vs. Short-Term Outlook as a Cultural Construct. Organizational cultures can be measured by whether they are short-term or long-term oriented. Corporate cultures that are long-term oriented value perseverance and thrift and order relationships by status (Hofstede, 2011). In a long-term-oriented society, the perceived difference between good and evil depends on the circumstances, and a moral person adapts to the conditions (Hofstede, 2011). Short-term-oriented cultures value fulfilling social obligations, protecting a person's honor, respecting tradition, and maintaining personal steadiness and stability (Hofstede, 2011). Organizations with short-term orientation are more likely to support an atmosphere conducive to workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017).

Indulgence vs. Restraint as a Cultural Construct. An indulgence orientation compared to a restrained direction for society is another culture construct in the OCWB model. Indulgence refers to the extent to which a community and its members care for the gratification of basic human desires related to enjoying life and having fun, including spending money or enjoying leisure activities (Thanetsunthorn & Wuthisatian, 2018). Individuals in indulgent societies are less likely to possess moral discipline (Thanetsunthorn & Wuthisatian, 2018). Indulgent societies encourage freedom, emotional expression, and happiness (Guo et al., 2018). Conversely, individuals from a restrained community constrain their feelings and primitive needs regarding enjoying life

and having fun (Guo et al., 2018). Individuals often suppress their gratification of needs under restrictive social norms (Thanetsunthorn & Wuthisatian, 2018). Organizations with an indulgent orientation are more likely to support an atmosphere conducive to workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017).

Concern for People vs. Concern for Job as a Cultural Construct. The seventh dimension measures an organization's concern for people against their concern for job. In designing the OCWB model, Pheko et al. (2017) used the managerial grid model developed by Blake and Mouton (1964) as a basis for the seventh dimension to measure organizational culture. This dimension in the managerial grid model contrasts a company's concern for people with their concern for job, and a rating scale of 1–9 was established for both elements (Blake & Mouton, 1964). When different organizations score similarly on the range for the company's concern for people with their concern for job completion, common characteristics can be identified for them (Blake & Mouton, 1964). If organizations score low on concern for job and low for "concern for people," they are labeled as impoverished (Blake & Mouton, 1964). If an organization scores low on concern for job but high on concern for people, they are labeled as country-club style (Blake & Mouton, 1964). An organization that measures high on concern for job but low on concern for people is considered to have a produce-or-perish style (Blake & Mouton, 1964), while an organization that rates high on concern for job and high on concern for people is said to have a team-style culture.

In the OCWB model, concern for people versus concern for job is measured differently. In the OCWB model, concern for job and concern for people are not

measured as in the original model (Pheko et al., 2017). In the OCWB conceptual model, an organization's concern for job is compared to concern for people, where an organization's culture is measured on a continuum as strong in one category or the other (Pheko et al., 2017), similar to an organization either reflecting an individualistic culture or a more collectivist culture. An organization with a more significant concern for job is more likely to encounter workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). The OCWB model describes this last dimension of organizational culture as job oriented versus employee oriented (Pheko et al., 2017).

Implications From OCWB Cultural Constructs. Using the OCWB conceptual model constructs helps organizations recognize the status of their organizational culture. Organizational culture represents shared values, beliefs, norms, traditions, and behavioral patterns within the employing organization, influenced by its history, customs, and practices (Pheko et al., 2017). How an organization measures each construct can indicate the likelihood of workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). The different cultural constructs can mediate each other in determining an organization's culture. An organization's culture can have many relationships among the other constructs of the OCWB that measure an organization's different levels of analysis (Pheko et al., 2017).

Measuring Additional Constructs of the OCWB Model

HRLM use the breadth of the OCWB framework to measure several elements that may indicate the likelihood of workplace bullying. Workplace bullying results from a complex and dynamic process with contributing causes to be found at various levels, including job design, organization of work, organizational cultures and climate, reward

systems, regulatory changes, and leadership (Francioli et al., 2018). The primary construct of the OCWB measures an organization's culture based on Hofstede's (2011) and Blake and Mouton (1964). Researchers then use the OCWB to compare these cultural measurements to other workplace bullying dynamics in the organization. An organization's practices, such as managerial tools, programs, and interpersonal relationships, may influence and be influenced by the organization's culture (Pheko et al., 2017). An aspect of the OCWB model is the interactive relationship between organizational culture, organizational and individual practices, and workplace bullying.

HRLM use the OCWB framework to focus on different levels of workplace bullying, such as the interaction of individuals, group dynamics, work resources, and various organizational practices with the cultural constructs (Pheko et al., 2017). Because of the complexities of organizations, the proposed relationship between organizational culture and workplace bullying may be complicated by additional variables: some heightening, some moderating, some mediating, and some acting as antecedents of workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). Using the OCWB to relate the cultural constructs to the additional constructs helps HRLM determine the likelihood of workplace bullying. Researchers of workplace bullying have investigated and opined about the elements congruent to the OCWB model's constructs.

Organizational Elements as Constructs. Researchers have explored how organizations' elements: mission, vision, strategy, structure, policies, procedures, and climate relate to workplace bullying. Culture is how individuals interact with each other, a set of rules for society members' beliefs and behavior to follow (Fusch et al., 2016).

Organizational attributes can contribute to a bullying culture, and bullying is not merely a matter of personality differences (Hutchinson et al., 2010). Research indicates that leadership quality contributes to establishing working conditions that lead to workplace bullying (Francioli et al., 2018). Organizational elements and how they intertwine can contribute to an organization's culture and subsequent workplace bullying.

Researchers have investigated how an organization's structure and leadership interact with workplace bullying. Pheko et al. (2017) designed the OCWB model to measure a company's structure to indicate potential workplace bullying. Transformational leadership and ethical leadership are useful tools for supervisors and managers to deal with workplace bullying (Gupta et al., 2020). Various leadership styles, such as authentic leadership and transformational leadership, have been linked to decreased bullying levels, but autocratic, authoritarian, tyrannical, and laissez-faire types of leadership have led to increased levels of bullying (Francioli et al., 2018). Some leadership styles, such as authentic leadership, promote trust and a genuine sense of caring for employees and lessen the potential for hostile relations at work (Francioli et al., 2018). A laissez-faire leadership style can lead to role conflict and role ambiguity and can be an antecedent of workplace bullying (Balducci et al., 2011). Acolytes will work with the toxic leader because they share the same values and needs, and bystanders are fearful that they will be targeted if they do not go along. (Pelletier et al., 2018). The leadership of an organization can be influential in deterring workplace bullying.

Researchers have also explored how human resource departments can interact with an employee's work experience. Human resource managers can fill two roles,

representing the organization by implementing the programs and liaising for employee support (Salin et al., 2019). With either role in an organization, human resource management's prime responsibility is to provide a conducive work environment for employees' growth and development (Gupta et al., 2020). Higher levels of bureaucracy will correlate with higher workplace bullying levels because bureaucracy reinforces a structured power imbalance and reduces individuals' empowerment (De Cieri et al., 2019). However, the presence of high-quality human resource management practices and organizational size predicted the existence of strategies addressing workplace bullying (Einarsen et al., 2019). Human resource management can create a competitive advantage because it facilitates employees' success in an organization (Elrehail et al., 2020). Researchers have confirmed that the organizational structure, including leadership and the human resource department, can influence the presence of workplace bullying.

Researchers have highlighted how current laws are inadequate to address workplace bullying. Traditionally, organizations relied on relevant laws to police unacceptable work behaviors, but current U.S. employment laws neither offer a cure nor compel employers to prevent or correct bullying (Namie, 2007). When American employers and human resource professionals depend on statutes to navigate workplace incidents, they rely on 1960s civil rights legislation (Hollis, 2019). The law imposes minimal prevention and enforcement standards on employers in setting up their grievance procedures and contractual measures to deter employee conduct that contributes to a hostile work environment (Bac, 2018). Organizations cannot rely on laws to address workplace bullying and need to develop separate policies.

Leaders of organizations can choose to adopt policies that reduce workplace bullying. Researchers have noted the increasing demands on organizations to prevent and manage workplace bullying (Caponecchia et al., 2020). Human resources managers represent their organizations and play an essential role in maintaining optimal workplace relations and well-being (Mokgolo & Barnard, 2019). When individuals experience unfair treatment, they expect the human resources department to intervene and provide fairness and justice (Mokgolo & Barnard, 2019). The presence of formal and informal ethical systems within an overarching moral infrastructure has shown to be associated with less unethical behavior and practices in organizations (Einarsen et al., 2019). Because statutory laws have not changed with the increasing types of harassment, organizations are now responsible for setting the company policies and rules regarding workplace bullying instead of relying on the law (Namie, 2007). Organizations cannot rely on laws and statutes that reflect today's work landscape. Instead, organizations can address workplace bullying through program development.

Group dynamics is another construct of the OCWB. The OCWB model measures the group dynamics in an organization through the structure and climate and then measures other organizational practices through their missions, visions, strategies, policies, and procedures (Pheko et al., 2017). When an organization's customs, policies, or internal regulations are violated by an individual or a group participating in deviant behaviors, the organization's well-being may be put at risk (Appelbaum et al., 2007). Measuring the social networks that a bully may use is an important dimension in

recognizing organizational climate (Volk et al., 2017). It is necessary to consider group dynamics when measuring workplace bullying and developing strategies for its reduction.

Researchers have explored the relationship between organizations' policies and how the resulting organizational culture affects workplace bullying. Consistent with research findings, climate and culture have been identified to explain workplace behavior (Escartín, 2016). Organizations with a supportive environment have reported less bullying (Baillien et al., 2016), but bullying may result from destructive team and organizational cultures or habits (Baillien et al., 2016). An organization tends to elicit or inhibit deviance through their culture (Di Stefano et al., 2019). Norms and behavior expectations are communicated through policies and procedures and reward structures, and employees note what and who gets rewarded or punished (Pelletier et al., 2018). Employees will judge the climate and the culture and determine whether bullying would be tolerated, cited, or punished (Dollard et al., 2017). Organizations shape antibullying policies and practices to meet their needs (Zilic & LaVan, 2020). Workers work within organizational policies and consider their immediate group and work environment experiences (De Cieri et al., 2019). Consequently, their line manager can play a role in bullying prevention by influencing socially appropriate rules and actions (De Cieri et al., 2019). It is common for intervention to be supported by anti-bullying policies and training for managers and employees (Blackwood et al., 2017). Researchers have found that an organization's climate and culture influence whether an organization will prevent workplace bullying or inadvertently support it.

Individuals as a Construct. When discussing the relationship between culture and bullying, other organizational factors are the parties' relationships and interactions in a workplace bullying incident. Examples of these constructs are the bully, the victim, the circumstances of a "first bullying incident," "corporate practices," and "outcomes of bullying" (Pheko et al., 2017). To measure these components of the organizational activity, the OCWB conceptual model uses age, gender, educational level, personality, position, and roles of the bully and the victim, and how they affect the likelihood of workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). These elements can interact differently depending on the culture of an organization. The same bullying behavior purported on one victim may cause a different result than the same frequency and type of bullying behavior on another victim because of other individual and environmental, ecological factors (Volk et al., 2017). Understanding the factors involved in bullying situations is essential to developing effective strategies to reduce workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). HRLM can use the constructs of the OCWB to measure the various characteristics of employees against the culture and elements of organizational practices to determine the likelihood of workplace bullying.

The interaction between an employee and an organization often depends on employee characteristics and cultural attributes. The OCWB model is structured to allow researchers and practitioners to measure this relationship better. Employees tend to view the behavior associated with the organizational culture as the proper conduct (Pheko et al., 2017). Therefore, corporate practices and actions can unwittingly encourage and reward bullying behaviors and actions (Pheko et al., 2017). Another factor when

predicting the likelihood of bullying is that an individual's personality can affect the interaction with a potential bully (Adamopoulou & Koukia, 2020). An employee's character can be determined by their cultural background, and subsequently, there is a higher likelihood of cultural background being a determinant as an antecedent to workplace bullying (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). Researchers and practitioners can base the probability of an employee falling victim to workplace bullying on the measurements of the constructs of the OCWB model.

In addition to organizational characteristics being a construct in the OCWB model, the response to the first bullying incident can affect how bullying progresses (Pheko et al., 2017). The OCWB model measures this construct by the organization's responses, the victims, and the bystanders (Pheko et al., 2017). Workplace bullying can negatively affect targets, observers, and organizations (Oade, 2018). The bully will be watching for the reaction to assess whether they can continue with further bullying (Oade, 2018). The HRLM are usually responsible for responding to workplace bullying complaints (Blackwood et al., 2017). Sometimes identifying bullying is the most challenging part of dealing with it (Bond, 2020). The organization's response might not make a difference in future bullying (Glambek et al., 2018). Often organizations do not respond strongly, and researchers have found that employees can form mistrust in organizational responses because the perception becomes that the organization tolerates bullying (Hurley et al., 2016). However, high-quality human resource practices can predict an ethical culture, and policies can guide HRLM to the proper responses (Einarsen et al., 2019). An organization can implement training programs that prepare

employees to react positively when they witness bullying (Lassiter et al., 2018). Many organizations' initial step is to distinguish workplace bullying behaviors (Hodgins et al., 2020). The organization, the victim, and the bystander endure different consequences after recognizing and responding to a first bullying incident.

Researchers have highlighted how the victims' first bullying incidents are seldom recognizable. Employees who reported bullying and proactively responded to it experienced fewer health problems than those who did not (Jung & Yoon, 2018). Accordingly, how the bullying victim responds to the situation is exceptionally significant because it can be detrimental or beneficial to the organization (Jung & Yoon, 2018). Often the first bullying incident is just a minor conflict, and the antagonistic relationship grows and is recognized later as bullying (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). In one study, 44% of workers who reported an incident of bullying to a superior stated that the employer did nothing to address the situation (Attell et al., 2017). Often, management stigmatizes the target for being problematic or refuses to accept responsibility for the mistreatment (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). Bullying can start as a minor incident and then escalate into a workplace bullying incident (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). When the incident is finally reported and becomes a case with human resources or management, the bullying process has often progressed to further stages (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). It is increasingly common for intervention to be supported by an antibullying policy and training for managers and employees (Blackwood et al., 2017). However, researchers have found that there is seldom proper recognition or reaction by a victim or an organization to the first incident of bullying.

In addition to the victim, researchers have explored how workplace bullying can affect individuals that witness the act. For bystanders, there are three typical responses to seeing workplace bullying; avoidance, pro-bullying, or prosocial behavior (García-Vázquez et al., 2019). Witnesses of bullying might ignore it or not even recognize it as such, they may join the bully, or they may interject themselves to protect the victim. Prosocial bystander behavior is essential for maintaining positive relationships, limiting bullying, and promoting social adjustment in the victims (García-Vázquez et al., 2019). Coworker support is a protective buffer against workplace bullying, although the buffering effect is relatively small (Attell et al., 2017). Being a witness to bullying can be moral distress, linking bystander behavior to individual disengagement (Gini et al., 2020). Bystanders who have experienced previous workplace bullying or trauma in their life may feel helpless to intervene, or they might identify with the bully as a means to protect themselves (McKay & Fratzl, 2011). Individuals can have a different reaction when they are in a bystander's position to workplace bullying. Researchers have found that organizations can suffer from the adverse effects experienced by workplace bullying witnesses.

Researchers have also explored how the bully and the victim's characteristics can affect the likelihood of workplace bullying. Pheko et al. (2017) used gender, age, education level, personality, positions, and work roles to measure potential bullying. Each characteristic's impact can depend on other variables recognized in the OCWB model's constructs (Pheko et al., 2017). Regarding gender, women in managerial positions report more bullying than men, but in non-managerial posts, men convey more

bullying than women (Attell et al., 2017). Regarding job positions and roles, workplace bullying was more frequent in situations characterized by high job demand and low job control (Francioli et al., 2018). One study found that the top four reasons victims gave for being targeted are (a) refusing to be subservient (personality), (b) possessing more technical skills than the bully (education level), (c) being better liked than the bully (personality), and (d) exposing fraud or crimes (job roles) (Namie, 2007). Another study found that workers over 35 years of age were more likely to experience both downward and upward bullying than younger workers, which could mean that older workers may be more vulnerable to multiple sources of workplace bullying because they have more direct contact with managers and are managers themselves (De Cieri et al., 2019). Different personal characteristics can affect bullying outcomes, depending on their relationship with the other variables involved.

Researchers have investigated personality traits as an indicator of impending bullying. Most workplace bullying research has focused on the five big personality traits, extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism, as possible antecedents of workplace bullying (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). Some research has identified the relationship between personality traits and bullying as nonlinear (Rai & Agarwal, 2018), meaning that other constructs' measurements can influence the relationship. Personality traits such as type A, neuroticism, assertiveness, and social anxiety can act as moderators (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). Individuals that are emotionally stable, extroverted, accommodating, trusting, and responsible are likely to experience less workplace bullying (Di Stefano et al., 2019). Although personality traits can be an antecedent to

workplace bullying, researchers recognize they may act as mediators or moderators, and those other elements may also affect this relationship.

OCWB Model Usefulness

The OCWB conceptual model helps HRLM predict workplace bullying's likelihood based on how an organization's culture relates to the other dimensions. The constructs for an organization's culture are based on the culture model created by Hofstede (1980) and the managerial grid model developed by Blake and Mouton (1964). Because organizational cultures differ, the likelihood of bullying will also differ when matched to an organization's other functions. The OCWB conceptual model identifies and provides measurements for an organization's various elements associated with workplace bullying.

The relationship of characteristics between the employee and the organization varies from situation to situation, and Pheko et al. (2017) did not deem one relationship more prevalent. This framework's constructs provide HRLM a roadmap to identify the aspects of their organization's culture reflected in the members' behaviors, providing insights into reducing workplace bullying. Therefore, this conceptual framework could help HRLMs create a work environment that is less conducive to workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). A comparison to other available models showed why the OCWB conceptual model was the most appropriate choice for the current study.

Related and Contrasting Theories

I chose the OCWB model over concepts used by researchers because it contains several constructs to assess the intricacies of workplace bullying. Hundreds of studies

have researched bullying in the last 2 decades (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018), and many conceptual models have been used to view the constructs of workplace bullying. Some of these concepts are models designed for examining workplace bullying, but others align with underlying constructs such as antecedents, employee personalities, stress, and power imbalances. Some researchers argue that in the abundance of conceptual models, investigators are labeling similar actions with different names (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). In contrast, others believe the vast array of constructs underlying workplace bullying is better addressed through different models (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). Antecedents, outcomes, work environment, organizational structure, bullying methods, victim consequences, stress, and resources are common constructs addressed by previous researchers' conceptual models. In the following discussion, I reviewed how conceptual models are used in studies on workplace bullying and related phenomena and compared them to the OCWB model.

Models Measuring Antecedents to Workplace Bullying

Researchers have addressed the antecedents to workplace bullying with various models. Researchers have used models addressing the work environment, personality traits, and power imbalances. Models focusing on power imbalance often refer to the circuits of power model developed by Clegg (1989). A model used by researchers to explore personality traits was the EAPA-T workplace bullying scale designed by Escartín et al. (2017). The work environment hypothesis (Einarsen et al., 1994) and the communication flows theory (McPhee & Zaug, 2001) emphasize the antecedents to workplace bullying relating to the organizational environment. Although the work

environment hypothesis theories and the communication flows theory address antecedents regarding work environment characteristics, significant differences exist between the two models.

Work Environment Characteristics as an Antecedent. The work environment hypothesis had been the dominating framework in studies of workplace bullying antecedents, highlighting the characteristics of the psychosocial work environment as precursors of bullying (Skogstad et al., 2011). Bullying behavior of employees originates from the culture and climate of the organization (Iftikhar et al., 2021). According to the work environment hypothesis, task-oriented and relations-oriented factors are essential precursors of bullying (Skogstad et al., 2011). The work environment hypothesis states that a work environment characterized by high job demands creates a fertile ground for social tension, which may escalate into workplace bullying (Agotnes et al., 2021). In a 2011 study surveying Norwegian business departments, inadequacies in leadership practices and poorly organized working conditions, and low levels of morale in departments were found as the main precursors of workplace bullying (Skogstad et al., 2011). In a 2017 study examining the relationship between nurses and the work environment, the work environment hypothesis was chosen to identify workplace bullying antecedents (Blackwood et al., 2017). Environmental factors are considered more influential than individual factors as antecedents to workplace bullying (Blackwood et al., 2017). Workplace bullying originates from a hostile and antagonistic organizational climate (Iftikhar et al., 2021). However, by committing to positive work culture, an organization enhances the attractiveness of employees' tasks and organizations (Kim &

Kim, 2020). Organizational culture includes values that must be understood and practiced together by all individuals and groups (Kurniady et al., 2020). These authors investigated the role work environment factors play in influencing the management of workplace bullying experiences.

Although researchers use the work environment theory to look at task-oriented and relations-oriented factors, others have used the original communication flows theory (McPhee & Zaug, 2001) to explore and explain an organization's elements. The communication flows theory measures four antecedent constructs that can apply to workplace bullying: (a) organizational self-structuring, (b) membership negotiation, (c) activity coordination, and (d) institutional positioning in the social order of institutions (McPhee & Zaug, 2001). The syncretic superstructure, the aggregate at a given period of practices that give rise to formalized systems, was added to the model in 2008 (Lutgen-Sandvik & McDermott, 2008). The syncretic superstructure, the additional flow accounting for cultural and historical discourses, can be framed as (a) what can be talked about, (b) who is allowed to speak, (c) how they are supposed to speak, and (d) what form of speech is accepted as knowledge or truth. This fifth construct was added upon exploring a case study that drives the theory and illustrates how communication's dynamic flows can lead to abusive employee actions (Lutgen-Sandvik & McDermott, 2008). The premise behind the work environment hypothesis and communication flows theory is that HRLM could develop strategies to reduce workplace bullying by recognizing precursors to bullying. Although these two models expose many aspects of

the work environment that can precede workplace bullying as antecedents, some models shift the focus on the victim's personality as an antecedent.

Personality Characteristics as an Antecedent. Some researchers chose models that focus on personality traits to examine workplace bullying. The EAPA-T and the EAPA-T-R workplace bullying scales assess workplace bullying and the victim's personality traits (Escartín et al., 2017). Instead of analyzing relationships in general, the EAPA-T provides practitioners a scale to evaluate specific aspects of relationships between an organization and their employees (Escartín et al., 2017). In the 2010 study developing the EAPA-T scale, workplace bullying victims were measured by 12 specific questions over four general constructs: (a) control and manipulation of the work context, (b) emotional abuse, (c) professional discredit, and (d) role devaluation (Escartín et al., 2017). These constructs were hypothesized to identify a positive correlation between victimization and a workplace bullying outcome (Escartín et al., 2017). In 2017, the model was further developed into the EAPA-T-R, and the questions were reduced to four, with each question addressing one of the general constructs (Escartín et al., 2017). Some researchers have found personality traits used in the EAPA-T and the EAPA-T-R workplace bullying scales are antecedents to workplace bullying.

Another theory used to explore personality traits is the humiliation theory (Lindner, 2001). Researchers have used the humiliation theory to examine workplace bullying because the act is usually visible to others and involves subjugating a less powerful victim (Evans & Smokowski, 2015). The humiliation theory addresses victims' traits while considering the three involved parties, the bully, the victim, and the bystander

(Evans & Smokowski, 2015). Individuals can use different forms of humiliation across the three parties involved.

The methods of humiliation can be used by perpetrators progressively. The humiliation theory identifies four kinds of humiliation: (a) conquest, (b) reinforcement, (c) relegation, and (d) exclusion, and each one relates to the involved parties and workplace bullying differently (Evans & Smokowski, 2015). Evans and Smokowski (2015) explained that an individual uses conquest humiliation to force a previously equal peer into a subordinate position and subsequently bully them using reinforcement humiliation to secure the imbalance of power they created. Evans and Smokowski identified the use of relegation humiliation as when an individual exploits a power imbalance between themselves and the victim by bullying them to increase the power differential. Evans and Smokowski considered exclusion humiliation the most severe form of the four types because the bully uses their power to banish the victim from work and social groups, creating a larger imbalance of power. The EAPA-T and humiliation models are useful to researchers because victimization and humiliation can generate stress and negatively affect individuals subject to workplace bullying. The work environment theory, the communication flows theory, the EAP-T model, and the humiliation theory measure actions preceding the bullying event.

Power Imbalance as an Antecedent. Researchers of workplace bullying have opined about the relationship between organizational structure and the power imbalance that perpetrators exploit. Almost all workplaces are immersed in power relations (Pheko, 2018b). Approximately 70% of the time, workplace bullying is a conflict resulting from

legitimate power (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). The power disparity between the bully and the victim makes it difficult for the victim to bring conflicts to a successful resolution (LaGuardia & Oelke, 2021). Legitimate power is between a more powerful individual in an organization, the manager, and a less powerful counterpart, the subordinate (Van Der Wal et al., 2020). Downward bullying through legitimate power and horizontal bullying of colleagues are the most likely types of workplace bullying (De Cieri et al., 2019). However, bullying can occur upward, such as subordinates bullying their managers and supervisors (De Cieri et al., 2019)**.** Workplace bullying perpetrators include managers, co-workers, associates, and people external to the organization (De Cieri et al., 2019). Vicarious bullying is a form of organizational aggression when the primary bully sends or inspires a messenger henchman, bark orders, diminishes staff accomplishments, and extends the bully's rule through fear (Hollis, 2019). In vicarious bullying, the secondary bully uses the primary bully's power to inflict emotional and psychological abuse on the target (Hollis, 2019). Although most bullying is from manager to subordinate, power imbalances exist in many directions in the corporate structure. The paths bullies use to victimize others can follow the lines of authority in organizational structure and other environmental settings with a disparity in power between individuals.

Researchers have explored how individuals suffer workplace bullying from sources not tied to legitimate power. Inward bullying at the workplace includes bullying from external sources such as customers, visitors, and other stakeholders (Balducci et al., 2011). An organization's gatekeeper can use coercive power to bully others by withholding resources necessary for targets to succeed. Gatekeepers steal credit, take care

of favorites, and isolate and torment the unfavored (Namie, 2007). Perceived differences among individuals may create power dynamics, such as information sources that are social, physical, or psychological (Wright, 2020). Targets of workplace bullying believe they are powerless and, therefore, unable to defend against the bully's actions (Scott, 2018). Bullying at work can occur for almost any conceivable reason (Lutgen-Sandvik & McDermott, 2008). Whether through structural channels or otherwise, the harm associated with bullying is affected by the perpetrator's power over the victim (Nelson et al., 2018). Researchers have identified how bullies will use legitimate power and other perceived power imbalances to dominate their victims.

Another aspect of workplace bullying is the perceived power disparity between the bully and the victim, and previous research has used conceptual models featuring this imbalance. Workplace bullying includes periodic and repeated verbal and nonverbal messages characterized by an imbalance of power that negatively affects workers (Goodboy et al., 2017). In their research on how nurses were subjected to workplace bullying, Hutchinson et al. (2010) supplemented the multidimensional model of workplace bullying with Clegg's circuits of power model (1989). Clegg founded the circuits of power model upon Foucault's (1977, as cited in Clegg 1989) notions of power, knowledge, and resistance. Researchers can use the circuits of power model to explore power imbalances throughout an organization.

Measuring power imbalances can depend on how researchers view power. Foucault (1977) asserted that power should be viewed from a relational aspect, not associated with a particular institution but with practices, techniques, and procedures.

Clegg (1989) continued by stating that power is not just found in a specific person or agency, nor just located within individuals with legitimate authority or sovereign power from Foucault's standpoint. Instead, it is a constitutive force of precise alignments of social relations operating in micropower complex flows (Clegg, 1989). Instead of singular relations of influence and authority, the circuits of power framework conceived the authority of power to flow in three distinct but interacting circuit arrangements that are fixed and constituted in a discursive force field (Clegg, 1989). Hutchinson et al. (2010) identified episodic, dispositional, and facilitative as three distinct but interacting circuits in the power model's circuits. The episodic circuit analyzes the day-to-day interaction characterizing work routine (Hutchinson et al., 2010). The dispositional circuit, which focuses on social integration, considers the rules of practice, relationships of meaning, and group membership (Hutchinson et al., 2010). The facilitative circuit, which accounts for reward and punishment, measures the domination achieved through techniques of discipline and production (Hutchinson et al., 2010). Hutchinson et al. used these interacting circuits to explore how socially constructed rules within work teams condone and perpetuate workplace bullying. Hutchinson et al. used Clegg's interacting circuits of power model to create their multidimensional model of workplace bullying, containing four organizational factors as constructs: (a) organizational tolerance and reward, (b) networks of informal organizational alliances; (c) misuse of legitimate authority, processes, and procedures; and (d) normalization of bullying in the workplace. Clegg and Hutchinson et al. all theorized that workplace bullies' power was less about actual organizational structure and more about their inner relationships.

Conversely, other researchers of workplace bullying featured conceptual models based on power derived from the formal organizational structure to identify antecedents. Akella (2016) applied the labor process perspective to workplace bullying to measure power-related interactions for bullies and their victims. Akella contended that power was derived from organizational structure, and leaders often used it to encourage their labor force to act in the desired manner. In this scenario, workplace bullying becomes a leadership style, with generating profits the paramount goal (Akella, 2016). The organization's structure and the subsequent superior to subordinate relationships provide a format conducive to workplace bullying.

Power relationships are prominent in bullying theory. Attell et al. (2017) presented how social dominance theory (Salin & Hoel, 2013) and critical management theory posit that the base for women and minority race individuals in lower-power positions can be bullied. Using the critical management theory (Alvesson & Deetz, 1996), victims may consider the organization the bully in corporate settings (Liefooghe & MacKenzie Davey, 2001). Alvesson and Deetz (1996) suggested that the first step of a critical management study is to investigate the interactions of an organization's employees to identify the relationship between the organization and workplace bullying. Researchers use the critical management theory and the social dominance theory to explore power imbalances in relationships.

The critical management theory extended the critical theory that appeared in Kincheloe's seminal work in 1996 (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). The critical theory, which refers to the theoretical tradition developed by the Frankfurt school (Kincheloe &

McLaren, 2011), is used to analyze competing power interests between groups and individuals within a society by identifying which party gains and which party loses in specific situations (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). The critical theory purports that the privileged group has the power and seeks to maintain the status quo (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). By applying the critical management theory to organizations, Liefooghe and MacKenzie Davey (2001) highlighted how organizational structure enables management to hold power over the workforce and subsequently engage in workplace bullying.

The social dominance theory and the critical management theory also measure power relationships because it applies to individuals versus groups. Evans and Smokowski (2015) furthered the discussion on power by analyzing two theories. Firstly, the social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) focuses on social hierarchies based on group structures, such as males versus females or adults versus children (Evans & Smokowski, 2015). Evans and Smokowski highlighted how dominant groups form a hierarchy by oppressing less-powerful groups. In such group-based social orders, individuals' power is drawn from group membership instead of individual characteristics (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). An individual's capacity to bully derives from being part of the group and helps this individual dominate a victim (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Sidanius and Pratto (1999) posited that individual power is based on social hierarchies that form when individuals use personal characteristics, such as a charismatic leadership style or intelligence, to gain social status and control. Individual and group attributes can influence a relationship's power and influence subsequent workplace bullying.

Researchers of workplace bullying have used models to explore antecedents to bullying. The work environment hypothesis measures the organizational social interactions by identifying characteristics that precede workplace bullying. Simultaneously, researchers have used the humiliation theory to explore personality characteristics that indicate potential bullying. Researchers using models on power imbalance consider the organizational structure and social interactions between the members to base their measurements. Researchers use the models to identify antecedents to assist practitioners in avoiding the consequences of workplace bullying.

Models Measuring Consequences of Workplace Bullying

Instead of focusing on precursors, researchers have used other models to measure workplace bullying consequences. The majority of existing reviews have focused on workplace bullying outcomes (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). Caponecchia et al. (2020) shared that workplace bullying outcomes can include legal costs, reputational damage, absenteeism, productivity, and replacing and retraining staff. Nozaki (2019) recognized that workplace bullies deprive their victims of resources, and Hurley et al. (2016) explained the adverse health effects that stress causes bullying victims. Researchers have developed models to explore workplace bullying's implications by measuring stress and measuring resource deprivation. Identifying and measuring workplace bullying outcomes regarding employee resources and stress can help practitioners better address the phenomenon.

Stress as a Consequence of Workplace Bullying. Some researchers use models to measure the stress employees suffer from workplace bullying and related phenomenon.

Researchers have used the models, whether the bullying is causing the stress or visa-versa. The job demand-control (JDC) model (Karasek, 1979) was used to explain the relationship between stress, job strain, and workplace bullying among 300 professional workers (Goodboy et al., 2017). Initially designed as a stress-management model of job strain, the JDC has guided hundreds of organizational and management research studies examining occupational stress (Goodboy et al., 2017). Researchers have used the JDC model to posit that work stress could be created through a combination of job demands and job decision latitude. A worker's ability to control his work conditions can moderate the stress caused by job demands (Karasek, 1979).

Researchers may also choose the stress process model (Pearlin et al., 1981) to view workplace bullying because of the vast body of empirical evidence linking stressors to adverse mental health outcomes (Attell et al., 2017). For more than 3 decades, the stress process model has served as one of the dominant sociological lenses for understanding health and illness (Attell et al., 2017). Through structural equation modeling of survey data from the 2010 Health and Retirement Study, the stress process theory was used to explain that coworker support is a buffering mechanism against workplace bullying's adverse effects (Attell et al., 2017). The stress process theory recognizes two main categories of stress: the occurrence of discrete events and the presence of persistent problems (Pearlin et al., 1981). The stress process theory measures the following constructs: job disruption, social support, the ability to cope, economic strain change, self-esteem change, and mastery change. The JDC model outlined the relationship between job control and job demand and was also used as a basis for a model

that outlined the resources for the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Researchers have used the JDC, the JD-R model, the effort-reward imbalance model, and the stress process model to measure workplace bullying outcomes.

The JD-R model is a combination of previous theories. Similar to the JDC model, the effort-reward imbalance model (Siegrist, 1996) addressed stress and was used in the development of the JD-R model. Siegrist (1996) explained that the effort-reward imbalance model was designed from the JDC model and the person-environment fit model developed by French et al. (1982). Siegrist felt that the JDC model and the person-environment fit model had undisputed merits but lacked a clear explanation to measure the long-lasting experience of stress, the meaning of control, and the role of individual coping characteristics. In the effort-reward imbalance model, effort means the employee's demands and obligations, and reward means the money, esteem, and career opportunities the employee expects in return (Notelaers et al., 2019). The JDC model highlights task-level control, whereas the employee reward imbalance model emphasizes the employee's reward (Notelaers et al., 2019). Kunz (2019) used the effort-reward imbalance model to explain work-related stress, overcommitment, and health differences because this model was established with these variables. The model considers employee and employer inputs to evaluate the interaction's stress. The effort-reward imbalance model, the JDC model, and the person-environment fit model were used to create the JD-R model.

One of the models used to develop the JD-R model was the effort-reward imbalance model. Three stress characteristics were identified related to a work situation:

(a) control as an objective characteristic, (b) control as a subjective evaluation reflecting an individual's judgment of work responsiveness, and (c) the overall belief of the employee's control of outcomes (Siegrist, 1996). This framework is unique from the others because it incorporates the interplay between objective and subjective components of the work environment and the person, and it presents a new view on the role of work in human life (Siegrist, 1996). Experiencing a lack of reciprocity in terms of high costs (effort) and low gains (reward) is theorized to elicit negative emotions in exposed individuals (Agotnes et al., 2021). Siegrist (1996) used the effort-reward imbalance model to explain the relationship between low-status control, high intrinsic or extrinsic effort, and the individual's associated strain reaction. Researchers have used the effort-reward imbalance model and others to measure the stress generated by workplace bullying.

Resource Deprivation as a Consequence of Workplace Bullying. Researchers of workplace bullying have examined the phenomenon through other models that measure the victims' deprivation of resources. Workplace bullies can victimize their targets by depriving them of resources, causing stress and leading to decreased work performance (Naseer et al., 2018). The social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), the competing values theory (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983), the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), and the jobs demand-resource model (Demerouti et al., 2001) are tools researchers have used to measure employees and their resources.

The social exchange theory resembles the effort-reward imbalance model. The social exchange theory allows researchers to measure the mutual exchanges and mutual

responsibilities between two parties, such as the employee and the employer (Blau, 1964; Naseer et al., 2018). In developing the social exchange theory, Blau (1964) posited that each party's behaviors influence the other in this relationship. Researchers can examine the exchanges between employee and employer over six simultaneous principles: reciprocity, rationality, altruism, group gain, status consistency, and competition (Di Stefano et al., 2019). Kakarika et al. (2017) used the social exchange theory to explain the relationship between workplace bullying, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction among 69 business students and 275 business professionals. Kakarika et al. found that when employees believed that the organization had failed to meet their commitments towards them, employees considered it a breach of the psychological contract between them and the employer, and their satisfaction diminished.

Mackey et al. (2016) noted that the social exchange theory concept aligns with workplace bullying because it involves employees' perceptions of the work environment and supervisory treatment. Ideally, employees react to a favorable work environment through better performance, but if they perceive their treatment as unfavorable, they could adjust their attitudes and behaviors downward (Merilainen & Koiv, 2018). Likewise, the expression of resulting deviant behaviors could be influenced by the nature of the quality of exchange relationships between employers and employees (Di Stefano et al., 2019). The most significant exchange currency in an employment relationship is performance-related behaviors (Naseer et al., 2018). Researchers use the social exchange theory to measure the give and take of the relationship between employees and employers, and researchers often use it in conjunction with other models.

Researchers have used the conservation of resources theory individually or with the social exchange theory. Naseer et al. (2018) used the social exchange theory and the conservation of resources theory founded by Hobfoll (1989, as cited in Naseer et al., 2018) to explain the moderating effect of perceived organizational support on a work environment, the loss of resources for employees, and the subsequent decrease in production. Naseer et al. felt their findings strengthen other researchers' social exchange argument. When aggressive and hostile treatment, such as workplace bullying, occurs, it instigates victims to confront bullying with increased retaliation and poor performance, whether withholding discretionary behaviors or diminishing their job performance (Naseer et al., 2018). Raja et al. (2018) used the conservation of resources model to explain the relationship between workplace bullying, burnout, and strain at home. Raja et al. found that employees lose resources and energy through work burn-out, thereby affecting their homelife. The conservation of resources model's constructs provided Naseer et al. and Raja et al. with tools to integrate employee reactions into their research.

Researchers have used the conservation of resources theory to categorize types of individuals' resources that can be measured. Hobfoll (1989) explained the supposition of the model was based on people strive to retain, protect, and build resources and that the potential or actual loss of these valued resources is threatening to an employee. Hobfoll (1989) posited that these resources could be identified in four categories: (a) types of resource conditions, (b) energies, (c) personal characteristics, and (d) resource objects. Researchers use the conservation of resources model to make several predictions. The first of three examples is that individuals not possessing many resources lack the options

made possible by maintaining many resources and would attempt loss-control strategies that are high-cost and less likely to succeed (Hobfoll, 1989). Another prediction is that people are motivated to gain resources when they are not currently experiencing difficult situations (Hobfoll, 1989). Lastly, although the loss of support is stressful, individuals may employ other resources to offset the net loss (Hobfoll, 1989). When an organization provides positive perceived organizational support, employees interpret this as a complimentary resource, and it can moderate the effect of other resource loss (Hobfoll, 1989; Naseer et al., 2018). Whereas the competing values framework measures the organization's cultural element, the conservation of resources theory anticipates potential employee reactions. Understanding possible reactions to employee resources changes allow HRLM to project the subsequent exchange between employees and employers.

A different aspect of viewing employees' resources is through the JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001). The JD-R model proposes that working conditions, job demands, and job resources can be grouped into two broad categories related to specific outcomes (Demerouti et al., 2001). Job demands are associated with the exhaustion component of burnout, but a lack of job resources is related to disengagement (Demerouti et al., 2001). Demerouti et al. (2001) explained that job demands describe the job's physical, social, or organizational elements that require sustained physical or mental effort and correlate with specific physiological and psychological costs. Demerouti et al. further explained that job resources describe the physical, psychological, social, or organizational across three constructs: (a) functionality in achieving work goals, (b) reducing job demands at the associated physiological and psychological costs, and (c)

spurring personal growth and development. Conversely, sufficient job resources, which comprise an intrinsic or extrinsic role by fostering individuals' development or achieving work goals, may start a motivational process that results in higher employee well-being levels over time (Nel & Coetzee, 2020). These constructs help researchers anticipate how employee stress may develop from different aspects of the work environment.

A type of stress the JD-R model can measure is burnout. Demerouti et al. (2001) proposed that burnout's growth follows two JD-R model processes. In the first process, demanding aspects of work, like extreme job requirements, lead to constant overtaxing and, in the end, to exhaustion (Demerouti et al., 2001). In the second process, a scarcity of resources thwarts meeting job demands, leading to withdrawal behavior. The long-term consequence of this withdrawal is disengagement from work (Demerouti et al., 2001). Both unreasonable expectations and a lack of tools to complete a job can result in an employee's loss of resources and adverse situations. Similar to the OCWB model, the JD-R model is broad and can apply to different organizational situations.

Models Measuring Bullying

Researchers have developed several conceptual models explicitly designed for bullying, focused on antecedents from personality traits and the organizational environment. The work environment and personality factors model (Balducci et al., 2011), based on the JD-R model, focuses on the antecedents of workplace bullying and the outcomes. The work environment and personality factors model featured the following three unique aspects: (a) the model is integrated with work environmental and personality factors as potential preconditions of bullying, (b) it includes traditional job

stressors and buffering resources, and (c) it examines post-traumatic stress disorder (Balducci et al., 2011). Similarly, the conceptual model of workplace bullying (Ciby & Raya, 2014) centered on environmental and personality factors as precursors to workplace bullying. During the development of the conceptual model of workplace bullying, job demands, leadership, supervisors' management styles, and interpersonal conflict emerged as the significant antecedents of workplace bullying. The "inability to adapt to changes" was found as a personality factor in victims that added to workplace bullying in the presence of other antecedents (Ciby & Raya, 2014). The importance of recognizing antecedents is that understanding the precursors can help practitioners develop prevention and reduction programs (Ciby & Raya, 2014). In line with these conceptual models developed for bullying, the OCWB measures personality traits and work environment conditions as possible antecedents to workplace bullying. These models are specific to bullying, and, similar to general models, all models designed specifically for bullying measure antecedents. Conceptual models designed for bullying help researchers identify the intricacies of the workplace bullying phenomenon.

Implications of Models Used for Workplace Bullying. Researchers have used dozens of conceptual models to explore and explain workplace bullying. Although some models were designed to address workplace bullying expressly, most researchers used models that focus on specific elements such as antecedents and consequences. Researchers also used models to manage stress, resource deprivation, and power imbalances. This literature review highlighted the extensive number of elements that need to be addressed when exploring workplace bullying. The OCWB captures several of

these elements through its constructs and allows researchers to explore the intricacies of workplace bullying.

Description of Workplace Bullying

Researchers and practitioners have used the term bullying and many other descriptions of uncivil behavior to explain individuals' adverse interactions and the subsequent consequences. The term workplace bullying was first presented in 1992 by Andrea Adams (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). Workplace bullies try to gain resources, reputation, reproduction, and critical distinction from other actions because bullies strategically use aggression in the context of a power imbalance to obtain their desired goals (Volk et al., 2017). Workplace bullies may attack victims based on either task-related reasons or emotional-related reasons (Hurley et al., 2016). Workplace bullying has profound effects on individuals and organizations (Dollard et al., 2017). Bullying is an international phenomenon (Juan et al., 2018). Given the harmful and increasing nature of bullying, the World Health Organization has placed it on a list of significant community hazards requiring immediate attention and action (Naseer et al., 2018). Researchers have given much attention to workplace bullying in the last 20 years (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). Over 5,000 peer-reviewed articles have been published since 2000 (Volk et al., 2017). Over the past 25 years, researchers have developed conceptual clarity frameworks examining the prevalence, antecedents, and workplace bullying (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). Dr. Gary Namie and Dr. Ruth Namie, pioneers in workplace bullying research, founded the Workplace Bullying Institute in 1997 and have provided resources for victims, researchers, and practitioners for the last 23 years (Namie, 2017; Workplace

Bullying Institute, 2020). In the previous two decades, researchers have made significant progress in workplace bullying. Researchers have posited definitions of workplace bullying and have identified actions and consequences of workplace bullying during this time.

Workplace Bullying Definition

Researchers have written about their definition of workplace bullying as distinct from similar acts. Bullying, which employs the core concepts of intentionality, reiteration, and power imbalance, is sometimes referred to as peer victimization, and is a distinct behavior different from other forms of aggression (Nozaki, 2019). Not all violence is as overt as actual physical assault, verbal abuse, or sexual harassment because covert actions such as bullying, mobbing, harassment, and intimidation are also considered violent practices (Pheko, 2018a). Younger children tend to report physical aggression as bullying, and older children become victims of covert bullying, including verbal aggression and social exclusion (Nelson et al., 2018). Many lawmakers and researchers define workplace bullying as repeated mistreatment by one or more perpetrators of an individual or group (Namie, 2007). When individuals collaborate to bully, it is referred to as mobbing, although some authors use the terms mobbing and bullying interchangeably (Caponecchia et al., 2020). Some researchers and practitioners refer to unwanted actions as deviant behavior when an organization's customs, policies, or internal regulations are violated by an individual or a group that may jeopardize their well-being (Appelbaum et al., 2007). A similar term used is deviant workplace behavior, which may occur in many forms. Such forms include fraud, problem-making, low

performance, misuse of organization time, web surfing during office hours, theft, aggression, drug abuse, and various types of mobbing and harassment (Di Stefano et al., 2019). Other researchers recognize a type of bully as a bully-victim because they are involved in bullying and are victims of bullying themselves. Bullying and other incivilities can take different forms and can be found in various contexts. Researchers have presented many forms and definitions of bullying and identified mobbing, deviant behavior, and incivility as other terms that individuals use to refer to bully-like actions.

Researchers of workplace bullying have proposed many definitions for the phenomenon. Despite thousands of authors publishing research on workplace bullying in the last 20 years, there is no recognized consensus on a description of workplace bullying (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018)**.** Raja et al. (2018) described workplace bullying as a specific phenomenon such as when hostile and aggressive behaviors, physical or non-physical, are directed systematically at one or more colleagues or subordinates, leading to stigmatization and the recipient's victimization. Liefooghe and MacKenzie Davey (2001) highlighted that the core of any bullying definition is the element of power. Attell et al. (2017) presented that workplace bullying broadly refers to ongoing harmful acts directed at individuals in hostile work environments through perceived power imbalances in employee relationships. Combining these thoughts, Akella (2016) labeled workplace bullying as a desire to hurt plus hurtful action plus power imbalance plus repetitive aggressor, and a sense of being oppressed by the victim. Bond (2020) declared that bullying behaviors are best described as actions that demoralize individuals or groups. The common thread among the literature in the definition of workplace bullying was the

inclusion of a planned, harmful act repeated over time and the use of power advantage. Although Hughes and Quiñones (2018), Mokgolo and Barnard (2019), Nielsen and Einarsen (2018), and Nelson et al. (2018) proposed definitions of workplace bullying with each of these elements, the current study adopted the definition proposed by Goodboy et al. (2017): workplace bullying typically includes periodic and repeated verbal and nonverbal messages characterized by an imbalance of power that creates harmful effects on workers. In addition to defining workplace bullying, researchers have identified actions that workplace bullies exhibit.

Actions of Workplace Bullies

Researchers of workplace bullying have identified numerous actions that perpetrators use to carry out their victimizations. Researchers agree that workplace bullying involves repeated and cumulative harmful interpersonal behaviors, which are often subtle and embedded in workplace relations and processes (Pheko et al., 2017). Bullies use any approach at their disposal, including, but not limited to, intimidation (physical, emotional, verbal), positional authority, relational authority, or societal authority, to create altering effects on another's resources (Groman, 2019). Researchers have characterized bullying by the frequency and persistence of behaviors, many of which are subtle and could be considered trivial in isolation (Lempp et al., 2020). Individual acts may appear insignificant, but these minor insults have a cumulative effect that is often more harmful than "one-off" acts of violence (Hutchinson et al., 2006). Bullies will t advantage of any imbalance of power and use it to deprive a victim of resources by any means available.

The actions identified by researchers that perpetrators use to facilitate workplace bullying might be “just” incivility by themselves. As part of a combined attack regiment, the activities constitute workplace bullying. Actions bullies use can include criticism and humiliation (Akella, 2016), withholding of information that affects performance, spreading of rumors, social isolation (Balducci et al., 2011), mocking, joking, ridicule, insulting, teasing, sarcasm, verbal abuse, offending remarks, or the devaluing of one’s effort and work (Hamel et al., 2021; León-Pérez et al., 2019). Supervisors may perpetuate bullying by creating job insecurity and role conflict, providing poor communication, inadequate information, low social support, and a destructive organizational climate, changing an employee’s work tasks workload or making them difficult to perform (Nel & Coetzee, 2020). As bullies, supervisors may set unreasonable deadlines, make unwarranted budget cuts, and require minute-by-minute accounting time (Hollis, 2019). Supervisors may use intimidation and a conscious reduction of an employee's dignity, resulting in mental, moral, physical, or social harm (Birknerová et al., 2021). The supervisors may act like a bully through public denigration of ability or achievements, questioning skills and knowledge, assigning demeaning work, limiting career opportunities, excluding employees from committees, activities, and educational opportunities (Hutchinson et al., 2010). Researchers have surmised that workplace bullies use these and an infinite set of other actions to deprive the victim of some resource.

Negative Consequences of Bullying

Researchers of workplace bullying have identified the negative consequences that affect individuals and organizations. Employees’ well-being has a positive effect on

organizational performance and existence, and, therefore, organizations must be devoted to improving employees' well-being (Hsu et al., 2019). However, workplace bullying is a source of significant work distress, with prospective evidence showing that bullying predicts psychological health problems (Dollard et al., 2017). Of those who reported being bullied at work, 75% also experienced ill-health effects (Ahmad & Kaleem, 2019). Individual victims of workplace bullying suffer an increased risk of poor physical and mental health, including measures of cardiovascular disease, post-traumatic stress, and depression (Attell et al., 2017). Additional types of poor health victims may suffer include anxiety, depression, fatigue, sleeplessness, nausea, and thoughts of suicide (Caponecchia et al., 2020). The depression and anxiety suffered by victims correlate with withdrawal and avoidance at work, career interruption, and a reduced capacity to work (Hutchinson et al., 2010). Victims of workplace bullies suffer from poor physical and mental health, which affects their ability to work efficiently.

Researchers of workplace bullying have described actual and potential organizational phenomena and the related costs incurred from decreased work efficiency. Occupational stressors similar to bullying affect employees' physical, psychological, and social well-being, impacting their homes and community (Aquino, 2020). Workplace bullying represents a major human resource issue because it adversely affects the well-being, career outcomes, and productivity of targets, witnesses, and those accused of bullying (Lee et al., 2021). Workplace bullying leads to decreased job dedication and commitment, organizational identification, job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, and intention to leave, leading to increased turnover rates (Glambek et al., 2018; Hayat &

Afshari, 2020; Lee et al., 2021). Workplace bullying drains personal resources, reduces job performance, low citizenship behaviors, and increases organizational disruption (Naseer et al., 2018). Bullied targets, often the most talented employees, are driven from the workplace (Namie, 2007), as 82% of bullied employees eventually lose their job (McKay & Fratzl, 2011). Collateral costs from bullying include the legal fees and reputational damage for an organization and turnover costs such as lost productivity, replacing staff, and retraining staff (Caponecchia et al., 2020). Organizations will incur additional charges because of occupational health and employee assistance costs such as counseling, rehabilitation, litigation, financial settlements, organizational resources, and management time lost to carrying out investigations, grievances, and disciplinary procedures (Kline & Lewis, 2019). Researchers continue to explore how workplace bullying leads to diminished health of employees, which leads to lower production and increased costs to organizations. Researchers use various conceptual theories to investigate the actions and consequences of workplace bullying.

Research on Reduction Strategies

Although there is a plethora of research on bullying, few researchers have identified successful strategies to reduce workplace bullying. Developing practical strategies that focus on employee well-being is necessary for human resource professionals to build healthy organizations (De Cieri et al., 2019). In their review of the literature on bullying, Nielsen and Einarsen (2018) found that most research was focused on bullying antecedents and outcomes but focused less on intervention methods to

prevent or reduce it. Most studies relate to organizations in some manner, but few specifically address workplace bullying reduction strategies.

Some researchers of workplace bullying have developed strategies and initiatives to counteract it. By conducting a case study situated in Ontario, Canada, in 2010, McKay and Fratzl (2011) produced a list of policies that could be implemented in an organization to address workplace bullying and the associated costs. Dollard et al. (2017) conducted research theorizing that the psychosocial safety climate enactment mechanism works via psychosocial processes such as bullying mistreatment climate (anti-bullying procedures), work design (methods reduce stress through work redesign), and conflict resolution (systems to resolve conflict). Dollard et al. conducted a two-wave national longitudinal interview and used data from 1,062 Australian employees. Vartia and Leka (2011) researched organizations in Europe to determine commonalities among organizational intervention strategies for workplace bullying. Lassiter et al. (2018) conducted a Delphi study to outline a general approach to address workplace bullying, workplace violence, and workplace intimate partner violence in organizations. A Delphi study is appropriate when interviewing experts is the best resource because the existing literature is inadequate (Lassiter et al., 2018). Robert (2018) investigated two workplace bullying constructs and developed reduction strategies from the results. Robert analyzed data from 250 employees across six banks in Pakistan to explain the relationship between job stress, job performance, and workplace bullying. Past researchers have posited strategies for organizations to reduce workplace bullying.

The structure of programs was also addressed in the literature. Salas-Vallina et al. (2021) shared that human resource practices play an essential role in supporting employees' well-being and increasing individual performance. In a literature review of best practices to mitigate workplace bullying, Ferris et al. (2021) found workplace bullying policies may represent part of a comprehensive organizational approach to bullying. Similarly, Caponeccia et al. (2020) posited that workplace bullying programs are effective in a more extensive employee program. Messiaen et al. (2021) found that initial training for employees reduced workplace bullying. Valentine et al. (2021) stated that human resource practitioners should determine the best source of protection against bullying, including policies and procedures. Researchers have posited varying structures and contents of workplace bullying prevention programs.

However, several prominent researchers of workplace bullying have recently highlighted the need for additional research into organizational leaders' approaches to reducing workplace bullying. Hodgins et al. (2014) described that few interventions had been evaluated and published despite workplace mistreatment harming workers' health and well-being. In their literature review, Caponecchia et al. (2020) deemed that more information and evidence are needed to establish the efficacy, effectiveness, and implementation guidelines for workplace bullying intervention types. Catley et al. (2017) drew attention to specific areas that researchers need to consider in future research, identifying "good practice" in addressing bullying episodes. Di Stefano et al. (2019) acknowledged that implementing a positive culture framework could create a favorable values environment. Managers play an instrumental role in their facilitation but do not

identify the strategies to use (Di Stefano et al., 2019). Gupta et al. (2020) highlighted that to facilitate effective and robust interventions, a need exists for future quality research on forms, nature, interventions, predictors, and workplace bullying outcomes based on well-developed theoretical frameworks. Einarsen et al. (2019) noted that researchers have argued for organizational action to counter workplace bullying and identified the need for studies on systems procedures and effectiveness. Escartín (2016) posited that research on the efficacy of workplace bullying interventions has lagged and that the evaluation of anti-bullying interventions must flourish and be improved. Escartín further posited that interventions should be locally responsive for future research, reflecting corporate leaders' and employees' engagement and enhancing all stakeholders' participation. Lassiter et al. (2018) offered a summary of proposed best practices to address workplace bullying in which he used the Delphi method to research this phenomenon because they determined little information regarding prevention strategies was available in the literature. Some researchers; Dollard et al. (2017), Einarsen et al. (2019), Escartín (2016), Lassiter et al. (2018), McKay and Fratzl (2011), Namie (2007), Robert (2018), and Vartia and Leka (2011) have reviewed workplace bullying from diverse settings. These researchers have offered general reduction strategies for workplace bullying. Researchers have called for further investigation into strategies to reduce workplace bullying. Researching organizations with successful intervention strategies through the current study could further add insight into which strategies are successful and is a logical and needed addition to the existing body of knowledge.

Implications of Literature Review

Researchers of workplace bullying have investigated many aspects of the phenomenon. Most research areas have aligned with the OCWB model's constructs created by Pheko et al. (2017). According to the OCWB model, the characteristics of an organization's culture can determine the likelihood of workplace bullying, and these elements can also interact with other traits of organizations like their structure, policies, employee characteristics, and organizations' first response to workplace bullying to influence the likelihood of workplace bullying. Researchers have used many theories to guide their research on bullying, but the OCWB model's breadth allows researchers to consider multiple aspects of the bullying phenomenon. Workplace bullying creates physical and mental health problems for employees and costs organizations billions of dollars annually. Researchers have also proposed strategies to address workplace bullying, but the efforts lack follow-up to verify potential initiatives' efficacy. By researching strategies that organizations have used successfully, the current study could provide practitioners with additional tools to reduce workplace bullying.

Transition

In Section 1, I outlined an overall foundation for the research, describing the background of workplace bullying. I presented the purpose statement, the nature of the study, the significance of the study, and developed the research and interview questions. I reviewed operational definitions that may be unknown to the reader and continued by identifying the study's assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. In the literature review, I explained the OCWB model as the conceptual framework and presented how it

aligned with the research question. Finally, I posited how researching workplace bullying could create positive social change.

In Section 2, I discussed the current study's methodology and presented a robust research strategy. I reiterated the purpose statement, described the researcher's role, and elaborated on the research method and design. In Section 3, I presented a study synopsis, including findings and implications for social change. By identifying strategies to reduce workplace bullying, I highlighted practitioners' applications. I provided my reflections on the study's overall research process and made recommendations for HRLM to reduce workplace bullying.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I present the project's purpose and the critical role of the researcher. I provide information on the participants and the selection process. Next, I discuss the research method and design, population and sampling, instruments used for data collection, the collection technique, data organization technique, and data analysis. I conclude this section with an evaluation of the reliability and validity of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies HRLM used to address and reduce workplace bullying. The population consisted of managers from five companies in Michigan who had successfully used strategies to reduce workplace bullying. This study's results could contribute to social change by transforming workplaces where bullying behavior is diminished or nonexistent, benefiting employees and other stakeholders such as employees' families, vendors, and customers. Bully reduction and attenuation strategies could enhance employees' quality of life.

Role of the Researcher

A researcher's understanding of how they perceive and enact their role in research is paramount for their ethical conduct (Cumyn et al., 2019). In qualitative case study research, the researcher's responsibility is to accumulate data from multiple sources to form convergent inquiry lines through interviews, chains of evidence, and existing documents (Yin, 2018). Because a preference or predisposition may prevent neutrality and objectivity (Varpio et al., 2021), researchers should minimize interpretation bias. A

researcher follows an interview protocol to ensure the reliability and validity of a study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). By following my interview protocol (see Appendix), I reduced my bias in data collection. The researcher can also develop rapport with participants by establishing a transparent relationship built on trust (Thurairajah, 2019). As the sole researcher, I amassed data by conducting five semistructured interviews, completing member checking, and reviewing related documents. My role as the researcher was to create an atmosphere that allowed participants to share honestly and freely, which led to collecting comprehensive data that supported my study and minimized bias in my interpretation.

As an antecedent to my research, I had experienced interactions with workplace bullying. The qualitative researcher must understand that their personal bias may influence the study's outcome (Clark & Vealé, 2018). Preceding this study, I explored workplace bullying through previous case study research. From a previous case study, colleagues shared their experiences related to workplace bullying, which introduced me to how workplace bullying is viewed from the human resource managers' perspective. I learned about initiatives that organizations employ to prevent workplace bullying and their actions when reported. I had gained insight into workplace bullying through a previous case study. During my work career, I witnessed episodes that supported my knowledge base and alerted me to the potential bias in my role as researcher in the current study.

The Belmont Report protocol guided my ethical choices in establishing my role as the researcher. Researchers use principles identified in the Belmont Report to undertake

ethical research and protect study participants (Adashi et al., 2018; National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects in Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). The Belmont Report highlighted three core principles for ethical research: (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). By integrating the principles of the Belmont Report, I provided fair treatment and adhered to ethical standards in my interaction with participants.

I designed my research intending to reduce bias. In my work experience over the last 4 decades, I often witnessed workplace bullying. Qualitative research typically involves direct personal experience to understand the depth of observable behavior (Peterson, 2019). My work experiences provided insight into the extensiveness of workplace bullying. In the current study, I recognized my knowledge of workplace bullying and my related experiences and remained impartial in collecting information through testimonies and document research.

A relatively common qualitative research practice is member checking, which involves contacting informants after data collection to ensure the researcher understands the participants' meaning in their responses (Iivari, 2018). Conducting member checking allows the participants to be more integrated into the research and interview process and increases the study's validity and credibility (Iivari, 2018). Using member checking to understand the meaning of the participants' interview data reduced personal bias in my study. Using multiple data sources diminishes selectivity bias (Marshall & Rossman,

2016). I reduced my personal bias through member checking and gathering data from multiple sources.

In this study, I used an interview protocol (see Appendix) to organize the interview process and my search for evidence to minimize the opportunity for personal bias. An interview protocol's objective is to educate the participant about the interview process (Peterson, 2019). Interview protocols are essential because they include the interview questions used by the researcher to extract detailed and rich data in attempting to understand the participants' experiences (Yeong et al., 2018). Developing interview protocols helps researchers maintain a systematic method to secure information related to the research question (Braaten et al., 2020). Creating an interview protocol provides consistency from participant to participant. A benefit of the interview protocol in the current study was the reduction of bias throughout the data collection process.

Participants

I interviewed five HRLM from Michigan. I based the eligibility criteria for the participation of HRLM on those who had successfully implemented workplace bullying reduction strategies. In-depth qualitative research with information-rich participants justifies a smaller number of informants (Malterud et al., 2016). A process model of gaining access to participants includes (a) identifying potential informants, (b) contacting informants, and (c) interacting with informants during data collection (Peticca-Harris et al., 2016). I identified, met, and gained commitment from five HRLM familiar with workplace bullying strategies, which was critical to this study's purpose.

Different opportunities were available to establish a connection with HRLM with successful workplace bullying strategies. Relationships between researchers and participants can vary based on each participant (Yin, 2016). I identified potential participants through networking and searching through company websites. I also asked for references from personal HRLM relationships to identify organizations prone to positive cultures. Although obtaining access to these potential participants might appear to be a straightforward task, this research process step can be fraught with challenges that seldom make it simple, and the path to the participant is through a gatekeeper (Peticca-Harris et al., 2016). The role of trust in research involving participants is crucial to the success of the research (Guillemin et al., 2018). Whether through a networking reference or a cold canvass via a website, I approached the potential candidates through an introductory email and a follow-up phone call. I chose the participants from volunteers who responded to the email and touted a successful program.

I integrated strategies for establishing a working relationship with participants. Relationships of trust between participants and researchers are paramount to successful research (Guillemin et al., 2018). I developed rapport by acting transparently with participants, sharing the purpose of the study, and discussing how I would share the information and insights from the study with them. I recognized the importance of flexibility around participants' schedules and meeting arrangements. Working with gatekeepers, developing rapport, and being flexible were essential to gain access to the participants and develop an interactive relationship.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods are methods that scholars use in their research (Akimowicz et al., 2018). Quantitative research is statistical and is used to examine numbers and variables to confirm or deny a hypothesis in the study (Matta, 2019). The mixed-methods approach combines qualitative and quantitative methods (Walker & Baxter, 2019). Because I was not proposing a hypothesis or examining data to confirm or deny a hypothesis, neither quantitative nor mixed-methods approaches aligned with my study's purpose. Compared to the quantitative perspective, the qualitative perspective is intuitive and draws on data observation to find insights that are used to develop theory (Bansal et al., 2018). Therefore, the qualitative method was most appropriate for my study.

Characteristics of the qualitative method were advantageous to this study. Qualitative research is the in-context study of a social phenomenon to obtain an in-depth understanding from participants by exploring social or human problems (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Researchers use qualitative methods to seek responses to open-ended questions and obtain data enabling the discovery of new thoughts and personal views (Yin, 2018). Meanings that materialize from the interaction between the individual and the environment require in-depth observation and can only be clarified with qualitative methods (Bansal et al., 2018). Using the qualitative method allowed me to learn the meanings of the strategies and experiences that the participants shared during interviews.

Research Design

I considered three designs from the qualitative paradigm for my research: phenomenology, ethnography, and case study. The researcher in phenomenological studies attempts to comprehend and specify the population's perception of phenomenon through the participant's lens (Neubauer et al., 2019). I did not integrate myself into an organization's operations to observe workplace bullying from their perception; therefore, the phenomenological design was not appropriate for my study. The ethnographic design involves obtaining insights into human behavior and cultural practices by observing individuals' daily experiences (Turhan, 2019). Because I was not exploring participants' cultural practices by monitoring them daily, the ethnographic design was not appropriate for this study. A case study is appropriate when the researcher is answering "how" and "why" questions regarding a phenomenon (Yin, 2018). The case study design was suitable for my study because I researched the underlying strategies to reduce workplace bullying.

A qualitative case study design is appropriate for an extensive exploration of a phenomenon in a business context (Ebneyamini & Sadeghi Moghadam, 2018). A case study design is suitable to explore a current and complex real-life phenomenon (Yin, 2018). Case study methodology enables researchers to perform an in-depth exploration of complex phenomena within a specific context (Li et al., 2018), and it includes multiple data collection sources to create an extensive depiction and analysis (Ebneyamini & Sadeghi Moghadam, 2018). Using a case study design allowed me to explore the intricate workings of organizations, as explained by successful HRLM, to understand how and

why their systems work. Conducting a multiple case study allowed me to explore several organizations to compare strategies.

I chose a multiple case study design over a single case study design. Case studies can be structured in various ways, including single, multiple, holistic, or embedded (Yin, 2018). The multiple case study design was appropriate for interviewing several HRLM from various organizations that effectively addressed workplace bullying. A qualitative multiple case study is used to explore and compare individuals' experiences with organizational resources to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Rashid et al., 2019). A multiple case study is often considered more compelling and is regarded as more robust than a single case study (Yin, 2018). A multiple case study allowed observation and documentation from several programs, creating substantial analytical benefits.

Data saturation, also referred to as data adequacy (Fofana et al., 2020), was instrumental in the current study. Data saturation is essential for qualitative research to ensure the study's validity (Alam, 2020). Participants' redundant responses not revealing new information can alert the researcher to data saturation (Alam, 2020). I collected additional information throughout member checking to aid me in reaching data saturation. After the fourth participant, the data collection stopped revealing new information, which alerted me to achieving data saturation.

Population and Sampling

Purposive sampling was the sampling method for this study. The goal of sampling is to make reliable and reasonably accurate inferences to a larger population (Rivera,

2019). The techniques of sampling depend on the nature and type of research (Rivera, 2019). Purposive sampling is used when the researcher has something in mind and participants who suit the study's purpose are needed. Qualitative researchers seek an in-depth and detailed understanding and typically use purposive sampling (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Purposive sampling is used to match the sample with the research aims and objectives, thereby improving the study's rigor and the data and results' trustworthiness (Campbell et al., 2020). The purposive sampling technique is a nonprobability technique a researcher can use to ensure the sampling frame contains individuals who have intimate knowledge of the phenomenon (Serra et al., 2018). Purposive sampling involves identifying and selecting experienced and knowledgeable individuals or groups involved with a phenomenon of interest (Campbell et al., 2020). Purposive sampling involves selecting participants based on the researcher's judgment and based on the informative nature of participants (Sebele-Mpofu, 2020). For researchers, purposive sampling's logic and power lie in selecting information-rich participants (Rivera, 2019). A researcher can identify and choose the most informative participants by using purposive sampling. Because I selected participants who had established successful strategies to address workplace bullying, I conducted purposive sampling in this study.

I selected my sample with the intent of ensuring data saturation. Qualitative methods place primary emphasis on saturation (Alam, 2020). Sampling adequacy should be driven by saturation and replication (Low, 2019). Purposive sampling methods prioritize saturation until no new, substantive information is acquired (DeJonckheere &

Vaughn, 2019). With participants having particular characteristics for the study, a less extensive sample is needed for saturation (Malterud et al., 2016). Small sample sizes are appropriate for qualitative research and address the research question to describe the study's phenomenon (Yin, 2016). Five researched cases are recommended as a minimum for multiple-case sampling adequacy (Miles et al., 2014). For the current study, I selected five HRLM as a sample of participants. According to DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019), Malterud et al. (2016), Miles et al. (2014), and Yin (2016), interviewing five participants is sufficient to reach the point of no new information or themes found in the data collected. I researched five cases, and when the fifth interview revealed no new data, I determined that I had reached data saturation.

Selecting qualified participants led to collecting relevant data. The participants' selection was conditional on their implementation of a program that had addressed workplace bullying in their respective organizations. Potential participants were identified through my network of professionals who were familiar with their organization's program. Human resource professionals are expected to manage and solve workplace bullying problems (Catley et al., 2017). Because human resource professionals were the most associated with the phenomenon in their organizations, I chose only HRLM to interview because they were the most informed organizational workers regarding the intricacies of their organization's workplace bullying programs.

Researchers can maximize the participants' responses by creating a comfortable environment and relationship. Researchers must cultivate a relationship with their participants for them to be able to gather the necessary data (Thurairajah, 2019). I based

the interview location on the preference of the two options for the participants. I offered the participants the choice of face-to-face interviews or, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, remote interviews using Zoom. The interview setting can facilitate establishing rapport with a participant if situated in a favorable and comfortable location (Madsen & Santtila, 2018). I allowed participants to enjoy the comfort of their offices while conducting our interviews. Creating a comfortable setting for the participants encouraged detailed testimonies, which led to data saturation.

Ethical Research

I used the informed consent form to ensure transparency with participants. Participants must be informed regarding the current study's aims, methods, anticipated benefits, and potential risks for research to be completed ethically (Kaewkungwal & Adams, 2019). The voluntary expression of the consent by a competent subject and the adequate disclosure of information regarding the research are essential components of the informed consent process (Manti & Licari, 2018). By using a consent form, researchers ensure the principle of respect (Adashi et al., 2018) and provide confidentiality of the participants' information (O'Sullivan et al., 2021). The informed consent form contained the nature of the interview, the regime used to protect the information, and the study's elements. I used the informed consent form to provide autonomy to the participants and confirm their consent.

I provided the participants with the procedures for withdrawing from the study. I informed the participants of their right to stop the interview at any time, with no penalties. Participants could have indicated their intentions to withdraw by emailing me

their request. A participant's choice to partake in the study and answer questions was voluntary.

Participants were not offered incentives to participate in this research. However, participants and their organizations could realize non-financial benefits from participating. Participants may have benefitted from involvement in this study by analyzing their organizations through the interview process. The participant may have learned more about the phenomenon of bullying through the interview discussion. Another benefit was participants could implement the current study's findings into their organization. The research benefits outweighed the relatively low risk of ethical breaches affecting the participants.

I adhered to high ethical standards. Researchers and other stakeholders share responsibility for study ethicality (Cumyn et al., 2019). The Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures that Walden University research complies with prescribed requirements and U.S. Federal regulations (Walden University, 2016). With this study conducted through Walden University, I was accountable to the IRB, including integrating my CITI certification training on the Belmont Report principles. Researchers can use the principles recognized in the Belmont Report to embark on ethical research and safeguard study participants (Adashi et al., 2018; National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects in Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). The protection of the dignity and rights of research participants is essential (Tusino & Furfaro, 2022). For confidentiality, I had the participant choose a secure location at their organization for face-to-face meetings, and I conducted virtual meetings from my private

office. By meeting ethical standards put forth by the IRB, [approval number 06-28-21-1005457], as confirmed by my IRB approval number, I protected the participants from damages and created a favorable benefit-to-risk situation. I had informed consent from participants and a robust protection regimen for the data, thereby meeting ethical standards.

I will store the data securely for 5 years to protect the confidentiality of participants. I used emails and virtual platforms with embedded security systems to ensure confidentiality through communications. My data consisted of audio files, Word files, Excel files, and NVivo software. I will protect the data by using separate personal hard drives with passwords, saving the data for 5 years, and then using professional means to destroy it. The participants' sensitive information will be secured so that only I will have access over the next 5 years before the data's destruction.

A robust protection regime was imperative to ensure I met the ethical standards protecting participants. It is the researcher's duty to ensure data protection (Grech & Agius-Muscat, 2018). Data protection is essential to ensure the participants' security and rights are respected (Grech, 2018). Safeguarding the participants' confidentiality leads to ethical soundness (Kaewkungwal & Adams, 2019). I respected the participant's confidentiality because I was the only person that knew they were answering the interview questions. I used nomenclature to refer to participants after the informed consent process to protect the participants' confidentiality. For collecting and analyzing data, I used the code P1 to refer to the first participant, P2 for the second participant, and so on for the additional three participants and their organizations. Because I interviewed

only one individual from any organization, the participant and the assigned code represented phenomena from their unique organizations. The participants' names and organizations were never available to anyone. The coding system for participants' names and organizations kept the data confidential.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument in this qualitative study. The method through which information is collected can be important to participants (Heath et al., 2018). In qualitative research, the researcher is the data collection instrument (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Researchers' primary data collection tools in qualitative research are document reviews and semistructured interviews (Yin, 2016). Interviews are one way to gather a large amount of data from participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Because this was a multiple case study researching the rich data HRLM possess of organizational strategies, the interview process was the appropriate data collection method to supplement document research.

I used semistructured interview questions to encourage open sharing. I interviewed five HRLM to explore strategies that reduce workplace bullying. Semistructured interviews allow the researcher to collect open-ended data to explore participants' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about a particular topic (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). In a semistructured interview, researchers start with open questions related to the topic, which invite the participant to talk freely, and then ask follow-up questions or encourage telling more details by using probes and prompts (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The richness of the interview is dependent on these follow-up questions

(Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Furthermore, open-ended questions allow the participants to detail their experiences instead of giving one-word responses (Tinkler et al., 2018). Using semistructured interview questions enabled me to organize the questioning while obtaining more data from the participant.

In addition to interviewing participants, I explored organizational documents. I facilitated data collection for the current study by following the interview protocol and thoroughly searching documents. Using a semistructured interview format with triangulation through member checking and document research led to data saturation.

Achieving reliability and validity in research was crucial. Using triangulation improves the credibility and validity of research findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). By incorporating member checking, researchers can ensure the proper capturing of the participant's answers to the research question (Johnson et al., 2020). Document reviews support a case study because it allows the researcher to look at relevant information from a historical perspective (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). To ensure the research study includes an adequate amount of quality data, reaching data saturation is a critical component of the research methods (Saunders et al., 2018). I achieved reliability and validity by ensuring data saturation and enhancing data collection with member checking and document research.

In the interview protocol (see Appendix), I explained the procedure for this study. The development of a qualitative interview protocol supports in-depth discussion, promotes basic structure, and enables consistent focus on each interview (Iyamu, 2018). I referred to the interview protocol to guide the participants' questions and ensure I delved

further into subcategories for more in-depth information. I used the interview protocol to navigate the data collection process from participants.

Data Collection Technique

I collected data by using semistructured interviews and conducting document research. The interview protocol (see Appendix) and the consent form illustrated my data collection technique details. The structure of the semistructured interview is to be focused while allowing the researcher the autonomy to explore relevant ideas that arise in the interview (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). Semistructured interviews are a process in which a researcher has prepared a list of questions to ask the participant (Brown & Danaher, 2019). The researcher follows this list during the interview and ensures that the participants' open responses enable lines of unanticipated developments in conversation (Brown & Danaher, 2019). I used a semistructured interview with open-ended questions to gather data from the participants.

Using semistructured interviews and document research was advantageous. An advantage of semistructured interviews is that it allows for an emergent understanding of human resource practitioners' workplace bullying experience in a real-life setting (Mokgolo & Barnard, 2019). Well-informed interviewees can provide important insights into human affairs or actions (Yin, 2018). Sometimes respondents' answers to interview questions can be biased when answering how they believe the interviewer desires (Yin, 2018). Collecting document resources has the advantage of providing a historical timeline of the company and can offer specific situations to explore (Yin, 2018). However, documents can be difficult to locate and sometimes contain biased information (Yin,

2018). Interviews and document searches were an advantage that collectively supported in-depth and specific data.

In the consent form, I provided an initial outline of the interview process with the participants. The interview protocol was a list of steps to guide the interview and included sending a consent form, pre-interview steps, and post-interview follow-up procedures. I reviewed procedures and answered questions through a phone call so the participants were comfortable. The formal interview, which was face-to-face or via a Zoom call, lasted between 30 to 60 minutes. The face-to-face method is the gold standard of interview methods, and connecting through an online platform is the second-best choice (Heath et al., 2018). I asked the participants six preset questions and then, when needed, asked follow-up questions to gather additional information. The consent form contained instructions on participation, that engagement was voluntary, that they could have withdrawn at any time, and that they may have taken breaks in the interview if they desired. By using the interview guide, I created a formal process that prepared participants for a successful interview.

The interview protocol and the consent form also prepared the participants for the follow-up call for member checking. Member checking can occur during the initial interview and after complete data analysis (Yin, 2018). I contacted the participants 7–14 days after the interview. Member checks are a validation technique to ensure that participants agree that their testimony aligns with the findings constructed by the researchers (Johnson et al., 2020). Member checking enhances the interview system to determine if what the interviewer understands is consistent with what the participant

means (Yin, 2018). The purpose of member checking was to confirm the information shared by participants and verify that my interpretation of the information matches what they intended to say. By using member checking, I increased the quality of the data and better-reached data saturation.

Data Organization Technique

I organized my data for security, ease of use, and to maximize the information I drew from the data. The organization and management of data and its analysis are a prerequisite for the dissemination of the research undertaken (Maher et al., 2018). The technique I implemented included storing all records for 5 years, at which point I will then destroy them. Having this system in place facilitated data organization and security.

I needed to organize various data types. I moved study emails to an independent and isolated folder. I recorded the interviews using a Samsung device and the recording app: Hi-Q MP3 Voice recorder pro. I kept the MP3 files in a folder requiring password entry and on a flash drive for backup, locked in a file cabinet. Following each consultation, I used the NVivo transcription software to convert audio interview recordings to text versions and store them using the coded pseudonyms. From this point, I prepared my interpretation of the participants' responses to the member checking procedure.

I coordinated a date and time to facilitate the member checking discussions with each participant. I recorded the information from member checking in the same manner. After the member checking discussion with each participant, I uploaded the refined interview transcriptions into the NVivo software for storage and data analysis. I

transferred the data to an Excel spreadsheet for additional analysis. I protected access to all documents, MP3 files, Word, and Excel, in a separate file with a password. I also kept my research journal secure in a separate file cabinet. Field notes are an essential component of rigorous qualitative research (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). My journal was hand-written, and I identified specific sections to record the notes relating to the interviews. Using the NVivo and Excel software and setting security protocol, I created data security, ease of data usage, and maximized my ability to interpret the data.

Data Analysis

For this study, I followed Yin's 5-step approach to data analysis. Yin's 5-step approach consists of (a) compiling, (b) disassembling, (c) reassembling, (d) interpreting, and (e) concluding (Yin, 2016). I compiled data through interviews, member checking, and document research. I used a two-cycle coding method (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019) and the NVivo software to guide the disassembling and reassembling of data. I used the OCWB model to outline data interpretation methods and then concluded the study. The structure of my data analysis followed Yin's 5-step process.

I conducted interviews and reviewed documents supplied by participants to compile data. Document reviews and semistructured interviews are primary tools used for qualitative research (Yin, 2016) and are significant ways qualitative researchers generate and collect data for their research (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Qualitative researchers often design study-specific sets of open-ended questions (Alam, 2020). The researcher can use semistructured interviews to explore issues brought forward

by the interviewee (McGrath et al., 2019). I used interview questions, member checking, and document research to collect data from the participants and their organizations in the current study.

I followed the interview protocol by conducting member checking to ensure data accuracy. Member checking can occur following the transcription to respond to their own words or occur after analysis to have the participant more involved (Iivari, 2018). Through member checking, researchers can ensure that their reconstructions are recognizable to the informants as accurate representations of their realities (Iivari, 2018). After transcribing the audio files, I completed the member checking to understand the participants' intended message.

For a researcher, the disassembly and reassembly steps are to work with the data and to arrange it differently, such as arrays or other visual displays (Yin, 2018). Coding is a key data organizing structure in qualitative research (Williams & Moser, 2019). I used mind maps and Excel to organize the information and identify initial data patterns. I disassembled the data, assigned descriptive codes, reviewed transcripts and documents, and analyzed them for patterns. I was analyzing the data and its patterns, which led to the emergence of the themes.

Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), such as NVivo, can manage data analysis and synthesis. I used NVivo software to support my data interpretation. The use of qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo can greatly increase the proficiency of qualitative analysis and assist the management and analysis of complex data (Bergeron & Gaboury, 2020). Qualitative research explores text rather than

measurable numbers (Bansal et al., 2018). Although computer aids can assist synthesis, they cannot substitute for having a general analytical strategy (Yin, 2018). However, a case study protocol should consider analytical approaches for development (Yin, 2018). After an initial search using a spreadsheet for patterns with the data, I used NVivo software to synthesize the interviews' data framework.

I used the OCWB model constructs as a set of initial codes. In thematic analysis, the research topic, questions, and methods may be informed by a particular theory guiding the initial analysis of data, and then researchers are intentional in seeking new ideas that challenge or extend the theoretical perspectives adopted (Richards & Hemphill, 2018). Researchers should use a replicable methodology to guide the coding for a viable study (Williams & Moser, 2019). These constructs included the dimensions of culture for an organization, characteristics of the bully, victim, bystander, organizational practices, and the behaviors and practices of the first bullying incidents. Thematic analysis is a strategy used by researchers to comprehensively interpret qualitative data by identifying themes and codes to answer the research question (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). After an initial analysis of the interview data and the OCWB model's constructs, I used thematic analysis to identify other themes. Typically, the thematic analysis produces a set of themes that describe the most prominent patterns in the data (Richards & Hemphill, 2018). Three main themes were found, and they aligned with constructs of the OCWB model. I used the same methods to review the research documents to discover converging conclusions. Using CAQDAS assisted me in finding themes and patterns. The disassembly and reassembly process allowed me to identify themes in the data and

organize the information for presentation. By identifying themes and patterns and converging findings, I found the strategies used by participants to reduce workplace bullying.

Reliability and Validity

I ensured processes to promote rigor, reliability, and validity for this qualitative multiple case study. In quantitative research, reliability and validity are the researcher's goals (Maher et al., 2018). Instead of reliability and validity, qualitative researchers use the term rigor (Ellis, 2019). Qualitative researchers must identify the influences of self and take responsibility for ensuring rigor in a research study (Ellis, 2019). Quality criteria used to assess qualitative research are credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. (Ellis, 2018). I integrated systems in my qualitative study to support credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, and data saturation.

Reliability

Researchers strive to create reliability and dependability. Reliability refers to the soundness of the study and whether the research could be repeated by other researchers (Rose & Johnson, 2020). In qualitative studies, researchers ensure dependability to achieve reliability.

To build dependability, I referred to the interview questions from my previous case study, used member checking to enhance my interpretation of the data, and employed a coding system to analyze data. In qualitative research, dependability refers to the data's stability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Dependability tests the trustworthiness and consistency of a research study, ensuring that other researchers could use the same

data to generate similar patterns (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Using a consistent interviewing method, confirming that data represents the participants' intent through member checking, and using proven coding methods ensured dependability.

Validity

In this study, I incorporated the elements of validity into my design. The validity of research refers to the extent to which findings accurately depict the phenomenon it is designed to investigate, leading to credible interpretations of data and reaching trustworthy conclusions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Critical factors of quality in qualitative case study research include credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation (Yin, 2018). Researchers address credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation to support validity.

Credibility

I ensured credibility in my research using semistructured interviews, member checking, and document searches. Credibility refers to the findings' value and believability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The groundwork for credibility originates with awareness throughout the study (Ospina et al., 2018). Credibility, the accurate and truthful depiction of a participant's lived experience, can be achieved through prolonged engagement and persistent observation to learn the context of the phenomenon in which it is embedded (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). When the researcher establishes rapport, the respondent is able to provide a rich and detailed account of the experiences at the heart of the study (McGrath et al., 2019). A researcher can validate their findings through the process of data verification, analysis, and interpretation to establish credibility and

authenticity (Andersen et al., 2018). Multiple sources of evidence, such as triangulation and member checking, are a basis for a researcher to achieve trustworthiness and credibility (Ellis, 2019). To ensure credibility, I used semistructured interviews and validated participant responses with member checking.

Transferability

In this study, I addressed transferability concerning the reader and future research. In qualitative research, transferability refers to whether findings can be transferred to another similar context or situation (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). By choosing five participants, I identified strategies that work across organizations. I designed this study so the strategies I identified to reduce workplace bullying can transfer to other organizations and so that other researchers can better depend on and build on my research.

Confirmability

I used member checking to achieve confirmability. Confirmability refers to the data's neutrality and accuracy (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I used standard technology to translate the actual interviews into written-out Word documents. I used member checking to ensure the accuracy of the interview data. Member checking can support the confirmability of research by verifying responses with the participants to ensure the researcher has made a proper interpretation of the interview (Johnson et al., 2020). I used the OCWB model's constructs to outline my coding to reduce bias and create neutrality. The design of my study generated confirmability and rigor.

Data Saturation

I achieved data saturation to develop a more rigorous study. Obtaining data saturation is an essential component of the research methods used to ensure the study includes adequate quality data (Fofana et al., 2020). Reaching data saturation in qualitative studies occurs when collecting additional data and coding yields no other discovery, and other data gathering is unnecessary (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I met data saturation when the fifth interview did not add new information. Achieving data saturation was one of the elements of achieving rigor, reliability, and validity in my study.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I provided an overview of the methodology to include a robust and rigorous plan. I structured the interview guide and the consent form to guide the research to support ethical standards. I elaborated on my role as the researcher and described my interactions with participants to ensure the collection of unbiased and confidential data. I designed a system to collect, organize, and analyze data supporting identifying converging themes and saturation in the data. Finally, I explained the methods I used to verify the study's reliability and validity with dependable, credible, transferable, and confirmable findings.

In Section 3, I present my findings and provide recommendations for potential future research. In Section 3, I compare my results to others' research and offer practitioners suggestions. I review insights into my work and highlight social change

opportunities. I provide my reflections on the study's conclusions and make recommendations for strategies HRLM to use to reduce workplace bullying.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies HRLM used to address and reduce workplace bullying. I conducted semistructured interviews with five HRLM and reviewed archival documents from five organizations that reduced workplace bullying. Three themes emerged from the study: (a) establishing a desired organizational culture, (b) creating an employee wellness program, and (c) training employees. The themes aligned with the conceptual framework and outlined the participants' strategies to reduce workplace bullying.

Presentation of the Findings

The study's research question was the following: What strategies do HRLM use to reduce workplace bullying? Data were collected from five HRLM who shared their strategies through semistructured interviews. Three themes emerged from the thematic analysis. I assessed the themes through comparison to the OCWB model and the literature on workplace bullying. The five HRLM provided strategies that other organizations can use to reduce workplace bullying.

Theme 1: Establishing the Desired Organizational Culture

The first theme was the participants' intent to establish their desired organizational culture. I used statistics from NVivo software to help identify themes. Table 1 shows the frequency of participants' responses contributing to Theme 1 and its subthemes.

Table 1

Frequency of Responses Related to Theme 1 and Subthemes

Participant	Theme 1: Establishing a desired organizational culture	Subtheme: Describing the desired culture	Subtheme: Methods to establish the desired culture
Participant 1	19	14	5
Participant 2	12	2	10
Participant 3	13	7	6
Participant 4	12	3	9
Participant 5	6	4	2

Organizational culture can be defined as the set of values, norms, assumptions, and beliefs among members of the organization, which influence employee attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Di Stefano et al., 2019). Culture refers to the collective mental bargaining of a group of people (Hofstede, 1980). Organizational culture influences the presence of deviant behaviors (Di Stefano et al., 2019). The desired organizational culture would be conducive to reducing bullying.

The current participants shared their vision of desired shared values and norms to establish for their organizations. P1 explained that to create an organizational culture

> we place the highest value on the free exchange of ideas and points of view, understanding that those are open to challenge. We take pride in the strength of our diversity and our ability to work together with respect and equality.

P1 shared that they prevented bullying by creating their desired culture. P1 provided a training document used to emphasize company values, which was the workbook from their cultural competency employee workshop. In the document, cultural values were

identified as “based on a fundamental respect for the dignity of others.” P1 used the training document to illustrate that their leaders were committed “to creating a transparent, open, trusting, and safe culture.” P1 was intent on teaching cultural competency to their workforce, which was defined in the training document:

> Cultural competency is the ability to function effectively and with an understanding and sensitivity while interacting with people of differences and commonalities, knowing how to engage with people from different backgrounds, and honoring and respecting their beliefs, behaviors, attitudes, and values.

P1’s desired organizational culture included shared values of free exchange of ideas, respect for the dignity of others, and embracing individual differences.

P2 stated that their leaders have “set the culture” in their organization by establishing the desired culture in their organization. P2’s leaders created an environment less conducive to bullying. The employee handbook revealed the values P2’s management team established across their organization:

- engagement: Be a positive influence, embrace diversity and inclusion.
- integrity: Always do what is right.
- excellence: Provide our services to the best of our abilities every day, every time.
- teamwork: Create and support a diverse yet unified team, and we work together to meet our common goals.

P2's strategy to reduce bullying was accomplished by establishing shared values of teamwork and integrity with employees. Diversity, inclusion, teamwork, and unity were norms P2 strove to create for their organizational culture.

Similar to the efforts in P2's organization, P3 stated that the positive culture in their organization started with the organization's leaders. Leadership style, organizational norms and values, and communication climate affect the prevalence of workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). P3 noted that "individuals have the right to work in an atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibited discriminatory practices, including harassment." P3 stated that they valued "open communication between management and employees." P3 provided a PowerPoint training document used for their employee assistance program that revealed their desired culture. Included was the directive "we are committed to inclusion, equity, and collaboration for all clients, employees, and the communities we serve. Our dedication to diverse perspectives, ideas, and experiences is central to our culture and encourages individuals to be themselves." To create a work environment free of bullying and dysfunctional behavior, P3's leaders set the norms for their desired organizational culture.

P4 stated their desired shared values and norms:

> We focus very heavily on the development of our team members and ensuring that they feel as though they belong to the organization, that they're functioning as a team, and that we're growing them and their development to reach their full potential.

P4 continued “we really want folks to have a clear understanding of what our core values are and our core values; respect and development, accountability, community, and a passion for excellence.” Reviewing the policy manual from P4 showed the organization’s expectation: “Team members [are] to conduct themselves with dignity and with respect for fellow team members, customers, vendors, the public and others. Each team member has the right to work in an environment free from unlawful harassment and discrimination.” P4 was focused on creating a positive work environment through shared values for their employees.

The current participants described their desired organizational culture, noting a recurring need for employees to respect and accept their fellow employees and promote teamwork. P2 and P3 referenced how their organizational culture started with their organization’s leadership. P2 and P3 emphasized the importance of leadership. P4 stated that “the one thing over the years that seems to prevent this type of thing [workplace bullying] is strong leadership.” Establishing a desired organizational culture conducive to a positive work environment was a consistent strategy to reduce workplace bullying across the participants’ responses.

Correlation to the Literature

The findings noted in Theme 1 aligned with findings in the literature. The current respondents identified leadership as a critical element in establishing a desired organizational culture. Founders’ and leaders’ values become members’ practices (Hofstede, 2011). Current participants developed norms and shared values to establish their desired organizational culture and how it relates to bullying. Values are beliefs a

group considers desirable, such as ideals that influence the behavioral and organizational patterns (Schmiedel et al., 2013), and the bullying behavior of employees stems from the culture of the organization (Iftikhar et al., 2021). An integral strategy for HRLM to reduce workplace bullying is establishing their desired culture. The literature supported the current findings that shared values and norms of an organization's culture can deter and reduce dysfunctional behaviors. The first theme outlined the current participants' strategy to establish their desired organizational culture to reduce workplace bullying through value creation and promoting norms of teamwork, community, inclusion, and respect.

Correlation to the Conceptual Framework

Organizational culture is a prominent construct in the OCWB model (Pheko et al., 2017). Current participants shared comments about establishing teamwork, employee building, and communication, all of which reduce bullying as measured by dimensions of the OCWB model. The OCWB model contains seven dimensions of culture that can be used to predict bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). In each dimension's continuum, Pheko et al. (2017) posited that a low-power distance, weak uncertainty avoidance, individualism, femininity, long-term orientation, indulgence, and employee-oriented organizational cultures would predict less bullying. The current participants' responses regarding culture aligned with several of the cultural dimensions in the OCWB model, previewing actions that can reduce bullying.

The current participants' strategies could lower the cultural power distance in their organizations. Accepting inequality among the ranks is a trait of the power distance

dimension (Hofstede et al., 1990). A high-power distance signifies more inequality, whereas a low-power distance culture considers inequality as a negative phenomenon that needs to be minimized (Hofstede, 2001; Mulaomerovic et al., 2019). P1 established a transparent and open organization that minimizes the separation between management and employees, which can lower power distance and thereby reduce bullying. P1 and P3 emphasized open communication between management and employees. When subordinates expect to be consulted, it is representative of the low-power distance culture (Hofstede, 2011), which reduces bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). Through inclusion strategies, P3 lowered the separation of hierarchies, which is indicative of a low-power distance (Hofstede et al., 1990). Striving for inclusion, equity, and collaboration between management and employees could support a lower power distance, thereby reducing the likelihood of workplace bullying. Current participants' activities supported their organizational culture, which aligned with creating a lower power distance and a culture that can reduce bullying.

Job oriented versus employee oriented is another dimension of the cultural construct of the OCWB Model in which an employee-oriented culture predicts less bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). A more job-oriented culture would be concerned with job performance only, whereas employee-oriented cultures assume broad responsibility for their members' well-being (Hofstede, 2011). P4's focus on growing and developing employees is more employee oriented than job oriented and aligns with principles in the OCWB model predicting less bullying. P1 created a culture of employee orientation that reduced bullying as measured by the OCWB model. P3's dedication to growing

employees aligned with the employee-oriented dimension and predicted less bullying. The testimonies of P1, P3, and P4 contained elements aligned with lower power distance and employee-oriented cultures, which are dimensions of the OCWB model.

Theme 2: Implementing Programs

The second theme was that the current participants implemented programs to support a desired organizational culture. Table 2 shows the frequency of participants' responses across Theme 2 and its subthemes. Participants shared the design and elements of their programs and procedures, the policies that supported the program, and how they measured their efforts' success. Each participant used the programs to address employee well-being in general, with some aspects of their programs explicitly addressing workplace bullying.

Table 2

Frequency of Responses Related to Theme 2 and Subthemes

Participant	Theme 2: Creating an employee wellness program	Subtheme: Describing the program	Subtheme: Policies	Subtheme: Measuring the program
Participant 1	12	3	8	1
Participant 2	13	2	6	5
Participant 3	11	3	3	5
Participant 4	10	3	3	4
Participant 5	5	2	1	2

The participants described the programs and procedures to create a favorable work environment and reduce workplace bullying. P1 implemented the communication, appreciation, respect, empathy, and sensitivity (CARES) program in their organization.

P1 used their cultural competency workbook, which was designed to deliver the CARES program, to educate their employees on the program. P3 referred to their program as the employee assistance program, which addresses new hires, employees, leadership, and senior managers. P4 labeled their program the learning management system and used it to guide their employee interactions. Each participant implemented a dedicated program for the well-being of their employees.

> P1's cultural competency workbook outlined their CARES model:
>
> CARES is a model for working together to create a more diverse, respectful, productive, and welcoming workplace. It reinforced behaviors that support cultural competency and minimized behaviors that undermine it, understood intent versus impact in the workplace, and addressed issues and concerns in a respectful, constructive way.

P1 expressed satisfaction with the CARES program by stating "I think CARES is good conflict management resolution no matter what it is." Although the CARES program was broader than workplace bullying, portions of the ongoing training for managers and employees were explicitly directed at workplace bullying. An element of P1's CARES program addressed the intricacies of bullying and was presented to their workforce during a class each year. In P1's cultural competency workbook, bullying was distinguished from other incivilities by defining bullying as an intentional act. Reviewing the cultural competency workbook from P1 further revealed more profound insight into perpetrators' intentions and how the victims may perceive them. P1 sets the expectations for their workforce on how people should interact with others civilly and respectfully by using

their CARES program. The CARES program addressed employee well-being in general, and part of the program was designed around bullying intentions.

P3 developed their employee assistance program to address employee wellness. The document supplied by P3 showed that the cultural training incorporated the traits found in the VALUES model:

- visionary
- a balanced life
- lifetime learning
- unity
- excellence
- support

P3 delivered their VALUES program and policies to employees through orientations and yearly employee training and integrated them into their management training tracks. P3 used the program to establish their desired culture, subsequently reducing bullying. P3 stated that creating the desired culture was vital in reducing bullying. P3's leaders initiated their desired culture using their employee assistance program, and the goal of the program was to ensure it endured throughout company growth.

The current participants shared how their employee programs lasted multiple years. To support their desired culture, P1 said they distributed newsletters to the workforce monthly. P1 described culture-related items inserted in the newsletter, such as: "one month is bullying, the next may be diversity. Bullying is rotated through on a

regular basis." P3's training program for line managers continues for 3 years, but P4 has ongoing monthly reviews for their managers, and P5 has regular annual harassment training for their workforce. P1, P3, P4, and P5 noted that their employee programs lasted for multiple years, thereby having a long-term orientation.

Policies Support Programs

A sub-theme in the data showed that policies were a consistent part of the programs the current participants employed. Workplace bullying policies may represent only part of a comprehensive organizational approach to bullying (Ferris et al., 2021). The participants described policies and shared documents, such as policy manuals and orientation guides. P2, and P3, supplied their policy manual as a document. P4 and P5 provided documents on policy excerpts because it referred to unacceptable employee behaviors. P1 supplied training material for documents and referred to their policies in their interview. Each participant incorporated a set of policies as part of their program.

Documents provided by the current participants outlined the organizational policies that support the programs and initiatives to create and maintain a civil workplace. P2 stated that they developed a thorough handbook with relevant and specific work rules. P2 further stated that these policies were guiding employee behavior and that they created a better work environment. Policy implementation is essential for successful human resource practice to be realized (Catley et al., 2017). The participants also described how the policies were delivered to the workforce through orientations, training, and meetings. The participants used their policies to describe dysfunctional organizational behavior, the process for reporting behavioral incidents, and the potential punishments for treating

other employees inappropriately. The current participants' strategies to reduce workplace bullying included setting policies and delivering the information to the workforce.

P2 recognized the importance of policies being set with the organization to be "understood, followed, and enforced before the employee starts." Reviewing the document from P2's orientation showed employees are expected to be professional in dealing with management, supervisors, subordinates, co-workers, customers partners, and vendors. Conduct that is offensive to other employees, such as obscene, prejudicial, or provocative remarks, is prohibited. P2's policies outlined unacceptable behavior, such as when the conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a person's employment or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment environment.

P3 stated to ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, they expected employees to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all employees and the company. Failure to have such a policy signals the organization's acceptance of bullying behavior (Rockett et al., 2017). P3 said that it was impossible to list all forms of behavior considered unacceptable in the workplace. The company policies from P3's employee handbook specified examples of inappropriate practices that may lead to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. In this handbook, a policy directed that "we would not take action against anyone that brought up the situation that they were uncomfortable with." Additionally, P3 highlighted their written policy on the response to a claim of inappropriate action:

> When a report of unlawful discrimination or harassment is received, the Company will promptly initiate an impartial investigation which will be kept as confidential as possible under the circumstances. All Company personnel will be expected to cooperate fully and honestly if asked to participate in an investigation. Any refusal to participate in the investigation as requested by management may lead to discipline, up to and including discharge.

In the policy manual from P4, the name of their rules was labeled as a "team member dignity policy." The policy document listed that any team member believing they had been subjected to or had witnessed harassment should report it immediately to their supervisor, the Human Resources Department, or any other management member with whom the team member feels comfortable. P4 shared they encouraged the victimized team member to report to whichever option with which they felt most comfortable:

> If they don't feel comfortable with their direct line supervisor, they [the employee] can come to H.R. to file a complaint, or, if they are more comfortable, they can go to their plus-two manager, which would be the manager of their supervisor.

The options an employee has available to follow in the event of a claim were outlined in the policy excerpts from P4.

Bullying complaints often fell under current participants' policies oriented toward harassment. P1 said that they call in the parties involved when a claim is made. All parties are interviewed by human resources, and if the claim has merit, they coach and

counsel the perpetrator. P2 shared a similar method where each incident is assigned a labor-relations representative to substantiate the claim. P3's policy manual revealed that the victim, the alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses should be interviewed, but refer the victim to the employee assistance office for further support and counseling. P4 emphasized that in their reporting system, "the investigations are done immediately and confidentially." A target's perception of organizational support played an important role in perceiving the organizational commitment to the employee and their acceptance of the outcome (Catley et al., 2017). P5 had an anonymous tip line for their employee complaints in addition to approaching a supervisor or human resources. The participants implemented policies in response to complaints to maintain a positive work culture. The organizational culture can moderate the likelihood of bullying and the organizational response according to the OCWB model (Pheko et al., 2017). Prompt attention and consistent responses to bullying claims are strategies each participant has implemented in their organizations. Creating policies to outline procedures and defining dysfunctional behavior terms was part of each participant's employee wellness program.

Measuring Bullying Programs

Although the current participants' programs had many similarities, their methods of measuring workplace bullying differed. P3 stated they monitored their turnover ratio and conducted exit interviews to identify potential issues with employee dissatisfaction. Workplace bullying in an organization leads to high turnover intention (Hayat & Afshari, 2020). P4 measured percent compliance to their ongoing training programs and created a key performance indicator to track potential issues. P5 said they watched for an uptick in

reported incidents. P1, P2, and P5 stated they followed the total number of complaints per period and were satisfied that the results were acceptable. P5 further noted that although their organization seemed “employee-friendly, there could be unreported bullying incidents.” Each participant monitored employee dissatisfaction, and each participant shared that their programs were producing acceptable results. Current participants monitored dysfunctional behavior by tracking adverse changes in employee turnover rates, incident rates, and other key performance indicators.

Correlation to the Literature

The strategies emerging in Theme 2 correlated with the literature. Current participants implemented programs designed to create a better workplace for their employees, including reducing workplace bullying. Current participants had either programs or a set of plans to develop a civil work environment for their employees, and segments of their programs were explicitly directed at bullying. Caponecchia et al. (2020) developed a taxonomy of workplace bullying intervention types in a Delphi study. In the taxonomy development, it was discovered that most workplace bullying programs were part of a more extensive employee program (Caponecchia et al., 2020). Similarly, the participants’ programs addressed employee well-being in general and contained program segments specific to bullying. Addressing workplace bullying in each program was a strategy the current participants used to create a positive work environment.

Organizations using policies to support a program correlated with the literature. Current participants addressed the use of policies to guide their efforts to reduce bullying, and P2, P3, P4, and P5 supplied documents of policies that supported their programs.

Using policies to guide organizations to mitigate workplace bullying was the most agreed-upon intervention of workplace bullying intervention types (Caponecchia et al., 2020). Human resource practitioners should determine the best source of protection against bullying, including human resource policies and procedures (Valentine et al., 2021). The participants used their policies to describe dysfunctional organizational behavior and the guidelines for responses associated with these actions. The participants' strategy to use policies supporting the culture and operations of the organizations was consistent with the literature.

Correlation to the Conceptual Framework

The desired employee behaviors identified in the current participants' documents aligned with the dimensions of the OCWB model. Programs and policies were recognized in the organizational practices construct of the OCWB model (Pheko et al., 2017). In the OCWB model, the relationship between organizational cultural dimensions affects workplace bullying, and organizational practices can heighten, moderate, and mediate the effect (Pheko et al., 2017). The activities and characteristics of participants' programs can be related to the cultural dimensions of their organizations.

Establishing programs that lasted multiple years was a strategy current participants used to reduce workplace bullying. According to the OCWB model, an organization with a long-term orientation should predict less bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). P1, P3, P4, and P5 established programs that lasted multiple years. Designing multiple-year programs reflected aligned with the long-term outlook dimension of the OCWB model and can lead to reduced bullying.

Desired behaviors highlighted in P1's CARES program were communication and empathy. These behaviors can be measured by the cultural dimensions of the OCWB model, and communication and empathy lead to an employee-oriented culture and a low power distance culture, both of which predict less bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). A feminine culture also predicts less bullying (Pheko et al., 2017). A feminine culture can be characterized as an emphasis on the quality of life instead of performance, and when people and the environment are considered more important than money and things (Hofstede, 1980). Other encouraged behaviors by P1 were sensitivity, appreciation, and respect, which could lead to a higher quality of life for employees instead of performance-driven outcomes. P3 shared how they encouraged "a work-life balance for their employees." These behaviors characterize a more feminine culture and reduce the likelihood of bullying. An organization preferring a work-life balance instead of a heavier emphasis on work is another characteristic of a feminine culture (Hofstede, 2011). The programs of P1, P3, P4, and P5 supported employee-oriented, feminine cultures, and this strategy aligned with the OCWB model to reduce bullying.

Theme 3: Employee Training

The third theme that emerged from the data analysis was training employees. Table 3 shows the frequency of current participants' responses concerning Theme 3 and subthemes. The participants shared similar strategies because they conducted employee training regimens through their programs. Although the participants implemented different employee wellness programs, the training components paralleled each other. In

the OCWB model, employee training is a construct that influences workplace bullying (Pheko et al., 2017).

Table 3

Frequency of Responses Related to Theme 3 and Subthemes

Participant	Theme 3: Training employees	Subtheme: Training regimen	Subtheme: Training tools
Participant 1	8	2	6
Participant 2	5	3	2
Participant 3	9	6	3
Participant 4	7	5	2
Participant 5	11	7	4

The participants shared insights into their programs and highlighted their training protocol to reduce workplace bullying. P4 shared the goals of their training program for employees:

> We focus very heavily on the development of our team members and ensuring that they feel as though they belong to the organization, that they're functioning as a team, and that we're growing them and their development to reach their full potential.

P4's training was structured to support company values through teamwork and employee growth. P3 shared that their desired culture had been established in the organization, and the training helped maintain this positive culture as they grew through "mergers and acquisition." The training was an integral part of the current participants' programs to support the desired culture.

The general structure of the training regimens included initial employee orientations, yearly training classes through workshops and meetings, and management training classes. Each program provided training opportunities that were organized over several years. The document from P2, their employee handbook, illustrated how they managed their training schedule for each employee through an individual performance management plan. P1 stated they used their orientations to ensure new employees received a list of expectations and acceptable behaviors. P4 described orientation: “We want folks to have a clear understanding of what our core values are, our respect and development, accountability, community, and a passion for excellence.” P5 shared that orientation had employees sign off to read and understand the policies. Current participants used orientations to introduce the desired culture, policies, and preferred behaviors.

Current participants used workshops and meetings to train employees on dysfunctional behaviors, including workplace bullying. P1 stated they used workshops to teach employees their “Cultural Competency” class and their “Bullying Basics: Where to Begin?” class. Further, P1 shared that they delivered anti-bullying information to their workforce through emails, newsletters, and company websites. P4 stated each employee has a compliance learning track to follow and that harassment training is part of that package. P5 shared that they recently developed a harassment training program that is a requirement for all current employees and new employees. The participants delivered the anti-bullying message to employees through workshops and meetings according to learning tracks they had implemented.

Current participants also focused on management training. P2 hired an individual to redesign their human resource department, including management training procedures:

> We hired a trainer in January, and she not only revamped our new supervisor training and our new employee orientation. She is also working on revamping our labor relations training. The relations training is for managers to go through all the issues they may have with employees. We've got some other training sessions involved with performance evaluations and how to handle those things, which all can lead to a lessening of the bullying aspect of it.

P2 stated that the new labor relations training and the current performance evaluation training are directed at improving interactions between managers and employees. Similarly, P1 said they used training classes to teach managers to understand employees better. P3 shared how they addressed line manager training with their "Leadership Program," a 3-year program focusing on soft skills. P3 stated they had a 2-year program for their contractors to enter management, and an additional path was created for those motivated to promote from leadership to a partner position. P4's training program was similar to other current participants but focused more on the line managers. The participants used management training to engrain their desired cultures further and improve management-employee relations.

Many similarities existed across current participants' training programs. Participants used orientations to introduce the desired culture, support policies, and identify unacceptable behavior. The participants referred to continuing education classes for their employees by different names, workshops, classes, and learning tracks and used

them to deliver further employee wellness workplace bullying training. Each participant also conducted management training to improve the relationship between managers and employees. Addressing dysfunctional behavior was present in each step of the participants' training regiments.

Correlation to Literature

Theme 3, employee training, was correlated with the current literature. Organizations can use training, workshops, and orientations to create a nurturing culture and increase trust between employees and management (Jiang & Shen, 2018). Initial training for employees may reduce workplace bullying (Messiaen et al., 2021). Participants used orientations, workshops, leadership training, and continuing education classes to educate employees and support the desired culture. The participants educated their employees to distinguish unacceptable behaviors and introduce the desired culture. The participants' training initiatives were correlated with the current literature.

Training Aligning to the OCWB Model

Training is an organizational procedure recognized in the organizational practices construct of the OCWB model and is an individual's education dimension (Pheko et al., 2017). Pheko et al. (2017) posited that training initiatives are recognized in two different dimensions of the OCWB model and can affect subsequent bullying in an organization.

Summary

Training employees was the third theme found in the data. The current participants' training regiments were similar in structure, with each orientation introducing the desired culture to their new employees. P1, P3, P4, and P5 followed

orientation with training classes specific to dysfunctional behavior, including bullying. P2, P3, P4, and P5 acknowledged their training for new managers. The training regiments of the participants aligned with the literature and the OCWB model and were an integral part of their strategies to reduce bullying.

Conclusion

The three themes that emerged from the data were establishing a desired organizational culture, implementing employee wellness programs, and employee training. The findings verified the association between the conceptual framework and the data. The participants described the programs they used to create a positive work environment and the policies and systems to deliver the employee training. The interdependence between establishing the desired culture, implementing employee wellness programs, and employee training was evident in the data. Participants explained the importance of creating their desired work culture and how this influenced the creation of a support program. The desired culture influenced the programs and policies, and the programs and policies reinforced the desired culture, creating a symbiotic relationship. The experiences shared by successful HRLM provided concepts supporting applications to professional practices and recommendations for action.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings of the current study on workplace bullying apply to the professional practices of organizations. Workplace bullying costs U.S. businesses over $34 billion per year (Hassard et al., 2018). To mitigate costs, organizations can implement strategies to reduce workplace bullying. Three themes that emerged from the data on strategies to

reduce workplace bullying were (a) establishing a desired organizational culture, (b) implementing an employee wellness program, and (c) employee training. An immediate concern to reducing workplace bullying for organizational leaders is evaluating their culture, employee programs, and training procedures.

Establishing the desired workplace culture emerged as a predominant strategy across the current participants. The participants shared how their strategies to reduce workplace bullying started with their leaders. The leaders initiated the creation of positive work culture in their organizations. The behaviors and non-behaviors of leaders are paramount for most aspects of followers' effectiveness and health (Guest, 2017). Organizations are more successful in a culture where leadership promotes and demonstrates validation and valuing behaviors (Fusch et al., 2016). Creating a desired organizational culture starts with the leader of the organization. Leaders can create a positive work environment for their employees by designing programs to align with the culture.

The second theme that emerged from the data was how programs supporting employee well-being could affect an organization's ability to create and maintain the desired culture and reduce workplace bullying. Organizations are likely to benefit from policies that focus on employees' well-being (Guest, 2017). Leaders can integrate policies and procedures to support the desired work culture and develop strategies to identify and mitigate unacceptable behavior to reduce workplace bullying.

The third theme found in the data analysis, employee training, is also relevant to organizations. Organizational culture contains values that must be understood, imbued,

and practiced together by all individuals or groups involved (Kurniady et al., 2020). The participants expressed the importance of educating employees on organizational expectations and policies through orientations and training. Leaders can develop strategies to onboard individuals into organizations, sharing their culture and informing them of the policies and expectations.

Leaders can align the strategies to establish the culture, implement employee wellness programs, and design employee training. Pheko et al. (2017) described how organizational culture, organizational practices, and individuals interact to predict workplace bullying. Culture is integrated with each element in an organization (Fusch et al., 2016). Leaders can reduce workplace bullying by guiding organizational culture, promoting employee wellness programs, and instituting employee training to sustain the desired culture. Proactively developing strategies to reduce workplace bullying may help organizations mitigate associated workplace bullying costs.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this study could help HRLM create positive social change by reducing workplace bullying. Victims of bullying at work experience an increased risk of poor physical and mental health, including measures of cardiovascular disease, post-traumatic stress, and depression (Attell et al., 2017). An organization's commitment to employee well-being is expected to result in a reduction in workplace bullying (De Cieri et al., 2019). Human resource practices can play a relevant and strategic role in improving employees' well-being and increasing individual performance (Maccagnan et al., 2019; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). HRLM may use strategies identified in the current

study to create a more favorable work environment. Reducing workplace bullying may lead to more productive employees and more efficiently operating organizations.

A more favorable work culture created by implementing strategies outlined in this study may lead to positive social outcomes. Positive social outcomes can be appreciated at the individual, organizational, and community levels. Occupational stressors affect employees' physical, psychological, and social well-being, and their impact is felt at home and in the community (Aquino, 2020). Implementing the strategies highlighted in this study may create a positive work culture and reduce workplace bullying, assisting organizations in retaining happier and healthier employees. Favorable work culture may lead to stable employment and employee well-being. By committing to positive work culture, an organization enhances the attractiveness of employees' tasks and organizations, subsequently increasing service quality (Kim & Kim, 2020). Enhanced wellbeing has been shown to lead to better life outcomes such as better health status and social relationships, increased educational achievements, and higher productivity (Maccagnan et al., 2019). The strategies discussed in this study may lead to positive social change on varying levels. Employees may be better satisfied, perform better, and allow an organization to better serve their markets, which may benefit the community.

Recommendations for Action

Several recommendations for action emerge from the findings of this study. Organizations should establish a leadership that will establish the desired culture. In the OCWB model, Pheko et al. (2017) recognized that organizational culture predicts workplace bullying. The literature and the data supported that a bully-free environment

starts with leaders creating a positive organizational culture. Organizations can select leaders that will integrate a positive culture through the structures and policies to affect all stakeholders. Organizations can create programs leading to employee wellness. Employee wellness programs can support organizational culture and reduce workplace bullying. The HRLM can create programs to deliver cultural competence to their workforces.

A second recommendation is for organizations to develop programs to support the desired culture through hiring, orientation, and training. In orientations, organizations may introduce their cultural expectations to all incoming members. Organizations can tie the completion of cultural training to overall employee development to confirm the delivery of the cultural message. Initial onboarding followed by ongoing training may embed a desired culture across the workforce.

A third recommendation for organizations is to design training specific to line managers, which is critical to the program's success. Line managers will often be the individuals using the policies throughout the workdays. Line managers may be aware of the intricacies of workplace bullying and possess the skills to address employees with related issues. Line manager training is a critical element of a successful program to create and maintain a positive work culture.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study has several limitations and delimitations that future research may address. First, the sample size was set to five HRLM from organizations in Michigan. Future research could include a larger sample, potentially constructed to represent

managers from different regions of the United States. Second, the unit of analysis of this multiple case study is an HRLM, which adds the risk of self-reporting bias. Future studies may include surveys of stakeholders by following a mixed method to provide a more holistic view of the effectiveness of the strategies to reduce workplace bullying. Using surveys in a mixed method could also address the participants that might not choose to disclose company information fully or honestly. This research focused on successful programs, and additional research on the difference in strategies in organizations that do not prioritize a positive work environment could provide further insights into how HRLM can encourage creating a favorable work culture. Finally, a longitudinal study of an organization's culture from experience before and after implementing a focused strategy may deepen understanding of workplace bullying.

This study referred to some strategies broadly. Line manager training was a focus of current participants. Further research could explore details of line manager training to identify successful education strategies. Similarly, current participants shared that creating a desired culture was an integral strategy, but further research could be conducted to identify the most effective approaches. Developing policies to support cultural initiatives was a recognized strategy. Further research could explore methods to refine further the effectiveness of suggested strategies. Researchers could use mixed methods and quantitative methods to explore strategies further to reduce workplace bullying.

Reflections

My inspiration to earn a doctoral degree came from my family. My parents were educated, and they encouraged me to follow formal education. My dad started his doctoral degree but did not finish it, which motivated me to earn this degree. I first read through a doctoral application 25 years ago when I was at a crossroads in my career path, and 3 years ago, I found myself in a position to begin my formal pursuit.

I chose bullying as a general topic based on an experience while teaching a class of students in 2018. I had a young man bullied in my classroom. This class coincided with the beginning of my doctoral study, and I chose to focus on bully prevention and reduction for my research. Because a DBA addresses business problems, I pivoted my focus to how workplace bullying affects the profits of organizations. I intended to reduce workplace bullying in the workforce, and my desire to address this incivility could have biased my approach to this study.

After dealing with the before-mentioned in-class bullying incident, I intended to address any bullying I witnessed. I thought understanding bullying and how to recognize it was vital. Completing this research has shown me that addressing bullying is more complex. I now understand that creating a culture that proactively addresses bullying is paramount. To reduce workplace bullying, all stakeholders must have a shared vision. Addressing workplace bullying is a complex task and requires proactive initiatives and efficient follow-up to any incidents.

My networking for participants put email invitations in front of dozens of HRLM. I posited that the HRLM chose in part to volunteer for the current study because they

were passionate about their employees and the effects of workplace bullying. This passion is an integral force behind their organizational programs. The passion that led them to volunteer is the same passion they applied to reduce workplace bullying at their organizations. I opine that a vital component of a civil work environment is a passionate HRLM willing to trumpet the cause.

Conclusion

Reducing workplace bullying is essential for an organization's performance and contributes to more robust employee engagement, retention, and happiness. This study explored strategies HRLM have used to develop a positive culture in an organization, leading to a supporting organizational structure. The strategies that emerged as themes from the data were organizational culture, employee wellness programs, and employee training. The findings of the current study included methods used by practitioners to integrate a positive culture and supporting programs for employee training. Implementing strategies supporting reduced bullying may create better work environments, more profitable organizations, and positive social change.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

1. Set the qualification parameters: (a) participant touts a successful workplace bullying program or (b) referral to an organization based on their workplace bullying program.
2. Make a list of potential participants with their email addresses.

Approach volunteers

1. Send an email outlining the program.
2. Identify participants, secure five participants from eligible volunteers.

Consent form

1. Send the consent form to willing participants.
2. Collect the returned emails and store emails in their specific file.
3. Follow-up call to confirm the information on the consent form, provide interview questions, address any concerns, and schedule the interview.
4. Assign the appropriate codes to each participant.

Interview

1. Meet the participant or begin the Zoom meeting.
2. Greet the participant.
3. Ensure the technology is working (turn on audio recorder/Zoom recording/ test for accuracy, ask if they have any pre-interview questions).
4. Discuss the availability of additional documents.
5. Begin the interview.
6. List each interview question.
7. Complete the interview, asking if there is anything else, extend thanks.
8. Turn off audio recorder/Zoom recorder, exit the Zoom meeting/ in-person interview.
9. Complete the audio recording.
10. Set the member checking interview date.

Post-interview:

1. Transcribe the data through NVivo.
2. Summarize the interview information.
3. Follow up interview with the participant to member check the interview information.