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Workplace Bullying: A Quantitative Study of Adult Victims

Joyce Lynn Walker
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Walden University 2016

Abstract

Workplace Bullying: A Quantitative Study of Adult Victims

by

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MS, Springfield College, 2000

MBA, Nova Southeastern University, 1998

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Organizational Psychology

Walden University

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Abstract

Workplace bullying has gained widespread attention as contributing to the increase in organizational costs and the reduction in employee productivity. Organizations and human resource departments have conducted studies and developed prevention programs to address bullies, but few studies or programs have focused on the role of victims in the onset of bullying. This quantitative study examined the relationship between bullying victimization in the workplace, focusing on personality traits, specific problem solving, and a victim's locus of control belief. A sample ($N = 94$) of male and female college students completed the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised, Heppner's Problem-Solving Inventory, Levenson's Locus of Control Scale, and the NEO-5 Factor Inventory. Data were initially analyzed using a 2-tailed MANCOVA with subsequent ANOVAs. Results showed that victims and nonvictims of workplace bullying had significantly different instrument scores. Specifically, victims scored significantly higher than nonvictims in Neuroticism, Approach/ Avoidance, Personal Control, and Powerful Others, whereas nonvictims' scores were significantly higher than victims for Extroversion related to workplace bullying. This study may contribute to social change by identifying and addressing the behaviors of individuals who could become the victims of workplace bullying and how to address victimization through educational awareness and training, allowing victims to be more proactive and reducing the risk of being bullied. Future studies are recommended to examine the relationship between bullied victims who score high on problem-solving and their locus of control.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Purpose of the Study.....	6
Research Questions and Hypotheses	7
Nature of the Study.....	8
Theoretical Base.....	9
Definitions of Terms.....	12
Assumptions.....	14
Limitations	14
Significance of the Study.....	14
Summary and Transition.....	15
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	17
Introduction.....	17
Literature Search.....	17
Workplace Bullying	18
Frequency and Type of Bullying.....	20
Impact of Workplace Bullying.....	21
Bullying Characteristics.....	23

Bullying Victim Personality Traits	24
Locus of Control	28
Prior Abuse in Bullying	31
Bullying Outcomes	31
Bullying and Gender	32
Types of Bullying Victims.....	34
Organizational Climate	38
Summary and Transition.....	39
Chapter 3: Methodology	40
Introduction.....	40
Research Questions and Hypotheses	40
Research Design.....	41
Sample and Setting	43
Instrumentation	44
Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised	44
NEO-Five Factor Inventory	46
Problem-Solving Inventory	47
Levenson’s LoC Scale.....	48
Data Collection and Analysis.....	50
Ethical Considerations	52
Summary and Transition.....	53

Chapter 4: Data Analysis	54
Introduction.....	54
Research Questions and Hypotheses	55
Demographics	56
Descriptive Statistics.....	57
Test of the Assumptions.....	57
Analysis.....	59
Personality Traits	60
Problem-Solving Skills	62
Locus of Control Beliefs	64
Summary	66
Transition	68
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations	69
Discussion.....	69
Summary of Findings.....	69
Limitations	74
Implications for Future Research.....	75
Social Implications.....	76
Conclusion	77
References	78
Appendix A: Overview of Instruments and Explanation of Process	89
Appendix B: Permission to Use Negative Attributes Questionnaire-Revised.....	92

Appendix C: Permission to Use Problem-Solving Inventory	93
Appendix D: Permission to Use Levenson's Locus of Control Scale	94
Appendix E: Demographics Questionnaire	95
Appendix F: Consent Form.....	96
Appendix G: Research Opportunity.....	98

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Gender and Victim Status.....	57
Table 2. MANOVA of Gender and Victim Status With Personality Traits, Problem-Solving Skills, and LoC Beliefs.....	58
Table 3. Pearson Chi-Square Test of Gender and Victim Status.....	59
Table 4. Estimated Marginal Means of Victim and Nonvictim Personality Traits	60
Table 5. Test of Between-Subjects Effects: Personality Type.....	61
Table 6. ANOVA: Personality Type.....	61
Table 7. Estimated Marginal Means of Victim and Nonvictim Problem-Solving Skills	63
Table 8. Test of Between-Subjects Effects: Problem-Solving Skills	63
Table 9. ANOVA: Problem-Solving Skills	64
Table 10. Estimated Marginal Means of Victim and Nonvictim LoC Beliefs	65
Table 11. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects: LoC Beliefs.....	65
Table 12. ANOVA: LoC Beliefs	66

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Bullying, once thought to be a behavior endemic to childhood, has made its way into the global workforce (Brodsky, 1976). Bullying can occur between customers or clients and workers, employees and employers, or employees and their peers (Brodsky, 1976). In many cases, the victims of workplace bullying abandon careers, lose friends and family, develop physical illnesses, and in worst-case scenarios, retaliate. The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2006) reported that 14,770 individuals were the victims of workplace homicide between 1992 and 2012, averaging more than 700 per year. These statistics reflected all categories of workplace violence.

Bullying is a less frequently reported event in the workplace that can produce serious consequences. This form of interpersonal violence has multiple names and definitions, but the results are the same. Bullying (Einarsen, 1999), mobbing (Leymann, 1996), and harassment (Brodsky, 1976) rob workers of their careers, are responsible for physical and mental health problems, and result in substantial losses to organizations in productivity and profits.

Background of the Study

To understand the true impact of workplace violence on U.S. businesses, I reviewed the breadth and depth of this type of violence. Workplace violence, often referred to as workplace aggression, has broad definitions: The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA, 2010) website defined workplace violence as “any act or

threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site. It ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide.” This definition includes “a spectrum of violence from offensive language to homicide” (OSHA, 2010). Work settings include buildings, parking lots, garages, client homes, business trips, or other business locations. OSHA also has included harassment, psychological trauma, verbal threats, obscene gestures or comments, stalking, and intimidation under this definition. These definitions supported the fact that workplace violence extends far beyond physical violence or aggression and can lead to serious injury or death.

LeBlanc and Barling (2004) divided workplace aggression into four categories, Type I to Type IV. In Type I, Criminal Intent, the perpetrators are random to the organizations and are driven by crime, usually robbery. This type of aggression and violence accounts for the majority of workplace deaths (LeBlanc & Barling, 2004). These individuals come from outside the organizations, and they perpetrate the majority of this violence (LeBlanc & Barling, 2004). In Type II, Aggression, there is a relationship between the perpetrators and the organizations. The individuals can be customers of establishments, clients of practices, or students of educational institutions (LeBlanc & Barling, 2004). In Type III, Aggression, insider-initiated aggression is the result of violence between or among current or former employees. Lastly, in Type IV, Domestic Violence, the perpetrators currently have or have had personal relationships with employees of the organizations. This type of aggression often is the result of domestic violence and comes with deadly results and enormous cost to organizations in time and

money (LeBlanc & Barling, 2004). It equates to nearly \$5 billion a year lost to organizations because of actions associated with domestic violence (Johnson & Indvik, 2001).

Throughout the literature, researchers have used several terms to describe associations and forms of bullying. These terms have included such as *harassment*, *mobbing*, and *psychological terror* (Leymann, 1996). Bullying appears to be the most common term used by U.S. researchers and writers. Mobbing is the more frequently used term in European countries, and is generally associated with groups of individuals, as opposed to single individuals or bullies (Zapf, 1999). Mobbing refers to “acts performed in a sensitive manner that still produce stigmatizing effects” (Leymann, 1996, p. 168), whereas bullying is associated with acts of physical aggression (Leymann, 1996). However, these terms are often used interchangeably discussions of bullying activities in the workplace (Zapf, 1999). For acts or events to be considered bullying, they must be perceived as negative or unfair and must take place between the alleged victims and the perpetrators (Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2005).

Bullied victims in the workplace are more vulnerable when threatened with harassment, aggression, interpersonal problems, and coercion (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997). Harassment is another aspect and expression of bullying that victims view as personal attacks that play on their personal inadequacies (Brodsky, 1976; Leymann, 1996). Harassment in the workplace has long been associated with either deliberate or indirect sexual offenses toward women (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997). However, harassment on a larger scale can be directed equally toward men and women, and it can include

scapegoating, name-calling, undue work pressure, and physical abuse (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997).

Randall (1997) suggested that a clear delineation should be made between harassment and bullying for two reasons. First, applying the term harassment to adult bullying might lessen the seriousness of actual aggression taking place. Second, bullying often equates to physical acts that typically are not part of harassment (Randall, 1997). As detailed as Brodsky (1996), in identifying the problems that workers in the United States were facing, no action was taken at the time. Although the United States has ignored workplace bullying, researchers in countries such as Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland have acknowledged the need to address the issue of workplace bullying or mobbing (Einarsen, 1999; Leymann, 1996).

A study on the impact of bullying was conducted by Leymann and Gustafsson (1996) in Sweden, a country where it was predicted that 120,000 new victims of bullying would appear each year. The researchers reported that of the 4.4 million male and female individuals in the Swedish workforce, 154,000 had been subjected to some form of mobbing. The BLS (2006) completed a survey in 2005 designed to collect data on previous violence. It estimated that 5% of the 7.1 million private businesses in the United States had experienced some type of violence in their workplace settings over a 12-month period prior to completing the survey. The Workplace Bully Survey completed by the Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) in 2010 found that 35% of the U.S. workforce reported being bullied at work, along with another 15% reporting being witness to such events.

Statement of the Problem

The seriousness of bullying was first identified more than 30 years ago as a contributor to lost wages, lost productivity, and lost employees (Brodsky, 1976). Workplace bullying in the United States was not understood as a prominent factor in workplace culture until recently, and because of this lack of acknowledgment and understanding, bullying was largely regarded as a childhood and schoolyard issue. When the existence of workplace bullying was finally acknowledged, neither organizations nor researchers realized the extent or cost of bullying to employees and organizations. Every year, organizations in the United States lose millions of dollars to illness, lawsuits, and lack of productivity resultant from bullying (Namie & Namie, 2009). Along with these costs, hundreds of hours are spent training managers and teaching staff how to recognize and prevent workplace violence (Namie & Namie, 2009).

Researchers who have been exploring bullying and workplace behaviors have just begun to consider the victims' personality traits as a factor. So far, their results have indicated that the victims of bullying display personality traits different from those of nonvictims. Glasø, Matthiesen, Nielsen, and Einarsen (2007) have identified the victims of bullying as appearing more anxious, less agreeable, and less conscientious, and as displaying more neuroticism and extroversion than participants who they identified as nonbullied. One-third of the organizations surveyed by Glasø et al. reported negative results as an outcome of this behavior. Still, the majority did not reform their current policies. In addition, over 9% of the organizations had no set policies to address violence in the workplace.

Results of another WBI survey (Namie, 2014) showed that an estimated 65.5 million U.S. citizens self-identified as either being the victims of workplace bullying or witnessing acts of bullying. Twenty-seven percent of U.S. citizens noted that they had suffered some form of abuse at work, 21% of workers indicated they had witnessed abuse, and 72% reported being aware that such activities were happening in their workplace (Namie, 2014). Identifying the traits or characteristics common to the victims of workplace bullying will benefit organizations as they attempt to design programs to prevent workplace bullying, and individuals who self-identify as workplace victims. Identifying specific characteristics can empower victims to be proactive as well as prevent future episodes of workplace bullying.

In this study, I focused on internally initiated workplace bullying, defined as aggressive actions either between employers and employees or between coworkers. Specifically, I explored the role that the victims' personalities might play in these often-hostile interactions. My primary focus was on victims' personality traits, their problem-solving or coping skills, and their locus of control (LoC) beliefs related to workplace bullying. Chapter 2 includes details regarding how and why bullying occurs and what effect it has on the victims.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the role of victims when acts of harassment, mobbing, and bullying occur in the workplace. Specifically, it examined how victims' personality characteristics, problem-solving skills in resolving conflict, and LoC beliefs relate to workplace bullying.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

To address the gap in the literature, I used three research questions (RQs) and the associated hypotheses to guide the study:

RQ1: Are there personality traits that are significantly different between bullied and nonbullied participants?

H_{01} : Bullied and nonbullied individuals in the workplace, as indicated by the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R), do not have significantly different personality traits, as measured by the NEO-Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI).

H_{a1} : Bullied and nonbullied individuals in the workplace, as indicated by the NAQ-R, do have significantly different personality traits, as measured by the NEO-FFI.

RQ2: Are there specific problem-solving skills that the victims of workplace bullying, in comparison to nonbullied individuals, use in appraising and resolving conflict within the workplace?

H_{02} : Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, do not use any specific problem-solving skills that are different from those of nonvictims, as measured by the Problem-Solving Inventory (PSI).

H_{a2} : Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, do use specific problem-solving skills that are different from those of nonvictims, as measured by the PSI.

RQ3: Are there specific LoC beliefs that victims of workplace bullying use when compared to nonbullied individuals?

H_{03} : Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, will not identify with specific beliefs related to LoC, as measured by Levenson's LoC Scale (LoCS), as compared to nonvictims, as measured by the NAQ-R.

H_{a3} : Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, will identify with specific beliefs related to LoC, as measured by Levenson's LoCS, as compared to nonvictims, as measured by the NAQ-R.

Nature of the Study

In this quantitative study, I focused on the specific characteristics, if any of the victims of bullying in the workplace and the ways in which the victims managed such conflict. Specifically, I considered the victims' personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs to identify potential relationships between these factors and victimization. The study entailed a quasi-experimental design, using two subsample groupings determined by the results of the NAQ-R. To ensure that adequate data were gathered, I used poststratified random sampling for subsequent data collection sessions until an equal distribution of bullied and nonbullied victims was determined using a weighted mean for gender. A total of 94 participants were involved. Using a stratification process in which specific subgroups were weighted assisted in reducing the probability of error (Walker, 2010) and ensured that the two groupings had adequate distributions of bullied and nonbullied participants (Mitchell & Jolley, 2004). The independent variable (IV) identified individuals as victims or nonvictims of workplace bullying. I chose a two-tailed MANCOVA based upon the multiple dependent variables (DVs) and the potential for covariates. The MANCOVA gave me the opportunity to measure between-subject

analyses with more than two conditions. Because there were several DVs (i.e., personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs), I used a MANCOVA statistical test with an F ratio to analyze the relationships between the data.

Theoretical Base

For the theoretical framework, I used Bandura's (2002) social cognitive theory (SCT) and his theory of self-efficacy (1977) which focus on how individuals perceive themselves through their choices and actions. These theories help to explain how the victims of workplace bullying view their behavior as part of the events in the workplace. I also used two of Rotter's theories to understand the research regarding the personalities of victims of workplace bullying. Rotter's (1966) LoC theory addresses how victims perceive themselves, and his aspect of social learning theory (Rotter, 1960) focuses on how they might cope as victims.

I chose Bandura's (1977, 2002) and Rotter's (1960, 1966) theories for this study because of the variance between what the two theories support. In addition to his SCT of 2002, Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy supports the belief that individuals are responsible for the success of tasks they perform. Rotter's (1966) LoC posits that behaviors can affect the outcomes of tasks (Friedman & Schustack, 2006), and his aspect of social learning theory (1960) posits that individuals possess characteristics along a continuum and that these characteristics are predicted by internal or external environmental cues or drives.

The basis of the rewards and reinforcement depends on how individuals perceive their extent of control (Rotter, 1966). If individuals believe that they can accomplish

specific tasks or obtain rewards, they act in alignment with the chance of obtaining rewards in what Rotter called individuals' "expectancy." However, if individuals view their relationship between outcome and reward as fate or luck, they tend to believe that they have no control over events. This absence of control permits environmental conditions to become the predictor of behavioral outcomes (Rotter, 1966). Spector and O'Connell (1994) provided a clear example of LoC in a study that focused on personality traits, job stress, and loss. The goal of their study was to investigate the relationship among Type A personality, negative affectivity, and LoC. Spector and O'Connell hypothesized that individuals with high external LoC would report higher levels of job stress than individuals with high internal LoC would.

The basis of Bandura's (2002) SCT is the contention that individuals directly affect and influence the outcomes of their lives. The SCT was founded on three concepts: (a) the focus on individuals and their interactions with others, (b) the impact of others on their lives, and (c) how the individuals' behaviors were shaped because of such interactions. The central part of this theory is self-efficacy. Bandura stated that "self-efficacy is the belief that individuals regulate their functioning through cognitive, motivational, affective and decisional processes" (p. 270) that can affect behaviors in positive or negative ways. By observing responses from performance feedback, individuals learn to shape future performance.

Learning responses shape behaviors and provide guidance to individuals to help them to adjust their actions to gain positive outcomes and avoid punishing ones (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977) referred to this cognitive process as efficacy expectations, which

create the basis for individual expectations. Outcome expectancy is the assumption that a behavior will produce a certain outcome (Bandura, 1977). The relevance of efficacy expectations and outcomes to the victims of bullying lies within the victims' perceptions of self-efficacy.

Individuals' choice making is based upon their perceptions of success and how they cope with given situations (Bandura, 1977). If victims are fearful and apprehensive, and avoid situations, they tend to believe that the situations exceed their coping skills, and they perceive themselves as incapable of dealing with the situations (Bandura, 1977). Individuals who believe that they are ineffective and have little chance of influencing their environment, even if the potential for success exists, sustain an environment of failure and lose control of the environment (Bandura, 1991).

Individuals who display stress and depression, and have altered thinking, develop the inability to cope and function within their environments (Bandura, 1989). Their perceptions of their capabilities also tend to affect how they experience stress and depression. Motivation diminishes if they feel taxed, and they become emotionally detached, which alters their thinking directly and indirectly. This type of thinking eventually leads individuals to believe that they are deficient, so they begin to perceive their environment as dangerous and limit their level of functioning by imposing constraints and barriers (Lazarus & Launier, 1978; Meichenbaum, 1977; Sarason, 1975, as cited in Bandura, 1989). Conversely, individuals with a strong sense of efficacy persevere; develop; and find ways to impact and control their environments, despite the obstacles (Bandura, 1991).

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, I developed the following operational definitions:

Agreeableness: A trait that includes an individual's fundamental altruism, capacity for sympathy, willing to help, and belief that others will be equally helpful in return (McCrae & Costa, 1987).

Bullying: According to the NAQ-R, this term refers to “a situation where one or several individuals persistently perceive themselves to be on the receiving end of negative actions from one or several persons, in a situation where the target of bullying has difficulty in defending him or herself against these actions” (Einarsen & Hoel, 2001, p. 1).

Conflict: “An emergent property of relationships that appear during interactions between two or more people” (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2005, p. 166).

Conscientiousness: A personality trait characterized by purposeful, strong-willed, and determined action (McCrae & Costa, 1987).

Coping: The activity of and behaviors associated with “managing the demands of stressful transactions” (Folkman, Lazarus, Pimley, & Novacek, 1987, p. 172).

Extraversion: A trait of individuals who are sociable, prefer large groups, and are assertive, active, and talkative. They like excitement and stimulation, are upbeat, and tend to be cheerful (McCrae & Costa, 1987).

Locus of Control (LoC): Defined using Levenson's adaption of Rotter's LoCS (Bourgeois, Levenson, & Wagner, 1980), this term refers to the extent to which individuals believe that the positive or negative reinforcement of behaviors is the result of

the consequences of their actions (internal) or that these types of reinforcements come from chance, luck, or the control of others (external).

Neuroticism: A trait characterized by negative feelings such as fear, guilt, sadness, anger, or disgust, and a proclivity for highly irrational ideas, poor impulse control, and poor coping and stress management skills (McCrae & Costa, 1987).

Openness to experience: A characteristic of individuals who are willing to look at their inner and outer worlds to entertain novel ideas and unconventional values. They experience positive and negative emotions more keenly and tend to be divergent thinkers (McCrae & Costa, 1987).

Personality and the Big 5 personality traits: “Defined characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors over time and across situations” (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007, p. 1080). According to McCrae and Costa (1987), five basic personality factors that are relatively stable across all ages and cultures are neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

Problem solving: A complex interplay of cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes used to adapt to internal or external demands or challenges (Heppner & Krauskopf, 1987).

Victim: An individual who perceives her- or himself as “having been exposed, momentarily or repeatedly, to aggressive acts emanating from one or more persons” (Aquino & Bradfield, 1997, p. 526). I used The NAQ-R to identify the victims of workplace bullying based upon the scores of this instrument.

Assumptions

I assumed that the participants would respond honestly to the survey questions, and that the test instruments were valid and reliable in measuring personality, problem-solving skills, and LoC, and in identifying victims of bullying in the workplace. I also assumed that the participants would have adequate time to respond to the instruments and would not feel obligated to please me by altering their responses.

Limitations

First, the study was limited by the potential lack of diversity in the sample. The participants were primarily of European American descent, and only English-speaking participants were recruited, even though Spanish versions of the NEO-FFI and the NAQ-R are available. A Spanish translator was not available for this particular study. Another limitation was geographic. This study was conducted in a specific school in a specific town and state; therefore, the data and the results were specific to this location. The last limitation was that the participants had to be at least 18 years of age and employed in job types that did not include self-employment. These limitations, combined with the limited sample size, prohibited the accurate representation of the target population, meaning that the results might not be generalizable.

Significance of the Study

This study has significance for victims and organizations. From a monetary standpoint, with increasing competition for market share and an unstable economy, organizations cannot afford to ignore the factors contributing to workplace bullying. The National Safety Council (2010) estimated that between 10% and 52% of the victims' time

at work is spent seeking allies, avoiding the bullies, or plotting revenge. The damage to organizations can be irreversible in terms of the time and money spent on court costs, health care, employee turnover, retraining, and productivity (Namie & Namie, 2009).

For the victims of bullying, the significance of this study is that the results might broaden the current understanding of the influence of personality and other factors on becoming the victims of bullying. This information can be empowering in identifying crucial components regarding how personality and problem-solving skills might contribute to interactions with others. This study also has implications for positive social change by providing workers and organizations with another avenue for addressing and preventing workplace bullying. Early identification of the factors contributing to workplace bullying will increase awareness and facilitate the development of strategies to create a platform that can acknowledge and address such behaviors. The results of this study augment the currently limited research on the influence of personality traits on bullying victimization.

Summary and Transition

Bullying is endemic in the contemporary workplace. The consequences extend far beyond the victims, impacting family members, friends, coworkers, and organizations as a whole. Identifying the bullies is not enough. It is important to understand the role of the victims in order to create a proactive approach that organizations and victims can use to deal with workplace bullying. The purpose of this quantitative study was explore the role of victims when acts of harassment, mobbing, and bullying occur in the workplace.

Specifically, I examined how victims' personality characteristics, problem-solving skills in resolving conflict, and LoC relate to workplace bullying.

In Chapter 2, I present a review of literature on workplace bullying, bullies, and victims of workplace bullying. In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology of the study. In Chapter 4, I review the results of the research, and in Chapter 5 I discuss findings and offer recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an overview of workplace bullying and identify the factors (i.e., personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs) that can contribute to becoming the victim of workplace bullying. I also look at the impact of workplace bullying on individuals and organizational culture, and explore whether the victims of workplace bullying can be more proactive in responding to or preventing bullying events.

Literature Search

I identified articles for this review using online resources such as PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, SocINDEX, Academic Search Premier, Business Source Complete, Sage and Mental Measurement Yearbook, as well as international, national, state, and local websites on occupational health and safety. A search of the terms *victim* and *workplace* in the PsycArticles database yielded only 18 results; a search for *workplace bully* yielded no results. When I added other search engines such as ERIC and PsycBook, results increased 169 for *workplace victim* and 1,617 for *bully victim*. However, not all of these sources directly related to bullying and work. Keyword searches involved variations of the following terms: *victim, bullying, bullies, personality, personality types, personality styles, management styles, managers, workplace bullying, locus of control, problem solving, harassment, mobbing and organizational climate, behavior, ethics, and violence at work*. After reviewing literature related to violence at work and statistics from OSHA websites on violence, I narrowed the search to workplace bullying. Using the term

bullying to search for information in Google brought terms such as *mobbed* and *harassed*, along with other information about school bullying. I subsequently searched for other keywords including *targets, interpersonal violence, victimization, bully-victim cycle, power, self-efficacy, five factor model, Bandura, Rotter, Levenson, negative acts, negative affectivity, perpetrators, aggression, discrimination, Big Five, McCrae, Goldberg, and Costa.*

Workplace Bullying

According to Leymann (1996), mobbing or bullying can be viewed as a continuum over time. The first interaction is critical because it is when the incidents or the defining events unfold for the victims. These events generally are rooted in conflict. These initial negative interactions might even result in the separation of victims from their coworkers. Workplace bullying generally follows a pattern of escalation of negative interactions, misguided actions, or misinformation among workers that leads to management involvement. Long-term subtle behaviors can stem from these primary events and lead to stigmatizing consequences for the victims (Leymann, 1996). It is during this later stage that victims often are singled out and are subject to personal attacks by bullies and management. This cycle continues until the victims are labeled or portrayed as difficult and unable to work with others (Leymann, 1996). Finally, the victims leave their jobs because of illness or social isolation through either expulsion or systematic removal due to stigmatization in the workplace (Leymann, 1996). Sixty-one percent of victims will lose their jobs by either leaving the organizations or by being fired; 78% will lose their specific jobs in the organizations (Kreimer, 2013).

Brodsky (1976) defined harassment as a broad term describing the totality of such aggression in the U.S. workforce. He saw harassment as “both generic and specific” and “encompassing behaviors from teasing and humor to verbal aggression and physical abuse” (p. 2). Einarsen (1999) described bullying as the systematic persecution of coworkers, superiors, or subordinates that can cause severe social, psychosomatic, and psychological problems if it continues. The WBI (Namie, 2014) further defined bullying as the repeated and health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators that take one or more of the following forms: verbal abuse; threatening, humiliating, or offensive behavior/actions; or work interference.

For incidents to be identified as bullying, they must occur over specific periods of time. The individuals who are subjected to harassment, humiliation, intimidation, or punishment must feel that they are in positions of inferiority and experience such behaviors for periods lasting longer than a single incident (Zapf & Gross, 2001). Einarsen (1999) wrote, “Bullying is not an either or phenomenon, but rather a gradually evolving process” (p. 19). This process allows victims to become isolated and subject to discrete aggression. This pattern of behavior results in physical and psychological damage to the victims (Einarsen, 1999).

Aggressive behaviors can lead to aggressive acts. These behaviors include trait anger (a personality trait that predisposes individuals to experience anger over time) and negative affectivity (individuals’ perceptions of themselves as being in distress). Individuals with prior histories of exposure to violence become more susceptible to violence (Douglas & Martinko, 2001). Other contributors to workplace aggression are

alcohol and drug use, along with organizational culture and organizational climate (LeBlanc & Barling, 2004). Predatory bullying involves innocent victims and takes place without apparent justification. The victims might simply be in situations where the bullies are exploiting their need for power (Einarsen, 1999).

Frequency and Type of Bullying

It has been difficult to define bullying in terms of the acts involved and the frequency of those acts. Leymann (1996) defined bullying or mobbing by its frequency, stating that it must occur at least once per week for at least 6 months. Although this quantifiable description serves as a useful guide, bullying is still difficult to measure. Leymann applied the parameters of frequency and time to explain that the high frequency and long duration of hostile influences can result in deficits in social and psychological well-being as well as the development of psychosomatic problems for the victims. Leymann's parameters led to the creation of standards to measure the effects of bullying on individuals.

Without a clear definition of bullying, researchers have focused on the frequency and intensity of the acts of bullying. Einarsen (1999) compared bullying to Allport's model of how prejudice manifests. The first phase, antilocution, starts as small talk among the inner group about the victims. The next phase is avoidance, followed by open harassment, discrimination, humiliation, and extermination. In this final phase, the victims are subjected to physical attack. Einarsen divided bullying into two categories: predatory and dispute-related. The victims of predatory bullying are considered nothing more than easy targets to the bullies. Often, bullies use the victims to demonstrate their

power. Victims can be members of an out-group not supported by leadership. These victims generally become easy targets of unresolved frustration and stress within the organization.

Dispute-related bullying generally involves work-related disputes that can escalate into hostile scenarios. There are three kinds of dispute-related bullying: aggressive behaviors, malingering, and resentment or unfair treatment. When dispute-related bullying results in interpersonal conflicts, they are highly emotional situations that can escalate into personal attacks on the victims' self-worth. This type of bullying might leave both parties feeling like victims (Einarsen, 1999).

Impact of Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying has long-term consequences for organizations, family members, and friends of victims and bullies. Bassman (1992) discussed the price that employees and organizations pay as the result of bullying and violence in the workplace. According to Bassman, there are direct costs, indirect costs, and opportunity costs. Increased disability claims, Workers' Compensation claims, medical expenses, and lawsuits are all examples of direct costs related to the victims. Indirect costs include low productivity, decreased quality of work, high turnover, more absenteeism, dissatisfied customers, and an unstable work environment that can escalate into sabotage by employees. Opportunity costs are related to decreased employee commitment, loss of creativity, and lack of motivation (Bassman, 1992). Harrison Psychological Associates (as cited in Farrell, 2002) conducted a study of 9,000 federal employees over a 2-year

period and found that costs exceeding \$180 million were attributed to lost time and decreased productivity, both of which were the result of bullying.

From an organizational standpoint, bullying and mobbing can lead to decreases in social support and a less hospitable social climate, creating problems in the flow of information inside organizations (Zapf, 1999). Bullying can exact a heavy toll on organizations. In 1992, 25% of the workforce over the age of 55 years retired early because they were experiencing illnesses related to stressful work conditions and mobbing (Leymann, 1996). As far back as 1992, Bassman asserted that stress-related problems, including depression resulting from abuse in the workplace, cost upward of \$150 billion annually in health insurance, disability claims, and lost productivity. Sleep disorders also have been found to be 3 times more prevalent in the victims as well as the witnesses of bullying (Niedhammer et al., as cited in Lovell & Lee, 2011). Exposure to workplace bullying also has been found to increase the number of complaints related to psychological and psychosomatic health (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002). Among the complaints have been increased levels of anxiety, depression, and cardiovascular problems (Duffy & Perry, 2007; Kivimaki et al., 2003; Niedhammer et al., 2006; Vartia, 2001, as cited in Lovell & Lee, 2011).

Another interesting response was that the majority of nonbullied participants in Rayner's (1997) study indicated that they would seek and use support from colleagues, union, or management. The bullied group indicated that they would do nothing or would leave their jobs. Rayner noted that 53% of the respondents felt that they had been the victims of bullying at some point during their working careers. Rayner argued that the

absence of a clear definition of bullying could have accounted for the reported frequency of occurrences.

Bullying Characteristics

Researchers have described bullying, particularly in regard to schoolchildren, as an abuse of power over individuals who are more vulnerable for the sole purpose of causing distress (Craig & Pepler, 2003). As such relationships progress, an imbalance forms, and the bullies increase their power over the victims. Research has indicated that bullies are reinforced by actions cultivated over time, and that bullying behaviors might actually be intergenerational (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Children whose parents lacked self-control, lacked problem-solving skills, and displayed poor judgment tend to bully their own children. These children lack empathy and feel the need to dominate others (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Research on school bullying has raised questions about the development of bullies as they move from the educational setting to the workforce (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Once peer and aggression patterns form, rather than outgrowing the behaviors, a percentage of young people who bully will carry these bullying behaviors throughout their lives (Craig & Pepler, 2003).

Several factors have been identified as contributing to the development of bullies. Early in life, bullies develop attitudes or cognitive structures in which they need little, if any, provocation or justification for their aggressive behaviors. Bullies make unrealistic judgments about others and process social information inaccurately. Bullies believe that revenge, hostility, and violence are reasonable and short-term problem-solving methods (Randall, 1997).

Bullying Victim Personality Traits

There has been limited literature published on the personality traits of victims of bullying. Two major studies on personality have researched the relationship between personality and victimization. Coyne, Seigne, and Randall (2000) examined and compared the personality traits of self-identified bullied victims and nonbullied individuals. The two groups were determined based upon bullying status (i.e., victim or nonvictim) and similarities in gender, race, age, job status, marital status, community involvement, and social environment. In the second study, Glasø et al. (2007) used the NAQ to determine the bullied and nonbullied statuses of the participants, matching group results by age, gender, work task, and demographics.

The impact of bullying can be devastating to the victims (Brodsky, 1976). Bullying in the form of harassment can lead to humiliation, anger, alienation, revenge, loss of work, and loss of family and friends resulting from isolation (Brodsky, 1976). According to Davenport, Schwartz, and Elliott (2005), mobbing as another form of bullying can have a dramatic impact on individuals who identify with their jobs. Mobbing violates individuals on personal and professional levels, robbing them of professional integrity and causing self-doubt. Victims of mobbing often abandon career dreams or feel unfulfilled, eventually turning away from job commitment (Davenport et al., 2005).

Leymann (1996) surmised that stress can be the result of poor psychosocial conditions at work that can lead to individual frustrations. Stress from bullying can manifest in different ways. Vartia (2001) interviewed 949 Norwegian workers who were members of the Federal Municipal Reserve and found that demeaning or offensive

judgments of their work performance contributed to their general stress. Personal assaults, in combination with critical reviews of work performance, produced mental stress. Self-confidence was correlated to meaningless work tasks and oppression in the workplace setting (Vartia, 2001).

Studies of the personality traits of the victims of bullying have resulted in interesting discussions about their impact on the instigation of bullying toward the victims. Conye et al. (2000) reported that victims who have hostile or agitating personalities might be the authors of their own victimization. For example, the victims of bullying can be quick to anger (Conye et al., 2000; Solberg, Olweus, & Endresen, 2007) and tend to escalate conflicts, keeping them going until they move from the role of aggressor to that of victim because of their inability to perceive their challenges accurately. Children with agitating personalities are driven by misguided reward systems and the thought of hurting others, and the thought of being hurt or not gaining any reward did not disturb them (Randall, 1997; Solberg et al., 2007).

Research on school-related bullying has identified two types of victims: passive/submissive and provocative or guilty. Passive/Submissive victims account for 80% to 85% of all school bullying victims (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Bullying victims have been described as submissive, anxious, and sensitive, and wanting to avoid conflict (Coyne et al., 2000). This portrayal has been supported by other researchers (e.g., Einarsen, 1999; Leymann, 1996; Zapf, 1999).

Research on the personality traits of the victims and the dynamics of workplace bullying has been limited. Using the NAQ to measure workplace bullying and the

International Personality Item Pool, a 50-item tool that measures the Big Five personality traits of extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and intellect, Glasø et al. (2007) examined personality differences between the victims and nonvictims of workplace bullying. Using two subsamples in two separate phases, Glasø et al. collected data via anonymous mailings to 221 original participants in the first group and 72 others in the second group who self-identified as being bullied. Participants were matched with identified nonbullied participants using demographic variables and type of work performed. A two-step cluster analysis was used to detect any additional subgroups within the victim samples (Glasø et al., 2007).

Glasø et al. (2007) found that the victims of bullying displayed personality traits different from those of the nonvictims on four of the Big Five dimensions, appearing more anxious, less agreeable, and less conscientious, and displaying more neuroticism and extroversion than participants identified as nonbullied. In addition, Glasø et al. reported personality results for the victims of bullying in their study that were different from those of earlier studies. Their victims of bullying had much lower scores in agreeableness and conscientiousness than the nonvictim group did. Previous results had supported the claim that victims can be agreeable and conscientious (Glasø et al., 2007). A comparison of cluster groups also revealed that the victims of bullying scored higher on the Big Five dimensions of emotional stability and intellect (Glasø et al., 2007). Even though the results yielded some differences in personality traits between victims and nonvictims, Glasø et al. contended that there was no defined profile of the victims of

workplace bullying at that time. The researchers did determine, however, that personality should play an important role in understanding bullying victimization.

From a social change implication, exploring the personality traits of the victims of workplace bullying could provide opportunities for the development of effective interventions within organizations as well as provide managers who are responsible for hiring new employees insight into the relationship between personality and bullying victimization. This information can facilitate the identification of potential victims or enhance the culture of the workplace.

Gandolfo (1995) conducted a study related to workplace aggression and victim personality by reviewing the records of individuals who had filed insurance claims based upon harassment. The 47 victims were administered the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2); the control group comprised another 82 members who had not claimed harassment. The results showed no significant differences between the two groups; however, Gandolfo did find that the majority of claimants presented with emotional complaints stemming from anger and revenge that were the result of the alleged harassment.

In another study, Matthiesen and Einarsen (2001) hypothesized that personality can contribute to the likelihood of individuals becoming the victims of workplace bullying. The sample comprised 85 participants who self-identified as the victims of workplace bullying over an extended period. The participants came from diverse work backgrounds. Twenty-two respondents indicated that they were currently being victimized. Eighty-five percent stated that they were the victims of bullying by

supervisors or managers; 50% were the victim of bullying from coworkers. The participants were administered the MMPI-2 and the NAQ.

Results of the study by Matthiesen and Einarsen (2001) yielded elevated personality profiles of the victims in Scales 3 (Hysteria), 2 (Depression), and 1 (Hypochondriasis). Clinical studies have found that hysteria is higher among women than men (Graham, 2000). Matthiesen and Einarsen also reported this result in their study. Scale 2 and Scale 1 are clinical scales indicative of severe psychological disturbance. These scale combinations correlate with depression, suspicion, anxiousness, and marital problems.

Among the more comprehensive studies regarding victims' personality traits and bullying was one conducted in the United Kingdom by Conye et al. (2000), who focused on the personality traits of workplace victims. Conye et al. studied 120 employees from various jobs and skill levels using two groups of 60, one group of identified victims and a second group of nonbullied workers. Using semistructured interviews and the ICES Personality Inventory to obtain their data, the researchers concluded that there were significant differences in the personality traits of victims and nonvictims of bullying. The victims' personality traits indicated more suspicion, more anxiety, and more conflict avoidance.

Locus of Control

LoC determines where individuals' reinforcement of behaviors lies. Personality can be reinforced internally or externally, and each method of reinforcement can have a direct impact on personality. According to Rotter (1990), LoC refers to the extent to

which individuals believe that the positive or negative reinforcement of behaviors is the result of the consequences of their actions (internal) or that these types of reinforcements come from, luck, or the control of others (external). To understand LoC, it is important to address individuals' perceptions, particularly when examining the coping behaviors of the victims of bullying. Individuals with internal LoC will perceive that the consequences of their actions and contingencies are the result of their behaviors, whereas individuals whose LoC is external believe that the outcomes are the result of luck, fate, or other events beyond their control (Strickland, 1989).

Researchers have focused on various aspects of LoC in adults and children. Studies have ranged from how health is affected by internal or external LoC, to how career and life changes are managed if internal LoC is dominant. Spector and O'Connell (1994) studied personality traits, job stress, and loss related to LoC. They offered insight into the relationship among Type A personality, negative affectivity, and LoC. In their study, Spector and O'Connell hypothesized that individuals with high external LoC would report higher levels of job stress than individuals with internal LoC would.

For the LoC aspect of their study, Spector and O'Connell (1994) administered the Work Locus of Control Scale, a 16-item Likert instrument, to undergraduate students. The responses range from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). High scores indicate external LoC. Results indicated that LoC corresponded to the job stress related to autonomy, which is generally related to control of one's work. Other correlations with LoC were interpersonal conflict and role ambiguity. In support of previous research, Spector and O'Connell found that individuals with internal LoC experienced less job-

related stress, were more satisfied, and had less anxiety at work, whereas those with external LoC were more anxious at work.

Several researchers have investigated the ways in which LoC is related to age. Lumpkin (as cited in Knopp, 1987) conducted a survey of 3,009 households of various ages and found that younger adults ranging in age from 25 to 59 years aligned more with internal LoC than did older adults ages 60 to 83 years. Hale and Cochran (1986) researched 655 college alumni and found that young adults ages 20 to 49 years varied in LoC beliefs from adults ranging in age from 65 to 89 years. The older adults scored significantly higher in external LoC, which Hale and Cochran believed was the result of age-related changes in physical health and social engagement. Individuals 50 to 64 years of age presented no significant difference in their LoC beliefs from either the younger or the older group.

Using the results of the aforementioned studies on the relationship between age and LoC beliefs, Knopp (1987) hypothesized that individuals of work age are more external in their LoC than those too young to work or past their working age. Using data from 34 schoolteachers and a modified version of Rotter's 29-item I-E Scale, Knopp's results supported the hypothesis that during peak work years, frequency of expectations, work controls, and reinforcements lead to individuals having higher levels of internal LoC.

Gender ability and LoC were researched by Manger and Eikeland (2000), who administered a revised version of the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale to a sample of Norwegian students ages 14 and 15 years. The original 40-item scale held

yes/no questions. Manger and Eikeland revised the instrument to include strongly yes, weak yes, strongly no, and weak no responses. The other instrument was the Matrix Analogies Test-Short, which they used to measure nonverbal reasoning abilities.

The study results indicated that girls had a higher total internal LoC than the boys did and that the boys had a higher LoC on items referring to belief in luck (Manger & Eikeland, 2000). The results also indicated that the girls had a higher internal LoC related to belief in the impact of school (Manger & Eikeland, 2000). The results of this study were in contrast to previous studies that had identified a relationship between high internal LoC and high ability.

Prior Abuse in Bullying

Anderson (2002) used a mixed methods study to explore the relationship between the personalities of nurses and incidents of abuse. Looking at the relationship between prior childhood abuse and frequency of abuse in adulthood, Anderson used the Workplace Violence Questionnaire and the Demographics Survey and the Child Abuse and Trauma Scale to survey 65 participants from various age ranges, clinical settings, and educational backgrounds. Results indicated that the survivors of childhood abuse were more likely to become either victims of abuse in adulthood or witnesses to workplace abuse (Anderson, 2002).

Bullying Outcomes

Bullying can impact victims in ways that can range from difficulty sleeping to alcohol and drug abuse, family and marital problems, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Manifestations of PTSD include re-experiencing the trauma; having persistent

nightmares; and feeling intense psychological stress, aggression, and guilt (Randall, 1997). PTSD can occur in victims who are unable to leave their jobs because of age or other constraints, meaning that these victims cannot escape the abusive environment (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996). Einarsen (1999) found that the victims of bullying who experienced low job satisfaction were unsatisfied with leadership. In contrast to this behavior, Davenport et al. (2005) found that the victims whom they interviewed were of exceptional character, intelligent, competent, and dedicated to their profession, going as far as to say they possessed qualities of emotional intelligence by being able to problem solve and work things out.

Bullying and Gender

Men experiencing nonviolent harassment and other indirect forms of bullying such as social exclusion and rumor have been found to experience lower or negative correlations to job satisfaction (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997). The WBI (Namie, 2014) estimated that 51% of men and 46% of women have been either the direct targets of bullying or the witnesses to bullying. Data have supported differences in the individuals who bully. Rayner (1997) found similarities in the number of reports of bullying by male and female victims. She also found that men and women bullied women equally as often and that women seldom bullied men. As Randall (1997) wrote, “The core problem of the victim is with interpersonal; relationships and the lack of mechanisms to be assertive against a would-be dominator” (p. 89). One victim described himself in Randall’s study “as though he had VICTIM written above his head in neon” (p. 89).

Rayner (1997) found that men and women bullied female employees in the workplace almost equally. Reports of men being bullied by women at work were rare, with a rate of only 6%. Individuals who were actual victims were less proactive than nonbullied victims in responding to bullying. Of the 530 nonbullied participants in Rayner's study, 8% said that they would leave their jobs; 27% of the bullied group said that they would leave. Harrison's study (as cited in Farrell, 2002) also indicated that by sex, 42% of the victims were women and 15% were men. The WBI (2007) did find that men are more inclined to bully in public and women generally bully their victims behind closed doors.

Norwegian male employees in the marine engineering industry were asked to complete the NAQ to find out to how often during the last 6 months they had experienced direct or indirect harassment (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997). Direct harassment involved an open and obvious attack; indirect harassment involved subtle behaviors such as isolation or group exclusion. Einarsen and Raknes concluded that on average, 7% of the respondents were ridiculed, teased, verbally abused, or harassed on a weekly basis. They also found that 22% of the respondents experienced one or more of the following acts at least monthly: manipulation, rumors, ridicule, distortion of communication in regard to the victims, suppression of speech, loud criticism by someone in the presence of others, social exclusion, and isolation. Other behaviors identified by the participants included manipulation of work, such as being told to complete meaningless tasks; violence; or threats of violence. A recent WBI survey (Namie, 2014) found that women bullied

women 68% of the time and that 77% of the individuals reporting being bullied at the time of the survey were being bullied by the same gender.

Types of Bullying Victims

Aquino and Bradfield (1997) studied 350 employees from various governmental agencies to determine what situational factors contributed to the individuals perceiving themselves as victims of workplace bullying. Individuals who self-identified as being aggressive perceived themselves as victims more often than victims who self-identified as being less aggressive. Individuals with high negative affectivity perceived themselves as being more frequent targets of bullying, perhaps because of some of the characteristics that they manifested, such as sadness, anxiety, and insecurity, that were not related to feelings of aggressiveness. The women in the study indicated that they, more so than the men, were the targets of more indirect aggression. Victims' personality traits opened an interesting discussion about their impact on the instigation of bullying (Aquino & Bradfield, 1997).

Conye et al. (2000) investigated how hostile or agitating personality types of victims might be the reasons for being bullied. This type of victim personality trait is what Olweus termed *the provocative* or *the bully victim* (as cited in Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007), in their study of perpetrators and victims, looked at provocative victims from two aspects. They asked whether provocative victims have more exposure to and interactions with bullying throughout their lives and whether provocative victims report low self-esteem, combined with high aggression and low

social competence. They surveyed 4,702 respondents, 53% male and 47% female, ranging in age from 16 to 70 years (M age = 38).

Instruments used were the NAQ, which has a single question related to bullying, and the Bergen Bullying Index. Additional instruments were used to measure personality, role conflict, and role ambiguity. Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007) found that provocative victims reported being bullied more often than target victims in the workplace. Thirty-two percent of the provocative victims admitted that they had been bullied in the workplace, as compared to 17% of the target victims. In regard to childhood experiences, 48% of the provocative victims reported being bullied during childhood as compared to 27% of the target victims and bullies (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007). Results also indicated that provocative victims scored lower on self-esteem and social competency than did the target victim group. Another interesting factor of this study was that only the perpetrator group scored higher than the provocative group in terms of aggression (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007). Matthiesen and Einarsen concluded that low self-esteem could position victims into being bullied and that these individuals could become frustrated or irritated because of the lack of confidence or support in the workplace, leading to such behaviors as acting out provocatively, which could be interpreted by others as lacking social competence.

Even though research on the personality traits of bullying victims has been limited, it has not been without challenges. Leymann (1996) noted that mobbing as one form of bullying is simply part of the organizational culture and that victims' personality traits are meaningless and unlikely to be identified as the source of bullying. It is

important to determine what factors, if any, contribute to becoming workplace bullying victimization. These factors are personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC.

Studies on the relationship between children and school behaviors related to victimization have shown some support for the factors that can contribute to workplace bullying. Olweus (1995) concluded that children who are bullied at school come from homes where parenting behaviors are overly controlling and there are many rules and constraints. Olweus asserted that parents who are overprotective produce anxious and insecure children. These factors contribute to social withdrawal and the development of timid children who feel unsure of themselves, display anxiety and insecurity, and become the targets of bullies (Randall, 1997).

One important aspect of studying the victims of bullying is to look at the type of bullying and the reactions of the victims. Olafsson and Johannsdottir (2004) described three types of reactions that the victims of workplace bullying display: assertiveness, avoidance, or seeking of formal help. To better understand these reactions to bullying, categories of bullying need to be clarified. Rayner and Hoel (1997) identified five categories of bullying:

1. Threat to professional status aimed at humiliating the victims through criticism of work performance.
2. Destabilization when goals or responsibilities shift without the victims' knowledge as a method to intimidate and demoralize.
3. Isolation (e.g., withholding important information, refusing requests such as time off).

4. Overwork (e.g., setting impossible time frames and limits on performance) and threat to personal standing.
5. Violence or verbal threats.

Victims often resort to using all three types of reactions described by Olafsson and Johannsdottir to deal with these five categories.

Djurkovic et al. (2005) conducted a study of 127 individuals to determine which reactions to bullying were the most common when measured against the type of bullying encountered. Participants completed Quine's (1999) Workplace Bullying Scale, which measures five categories of bullying behaviors. Results showed that the victims who participated in the study had a tendency to react using avoidance more than assertive action or help seeking; however, some participants did respond with assertiveness under specific conditions (Djurkovic et al., 2005). They used assertiveness when their professional status was being threatened or when they were being overworked or isolated in their jobs. This type of response was linked directly to the victims' ability to perform their jobs adequately and placed them in a position to confront the bullies. Victims chose to seek help only when violence was used as a bullying tactic (Djurkovic et al., 2005).

Different types of bullying elicit different types of responses from the victims, and problem-solving approaches must be diverse and not subject to grouping (Djurkovic et al., 2005). Aquino and Bradfield (1997) studied victims who looked for predispositions or situations that gave them the opportunity to perceive themselves as victims. These victims concentrated on the organization, focus of job status, and the characteristics of perceived victims. Job status gave the victims the opportunity to employ formal

organizational methods of punishment or rewards. Retaliation for individuals in these job positions is often found to be limited due to fear of consequences or counter retaliation. Employees not in positions of status or authority often were denied monetary benefits or compensation and were not supported when they became the targets of aggression (Aquino & Bradfield, 1997).

Organizational Climate

Specific work-related risk factors can contribute to workplace bullying. Researchers have correlated role conflict, social climate, and dissatisfaction with leadership to bullying (Einarsen, Raknes, & Matthiesen, 1994). In a study of Norwegian workers, Vartia (1996) discovered that differences of opinion at work were settled based upon how information about tasks and goals flowed and how strongly the organizational culture supported individual autonomy. If the organization ignored problems in the workplace, bullying opportunities escalated. If employees addressed workplace problems through mutual discussion and negotiation, bullying was not present in the work environment; however, when problems were solved using positions of authority or intimidation, bullying was present (Vartia, 1996).

Organizational climate or culture often is the impetus for workplace bullying. Brodsky (1976) categorized harassment as subjective and objective. In subjective harassment, individuals are aware of the pain associated with the harassment but might feel helpless to act upon the incidents. However, objective harassment can be externally confirmed by coworkers or subordinates (Brodsky, 1976). Other categories of harassment identified by Brodsky are related to competition and advancement; institutionalization

(i.e., corporate or organizational environment); and harassment associated with cultural or personal differences.

Zapf (1999) conducted a study on organizational climate. Results showed that the participants (victims in one group and nonvictims in the second group) gave different responses to the survey questions that depended on leadership, job stressors, and work culture. Victims reported more stress and less job control. When asked about organizational problems related to stress and problems within the organization, the victims identified these problems as contributing to workplace bullying (Zapf, 1999).

Summary and Transition

In chapter 2, I presented a review of bullying, the victims of bullying, and the ways in which the workplace can be affected by bullying behaviors. Workplace bullying is not a new phenomenon, as noted by Brodsky (1976). Regardless of the term to describe bullying, such as mobbing or harassment, bullying is a form of aggression that exacts a mental and economical toll on employees and organizations. Much of the literature has supported the notion that workplace bullying is based upon multiple contributing factors, including organizational climate, responses from management and coworkers, job type, victims' personality traits, and so on. In chapter 3, I will describes the methodology of this study. Chapter 4 will explain the results, and chapter 5 will presents a summary of the findings, discussion of the results, and offer recommendations for future research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In this study, I focused on the specific characteristics, of the victims of bullying in the workplace and the ways in which the victims managed such conflict. Specifically, I considered the victims' personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs to identify potential relationships between these factors and victimization. I used The NAQ-R, which measures whether individuals perceive themselves as the victims of workplace bullying, to determine group placement (i.e., victim or nonvictim); the NEO-FFI to measure personality; and the PSI and Levenson's LoCS to assess bullying victims' problem-solving skills and LoC beliefs. All participants were asked to complete the entire set of four instruments. I used the collected data to compare any relationships between the two groups in terms of personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

To address the gap in the literature, the study was guided by three RQs and their associated hypotheses:

RQ1: Are there personality traits that are significantly different between bullied and nonbullied participants?

H_{01} : Bullied and nonbullied individuals in the workplace, as indicated by the NAQ-R, do not have significantly different personality traits, as measured by the NEO-FFI.

H_{a1} : Bullied and nonbullied individuals in the workplace, as indicated by the NAQ-R, do have significantly different personality traits, as measured by the NEO-FFI.

RQ2: Are there specific problem-solving skills that the victims of workplace bullying, in comparison to nonbullied individuals, use in appraising and resolving conflict within the workplace?

H_{02} : Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, do not use any specific problem-solving skills that are different from those of nonvictims, as measured by the PSI.

H_{a2} : Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, do use specific problem-solving skills that are different from those of nonvictims, as measured by the PSI.

RQ3: Are there specific LoC beliefs that victims of workplace bullying use when compared to nonbullied individuals?

H_{03} : Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, will not identify with specific beliefs related to LoC, as measured by Levenson's LoCS, as compared to nonvictims, as measured by the NAQ-R.

H_{a3} : Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, will identify with specific beliefs related to LoC, as measured by Levenson's LoCS, as compared to nonvictims, as measured by the NAQ-R.

Research Design

The design for this study was quasi-experimental, using two subsample groupings determined by the results of the NAQ-R to determine participant group placement. To ensure that adequate data were gathered, I used poststratified random sampling for subsequent data collection sessions until an equal distribution of bullied and nonbullied

victims was determined using weighted means for race and gender. The estimated sample size was 75 participants. Using a stratification process in which specific subgroups were weighted assisted in reducing the probability of error (Walker, 2010). This method helped to ensure that the two groupings had an adequate distribution of bullied and nonbullied participants (Mitchell & Jolley, 2004).

Prior to collecting any data or recruiting any participants, I sought and received permission to conduct the study from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB approval #11-26-13-0016843). The participants were selected from male and female members of the workforce from various ethnic, educational, cultural, and economic backgrounds. To be eligible for participation in the study, potential participants had to be 18 years of age or older and had to have a minimum of 1 year of full-time employment. Individuals who were not working or who were independent or self-employed workers did not meet the criteria and were excluded from the study. Participants did not have to be working in the same job for the 1 year of full-time employment because research has indicated that job change can be indicative of how victims handle workplace bullying (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002). The usual criterion for meeting the definition of bullying is 6 months; however, I used a minimum of 1 year of employment following Einarsen, Hoel, and Notelaers's (2009) conclusion that using a longer period of time results in more accurate accounts of bullying.

Multiple data collection sessions were needed to recruit an equal number of victims and nonvictims, and for homogeneity. The results from these instruments provided information about workplace bullying victims and what, if any, of these factors

contribute to why individuals become the victims of workplace bullying. The participants completed the NAQ-R, the NEO-FFI, the PSI, and Levenson's LoCS. Once two groups were established, the NEO-FFI, PSI, and LoCS identified traits and behaviors of participants within each designated group. The PSI scores participants on three categories: Problem-Solving Confidence, Approach/Avoidance, and Personal Control (Camp, 1992). Participants were classified using Levenson's LoCS as having either internal LoC or external LoC, which was further divided into two separate categories: Powerful Others or Chance. The external scale was broken down to determine whether the participants believed that their life circumstances were dictated by others or randomly by chance (Levenson, 1973). I applied the scoring results from the PSI, LoCS, and NEO-FFI to each individual in the designated group. I calculated the anticipated sample of 75 participants using a confidence level of 80% with a .05 alpha size and a response distribution of 50%. The final sample comprised 94 participants.

Sample and Setting

I held seven meetings to interview the 94 participants and collect data. Each participant was asked to complete each of the four instruments only once. To reduce the number of variables, I collected data at the same location, reducing the variables to educational level and class subject. However, I collected data on different days and times. The college holds classes on weekends, provides classes to adult learners, is familiar to local residents, offers a community setting that is less threatening, and provides easily accessible and comfortable locations. All of these factors made the college an appropriate site to conduct the study. After arriving at the school, I was informed by administration

which students would be participating. I provided the participants an introduction to and an overview of the study (see Appendix A).

I collected the averages of sample sizes from similar studies on victim personality and workplace bullying. This type of statistical methodology is used when sampling numbers are drawn from the same target populations (Voelker & Orton, 1993). For the current study, I calculated the sample size using a sample distribution, and averaged the mean from three similar studies involving victims of bullying and personality: Glasø et al. (2007; $N = 144$); Conye et al. (2000; $N = 120$); and Girardi et al. (2007; $N = 146$). The total of 410 participants was divided by 3, for an average of 137 participants. Using this average as an estimated sample size, a confidence interval of 80%, a 0.5 alpha size, and a 50% response distribution, I calculated that 75 participants were needed for this study. Status as the victim or nonvictim of workplace bullying was the IV; personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs were the DVs.

Instrumentation

Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised

Einarsen and Raknes (1997) developed the English version of the NAQ-R from the original Norwegian version of 21 questions (Einarsen & Hoel, 2001). The NAQ-R holds 29 behavioral items. Depending on the language, the NAQ varies in the number of questions from 18 to 28. The NAQ is a self-administered tool that asks the respondents to rate how often they have been subject to events ranging from negative acts to harassing behaviors in the workplace during the last 6 months. Participants answer the questions using 5-point range of Likert scale responses ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*daily*). The

NAQ presents general questions to the participant regarding behaviors that could be considered bullying without specifically stating or referring to bullying in the questionnaire (Einarsen & Hoel, 2001) in an effort to prevent the respondents from making judgments about being the victims of bullying or harassment (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997).

Scales for internal stability on the NAQ-R are high, ranging from .87 to .93 as measured by Cronbach's alpha (Einarsen & Hoel, 2001). The NAQ is an instrument that offers flexibility in its use. For example, a study by Einarsen and Raknes (1997) on male victimization in the workplace included questions about sexual harassment.

Interpretation of the NAQ can be subjective, as noted by Notelaers, Einarsen, De Witte, and Vermunt (2006) who used the latent class cluster approach in identifying victims of bullying. They discovered that 72% of the participants answered never to the question about ever having been bullied, yet when the NAQ items were grouped into categories, a significant percentage of participants did indicate that they had been bullied. In fact, the participants reported experiencing different forms of bullying, such as having information withheld or being assigned work below their level of competence (Notelaers et al., 2006).

Still another method of interpreting NAQ responses is through operational classification. In this method, the ratings are given a weight generally using ordinal scales of 0 or 1, with 0 being acts occurring less than weekly and 1 for acts occurring weekly or more. Using a numeric approach creates a clear demarcation between victim and

nonvictim groups based upon cut-off points, but this method leaves little room to identify or interpret the causes of bullying (Notelaers et al., 2006).

For this study, I used the latent classification method using seven primary clusters labeled as No Bullying, Some Work Criticism, Occasional Negative Encounters, Occasional Bullying, Work-Related Bullying, Severe Bullying, and Physical Intimidations. These clusters were sorted to classify responses from both bullied and nonbullied individuals. This method of measurement (Notelaers et al., 2006) provided greater depth in identifying victims based upon their responses on the NAQ. My rationale for using the latent class cluster is that it lends itself to empirical testing (Notelaers et al., 2006).

In this study, similar to that of Notelaers et al. (2006), I used the latent class cluster approach to determine the extent of bullying. It was more appropriate than the operational classification method. The latent cluster approach provides flexibility in grouping questions. Einarsen and Hoel (2001) used the 20 + 1-item NAQ-R because in the original 29-item English version, five questions were eliminated because of the low item-total correlation.

NEO-Five Factor Inventory

I used the NEO-FFI to collect data on personality traits. This tool can be administered individually or in groups. The NEO-FFI measures five global domains of personality: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience. These personality traits are known as the Big Five characteristics that all human beings share (Grant & Langan-Fox, 2007). Researchers have used them

consistently to describe people (Costa & McCrae, 1992). There are 60 questions, with response options on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Traits are measured based upon approximation to a normal bell curve. Big Five characteristics are compared by group responses rather than individual responses (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

There are two NEO questionnaires: the longer NEO-PI-R and the shorter the NEO-FFI. I used the NEO-FFI to focus on the five domain scores without scoring the facets, as in the original NEO-PI-R (Botwin, 1995). The NEO-FFI measures each of the five domains with six additional facets for each domain. Each domain is evaluated using a scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The NEO-FFI retains the same consistency, displaying internal consistency ($\alpha = .73-.86$; Cohan, Jang, & Stein, 2006), validity, and reliability as the longer version, proving to be a viable measure of personality (Botwin, 1995). Domain level reliability ranges from .86 to .95 (Botwin, 1995), and test-retest reliability for a 3-month period ($r = .73-.85$) has been shown with the NEO-FFI (Cohan et al., 2006).

Problem-Solving Inventory

The PSI is a 32-item self-rating scale designed to assess individuals' perceptions of their own problems and how they solve them. The 6-point Likert scale of responses ranges from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 6 (*strongly disagree*). The lower the scores, the greater the indication that the respondents have positive problem-solving abilities (Camp, 1992). The PSI uses the terms *problem solving* and *coping* synonymously. The PSI measures three coping areas: behavioral, cognitive, and affective. The scales reflect problem-

solving abilities in three areas: problem-solving confidence, approach/avoidance, and personal control (Camp, 1992). Test-retest reliability for all three PSI score scales ranged from .83 to .89 across 2 weeks and .44 to .65 over a 2-year period with a third sample. Three independent samples produced alpha coefficients for the three scales with a score range of .72 to .91 (Camp, 1992). One of the reasons that I chose to use the PSI in this study was Camp's assertion the strong correlation between the scales and scores of the PSI and Rotter's (1966) Internal-External LoCS, which Levenson's LoCS was based upon. Initial results indicated that individuals who appraised their problem-solving skills favorably also reported having internal LoC (Camp, 1992).

Problem solving refers to being able to identify effective or adaptive solutions to problems. Performance problem solving, on the other hand, is a complex behavioral process that requires specific skills to identify the outcomes of the chosen solutions (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 1971). The distinction for the purpose of the current study was important because Heppner and Petersen (1982) described the PSI as an applied problem-solving tool that assesses individuals' perceptions of the problem-solving process. Coping and problem solving were used interchangeably in the current study because much of the research has described coping and problem solving as methods of decision making. In a review of the PSI, Camp (1992) wrote that the PSI manual considers the terms coping and problem solving synonymous.

Levenson's LoC Scale

Levenson's (1981) LoCS is a 24-item instrument that uses a 6-point Likert scale of responses ranging from -3 (*strongly disagree*) to +3 (*strongly agree*;) (Ashby,

Kottman, & Draper, 2002). The LoCS was designed to take a more in-depth look at Rotter's (1966) scale, which identified individuals as having either internal or external LoC. Levenson's LoCS provides depth and dimension by dividing the external dimension into two distinct measurements: Powerful Others and Chance (Presson, Clark, & Benassi, 1997). The LoCS also measures three dimensions of internal LoC.

Levenson (1973) pointed out that individuals who believe that the world is designed in a specific order have a tendency to behave differently from those who believe that the world functions within a specific order and that people are manipulated or controlled by Powerful Others. The three scales used in the LoCS can be independent from each other. The identified I statements measure the degree to which individuals believe that they have control over what happens to them (Levenson, 1973). Using two separate groups, one male college students ($n = 329$) and the other psychiatric patients ($n = 165$), Levenson conducted a factor analysis in which she predicted that the Powerful Others and Chance scales of the LoCS would remain independent, even though the wording in each scale contained externally driven statements. The analysis yielded 60% variance and almost no overlap (Levenson, 1973). The LoC demonstrated a split-half reliability of .62 on Internal, .66 for Powerful Others, and .64 on Chance, with reliability of .64 (Internal), .74 (Powerful Others) and .78 (Chance).

Cronbach's coefficients in the sample used by Ashby et al. (2002) in their study of Midwestern College students were .75 (Internal), .76 (Powerful Others) and .61 (Chance). LoC, when looking at victims of workplace bullying, was used to determine whether victims felt that they had less control over their environment or that they

believed that their actions would not be decided by them, but by other outside forces. I received permission to use the NAQ-R, the PSI, and the LoCS (see Appendices B, C, & D). The NAQ demographics sheet is in Appendix E.

Data Collection and Analysis

I recruited the participants by working with a college in the southeastern United States. This school offers classes geared toward adult learners, who attend sessions on weekends. Participation, including introducing the study and collecting the data, took place in the student lounge and classrooms of the college. All participation was voluntary. Each potential participant received a short overview of the study orally and in a written format.

Information about the study and the data collection dates, along with my contact number and e-mail address, were posted on bulletin boards at the college. Posting this information in advance gave potential participants an understanding of the study and ensured that they understood and met the study criteria. This method of recruitment produced a sample of convenience, with the initial recruitment group being individuals who were in class on a particular date and who met the criteria for participation. Using this approach to recruit participants instead of using one particular work organization or job type prevented specific organizational climates or cultures from becoming a confounding variable.

Another factor for obtaining participants outside of a particular work organization concerned the nature of the study. Because this study focused on workplace bullying, it was determined that recruiting participants directly from a specific work organization

would create the risk of potential hardship on not only the participants but also the organization(s). Recruiting participants from any one specific organization also could have led to demographic bias by having a majority of participants from one particular gender, race, educational background, or job.

Participants were asked to complete an informed consent (see Appendix F) that identified the nature of the study and the demographics form, which gathered data about current job, length of time at job, sex, age and education. Once the consent and demographics form were completed, participants received a verbal introduction and explanation of each research instrument.

A group setting was the format used to provide information and complete the instrument. Because the instruments were self-assessments, the participants completed them at their own pace. Participants who completed the consent, initial paperwork, orientation, and instrument overview could then proceed to completing the instruments. Once they completed all documents, the participants were instructed to leave the packets at their site and exit the area to reduce distraction to other participants and confusion when collecting completed packets. From introduction to completion of all tools, the researcher estimated that the process would take 60 to 90 minutes.

Participation was voluntary and had no bearing on students' grades. There was no penalty or consequence for students opting not to participate. Students who agreed to participate were not rewarded with grades or any other form of compensation by the school or the researcher. The benefits to using this particular college were that the student body met the demographic base for the study and the participants were local and already

traveling to the school for classes. Because the actual assignment of victims and nonvictims to groups was not determined until the NAQ-R had been scored, there was no need to separate any of the completed documents until all of the instruments had been administered, collected, and scored. Participant instrument packets were randomly numbered to ensure participant confidentiality and keep all research instruments for particular participants together. I used SPSS to code the data and then subsequently stored them in a database using individual codes to protect the participants' identities. The data will be kept in a locked and secure location for a period in accordance with Walden University's policy on ethical research.

The IV identified individuals as victims or nonvictims of workplace bullying. A two-tailed MANCOVA was chosen based upon the multiple DVs and the potential for covariates. The MANCOVA provided me the opportunity to measure between-subject analyses with more than two conditions. Because there were several DVs (personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs), a MANCOVA statistical test was used with an *F* ratio to analyze the relationships between the data.

Ethical Considerations

Because of the nature of the study, there was a slight possibility that the participants who were victims could have experienced trauma or stress related to being bullied in the workplace. I took precautions by providing resources such as handouts from and phone numbers of various community agencies. I also provided contact information to the participants in case they had further questions or concerns about the

study. I verbally advised the participants that their participation was voluntary and that if they felt distressed or uncomfortable, they could withdraw immediately from the study.

Summary and Transition

This quantitative study was designed to examine the relationship of personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC to becoming the victims of workplace bullying. This chapter presented information about the recruitment and selection of participants, the methodology, the data collection, analysis protocols, and the instrumentation. In Chapter 4, I will present and statistically analyze the data, as well as address the results. Chapter 5 will provides an interpretation of the research results, a discussion of the findings, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore specific characteristics related to victims of bullying in the workplace. Specifically, I examined how victims' personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs relate to workplace bullying. In Chapter 1, I explored the role that the victims of bullying might play in the often hostile interactions between victims and bullies, primarily focusing on the victims' personality traits, their problem-solving or coping techniques, and LoC beliefs related to workplace bullying. In Chapter 2, I presented literature relevant to the factors affecting victims, elements that affect bullying, and the role of victims in bullying. In Chapter 3, I described the research methods used to collect and analyze the data.

I collected data over seven sessions between February 2, 2014, and June 8, 2014. I recruited student participants by placing flyers on bulletin boards in the student lounge and in areas where students congregated, such as hallways and lobby areas (see Appendix G). Instructors also assisted by informing their students about the study. I used e-mail to inform instructors about the study, ask about available times to collect the data, and answer any questions about the study.

I collected data from adult learners over 5 weekends at various times throughout the day namely, prior to class, after class, during lunch, and during class as determined by each instructor's preference. I also scheduled two additional Sunday sessions for students who could not align their schedule with my availability. Because of this change, it was necessary to collect data over two semesters.

A pool of 119 students were available for this study, and I included 94 in the final sample. From the initial pool of 119 individuals, 20 students declined to participate, and five students did not meet the inclusion criteria. Data collection remained consistent, despite multiple collection dates, through the use of a prewritten script, coding of materials, and consistency in location and familiarity of the instructor.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

I measured workplace bullying by looking at how personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs could impact workplace bullying victimization. I developed hypotheses and collected data to determine whether a relationship existed among higher scores in personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs of individuals identified as victims of workplace bullying.

The study was guided by three RQs and hypotheses:

RQ1: Are there personality traits that are significantly different between bullied and nonbullied participants?

H_{01} : Bullied and nonbullied individuals in the workplace, as indicated by the NAQ-R, do not have significantly different personality traits, as measured by the NEO-FFI.

H_{a1} : Bullied and nonbullied individuals in the workplace, as indicated by the NAQ-R, do have significantly different personality traits, as measured by the NEO-FFI.

RQ2: Are there specific problem-solving skills that the victims of workplace bullying, in comparison to nonbullied individuals, use in appraising and resolving conflict within the workplace?

H_{02} : Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, do not use any specific problem-solving skills that are different from those of nonvictims, as measured by the PSI.

H_{a2} : Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, do use specific problem-solving skills that are different from those of nonvictims, as measured by the PSI.

RQ3: Are there specific LoC beliefs that victims of workplace bullying use when compared to nonbullied individuals?

H_{03} : Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, will not identify with specific beliefs related to LoC, as measured by the LoCS, as compared to nonvictims, as measured by the NAQ-R.

H_{a3} : Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, will identify with specific beliefs related to LoC, as measured by the LoCS, as compared to nonvictims, as measured by the NAQ-R.

Demographics

I used a quasi-experimental research design to set up two subsamples (bullied or nonbullied participants). Placement within each group was determined by the participants' responses on the NAQ-R. I used poststratified random sampling during the data collection sessions to ensure equal distribution of bullied and nonbullied participants using a weighted mean for gender. I calculated an estimated sample size of 75 participants using a confidence interval of 80%, a 0.5 alpha size, and a 50% response distribution. However, a total of 94 participants joined the study. I used frequency

analysis to determine how bullied and nonbullied individuals scored on personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs. A MANCOVA was used with an F ratio to analyze relationships within the data.

Descriptive Statistics

The sample comprised 68 (72%) female and 26 (28%) male participants. Of the 68 female participants, 38 (56%) responded to the NAQ-R as being the victims of bullying, and 30 (44%) as nonvictims. Fifteen (58%) of the male participants identified as victims of bullying; 11 (42%) did not. Fifty-three (56%) of all 94 participants identified as being the victims of bullying; 41 (44%) did not (see Table 1).

Table 1

Participant Gender and Victim Status

Female participants		Male participants	
Total no. (%) in study	68 (72%)	Total no. (%) in study	26 (28%)
Victims of bullying	38 (56%)	Victims of bullying	15 (58%)
Nonvictims of bullying	30 (44 %)	Nonvictims of bullying	11 (42 %)

Test of the Assumptions

Because of the significant number of female participants in this study, I conducted a series of one-way ANOVAs on gender and bullying status related to personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs to identify any impact on the results. I concluded that the variable of gender did not have a significant effect on the categorical variable of bullied and/or nonbullied in regard to personality traits, problem-solving skills, or LoC beliefs. Gender results in personality were $F(5, 85), = .867, p > .05$, Wilks's $\Lambda = .951$, partial $\eta^2 = .049$, indicating a small effect size. The NAQ-R, which determined bullied or

nonbullied status, was $F(5, 85) = 1.425, p > .05$, Wilks's $\Lambda = .923$, partial $\eta^2 = .077$, indicating a medium effect size.

For problem-solving skills, gender results identified $F(3, 87) = .424, p > .05$, Wilks's $\Lambda = .986$, partial $\eta^2 = .014$, indicating a small effect size. The NAQ-R, which determined bullied or nonbullied status, was $F(3, 87) = 2.294, p > .05$, Wilks's $\Lambda = .927$, partial $\eta^2 = .073$, indicating a medium effect size. Gender results for LoC beliefs identified $F(3, 89) = .375, p > .05$, Wilks's $\Lambda = .988$, partial $\eta^2 = .012$, indicating a small effect size. The NAQ-R, which determined bullied or nonbullied status, $F(3, 89) = 2.592, p > .05$, Wilks's $\Lambda = .920$, partial $\eta^2 = .080$, indicating a medium effect size (see Table 2).

Table 2

MANOVA of Gender and Victim Status With Personality Traits, Problem-Solving Skills, and LoC Beliefs

	Value	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Err df</i>	Sig	Partial η^2	Observed power
Personality traits							
Gender Wilks's lambda	.951	.867 ^a	5	85	.057	.049	.296
NAQ-R Wilks's lambda	.923	1.425 ^a	5	85	.224	.077	.479
Problem-solving skills							
Gender Wilks's lambda	.986	.424 ^a	3	87	.736	.014	.132
NAQ-R Wilks's lambda	.927	2.294 ^a	3	87	.083	.073	.560
LoC beliefs							
Gender Wilks's lambda	.988	.375 ^a	3	89	.771	.012	.121
NAQ-R Wilks's lambda	.920	2.592 ^a	3		.058	.080	.619

Note. Design intercept + sex+ NAQ-R

^aExact statistic

I conducted a chi-square test to test for an association between gender and victim or nonvictim status. Results were $X^2(1) = .025, p > .05$. This result was larger than the alpha of .05, indicating that there was no significant relationship between gender and victim status (see Table 3).

Table 3

Pearson Chi-Square Test of Gender and Victim Status

Test	Value	df	Asymp sig (2-sided)	Exact sig (2-sided)	Exact sig (1-sided)
Pearson chi-square	.025 ^a	1	.874		
Continuity correction ^b	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood ratio	.025	1	.874		
Fisher's exact test				1.000	.531
Linear-by-linear association	.025	1	.875		
No. of valid cases	94				

^a0 cells (.0%) have expected count < 5. The minimum expected count is 11.34.

^bComputed only for a 2 x 2 table

A box test for equity of covariance matrices was assessed across the DVs of personality traits ($p > .05$), LoC beliefs ($p = 1.67$), and problem-solving skills ($p > .05$), indicating a violation of the assumption of homogeneity for personality and problem-solving skills ($p < .001$). Homogeneity of variance was assessed by Levene's test of the 11 DVs to test homogeneity. Statistically significant was neuroticism, one of the Big Five personality DVs ($p < .05$), and powerful others ($p < .05$), a DV of LoC beliefs. These values indicated inequality within these variables.

Analysis

I grouped participants as victims or nonvictims of bullying in the workplace according to their responses on the NAQ-R. The following analysis was broken down by DV (i.e., personality has five DVs, problem solving has three, LoC has three). I conducted three separate MANCOVAs to identify any potential effect of these DVs on the IV of victim or nonvictim status, with gender as the covariate. Once the DVs were identified as potentially having a relationship with the IV of victim or nonvictim status, I further conducted one-way ANOVAs to determine whether these differences were statistically significant.

Personality Traits

I conducted an estimated marginal means to evaluate differences between mean scores in the five dimensions of personality traits and victim or nonvictim status, and found significant differences in neuroticism and extroversion. Neuroticism showed a significant mean difference of 3.56 between nonvictims ($M = 15.76$, $SD = 1.171$) and victims ($M = 19.32$, $SD = 1.027$). Extraversion results reported a mean difference of 2.7 between nonvictims ($M = 31.68$, $SD = .913$) and victims ($M = 28.98$, $SD = .801$). Openness indicated a mean difference of 1.09 between nonvictims ($M = 29.05$, $SD = .905$) and victims ($M = 27.96$, $SD = .794$). Agreeableness showed the smallest mean difference of 0.55 between nonvictims ($M = 33.38$, $SD = .851$) and victims ($M = 32.83$, $SD = .747$). For conscientiousness, there was a difference of 1.85 between nonvictims ($M = 33.55$, $SD = 1.299$) and victims ($M = 33.70$, $SD = 1.139$; see Table 4).

Table 4

Estimated Marginal Means of Victim and Nonvictim Personality Traits

DV	Victim/Nonvictim	M	SE	95% CI	
				Lower bound	Upper bound
Neuroticism	Nonvictim	15.760 ^a	1.171	13.433	18.087
	Victim	19.319 ^a	1.027	17.278	21.360
Extraversion	Nonvictim	31.684 ^a	.913	29.870	33.498
	Victim	28.974 ^a	.801	27.383	30.565
Openness	Nonvictim	29.053 ^a	.905	27.254	30.851
	victim	27.960 ^a	.794	26.382	29.537
Agreeableness	Nonvictim	33.388 ^a	.851	31.696	35.079
	victim	32.836 ^a	.747	31.353	34.320
Conscientiousness	Nonvictim	35.553 ^a	1.299	32.972	38.135
	victim	33.709 ^a	1.139	31.445	35.972

^aCovariates evaluated at value: gender = 1.73

Based upon these results, further analysis was required. I conducted a between-subjects effects test, which revealed neuroticism, $F(1, 89) = 5.126$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 =$

.055, and extraversion, $F(1, 89) = 4.97, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .053$. Results of openness, $F(1, 89) = .823, p > .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$. Agreeableness, $F(1, 89) = .237, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$, and conscientiousness, $F(1, 89) = 1.139, p > .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .013$ (see Table 5).

Table 5

Test of Between-Subjects Effects: Personality Type

Personality type	Type III SS	df	Err df	MS	F	Sig	Partial η^2
Neuroticism	285.867	1		285.867	5.126	*.025	.055
Extraversion	165.758	1		165.876	4.976	*.028	.053
Openness	26.959	1		26.959	.823	.367	.009
Agreeableness	6.853	1		6.853	.237	.628	.003
Conscientiousness	76.774	1	89	76.774	1.139	.289	.013

Note. The asterisk (*) indicates significance at the .05 level

Based on these results, I conducted an ANOVA on those personality factors indicating significance. Results of this test yielded the following results: Neuroticism, $F(1, 90) = 4.789, p < .05$; and extraversion, $F(1, 90) = 4.977, p < .05$. The results of the ANOVA indicated statistical significance in both neuroticism and extraversion. The results for neuroticism in ANOVA was .031, indicating statistical significance. These results presented differently than the result of .025 calculated in the between-subjects test. This variance in result significance was due to my use of gender as a covariate in the between-subjects test, and it's not being factored into the ANOVA analysis (see Table 6).

Table 6

ANOVA: Personality Type

Personality type	Group comparison	Type III SS	df	MS	F	Sig
Neuroticism	Between	268.201	1	268.201	4.789	.03*
	Within	5040.006	90	56.000		
Extraversion	between	164.114	1	164.114	4.977	.028*
	Within	2967.756	90	32.975		

Note. The asterisk (*) indicates a significance at the .05 level

Null Hypothesis 1 (Bullied and nonbullied individuals in the workplace, as indicated by the NAQ-R, do not have significantly different personality traits, as measured by the NEO-FFI) was rejected, and Alternate Hypothesis 1 (Bullied and nonbullied individuals in the workplace, as indicated by the NAQ-R, do have significantly different personality traits, as measured by the NEO-FFI) was accepted because personality traits, as measured by the NEO-FFI, did significantly affect the individuals' chances of becoming the victims of workplace bullying. Using an alpha of .05, neuroticism $p > .05$ and extraversion $p < .05$ indicated statistical significance. Victims reported a higher mean score in neuroticism ($M = 3.56$). Nonvictims reported a higher mean score in extraversion ($M = 2.7$).

Problem-Solving Skills

I conducted an analysis of the estimated marginal means which demonstrated significant differences in mean scores in personal control between victims ($M = 16.02$, $SD = 5.49$) and nonvictims ($M = 13.44$ $SD = 5.91$). Victims displayed a marginal mean difference of 2.58, indicating significance. Approach/Avoidance also indicated significance between nonvictims ($M = 36.06$, $SD = 1.63$) and victims ($M = 41.30$, $SD = 1.46$), with a mean difference of 5.24. There was no significance reported in confidence between nonvictims ($M = 20.73$, $SD = 1.066$) and victims ($M = 22.60$, $SD = .956$), with a mean difference of 1.87; see Table 7).

Table 7

Estimated Marginal Means of Victim and Nonvictim Problem-Solving Skills

DV	Victim/Nonvictim	M	SE	95% CI	
				Lower bound	Upper bound
Confidence	Nonvictim	20.752 ^a	1.066	18.634	22.869
	victim	22.690 ^a	.956	20.791	24.589
Approach avoidance	Nonvictim	36.065 ^a	1.631	32.823	39.306
	victim	41.301 ^a	1.463	38.395	44.207
Personal control	Nonvictim	13.435 ^a	.889	11.668	15.202
	victim	16.023 ^a	.797	14.439	17.607

Note. a. Covariates evaluated values: gender = 1.73.

A between-subjects test was conducted to identify any potential relationships between problem solving and victims of bullying. Results indicated significant results in approach/avoidance, $F(1, 89) = 5.711, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .060$, and personal control, $F(1, 89) = 4.696, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .050$, Confidence was not significant, $F(1, 89) = 1.883, p > .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .020$ (see Table 8).

Table 8

Test of Between-Subjects Effects: Problem-Solving Skills

Problem-solving skills	Type III SS	df	Err df	MS	F	Sig	Partial η^2
Confidence	85.390	1		85.390	1.833	.179	.020
Approach/Avoidance	623.149	1		623.149	5.711	*.019	.060
Personal control	152.276	1	89	152.276	4.696	*.033	.050

Note. The asterisk (*) indicates significance at the .05 level

Based on these results I conducted an ANOVA looking at the problem solving skills approach/avoidance and personal control. ANOVA results yielded the following; approach/avoidance, $F(1, 90) = 5.677, p < .05$, and personal control, $F(1,90) = 4.673, p < .05$ (see Table 9).

Table 9

ANOVA: Problem-Solving Skills

Problem solving skills	Group comparison	Type III SS	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	Sig
Approach/Avoidance	Between	619.533	1	619.533	5.677	.019*
	Within	9821.369	90	109.126		
Personal control	Between	151.357	1	151.357	4.673	.033*
	Within	2915.078	90	32.390		

The asterisk (*) indicates significance at the .05 level

Null Hypothesis 2 (Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, do not use any specific problem-solving skills that are different from those of nonvictims, as measured by the PSI) was rejected, and Alternative Hypothesis 2 (Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, do use specific problem-solving skills that are different from those of nonvictims, as measured by the PSI) was accepted, indicating that the victims of workplace bullying in this study did have specific methods of problem solving that were different from those of their nonbullied counterparts. Statistically significant results were identified in approach/avoidance ($p < .05$) and personal control ($p < .05$). Victims reported higher mean scores in both approach/avoidance ($M = 5.22$) and personal control ($M = 2.58$).

Locus of Control Beliefs

An estimated marginal means was conducted comparing groups indicated significant mean scores between victims and nonvictims in powerful others. Results for victims ($M = 17.12$, $SD = 1.157$) and nonvictims ($M = 12.26$, $SD = 1.315$) showed a mean difference of 4.84. Minimal difference in scores on internality for nonvictims ($M = 32.9$, $SD = .943$) and victims ($M = 32.06$, $SD = .829$) showed a mean difference of 0.32.

Results for chance in nonvictims ($M = 13.61$, $SD = 1.059$) and victims ($M = 15.86$, $SD = .932$) showed a mean difference of 2.24; see Table 10).

Table 10

Estimated Marginal Means of Victim and Nonvictim LoC Beliefs

DV	Victim /Nonvictim	M	SE	95% CI	
				Lower bound	Upper bound
Internality	Nonvictim	32.906 ^a	.943	31.034	34.778
	Victim	32.601 ^a	.829	30.954	34.248
Chance	Nonvictim	13.621 ^a	1.059	11.516	15.725
	Victim	15.860 ^a	.932	14.009	17.710
Powerful others	Nonvictim	12.257 ^a	1.315	9.644	14.870
	Victim	17.122 ^a	1.157	14.823	19.420

^aCovariates evaluated value; gender = 1.73

Results from a between-subjects effects test indicated significance in powerful others, $F(1, 91) = 7.709$; $p < .05$; partial $\eta^2 = .078$. Internality, $F(1, 91) = .059$, $p > .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$ and chance, $F(1, 91) = 2.518$, $p > .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .027$ did not indicate any statistical significance (see Table 11).

Table 11

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects: LoC Beliefs

LoC beliefs	Type III SS	df	Err df	Ms	F	Sig	Partial η^2
Powerful others	546.817	1		546.817	7.709	*.007	.078
Internality	2.149	1		2.149	.059	.809	.001
Chance	115.854	1	91	115.854	2.518	.116	.027

Note. The asterisk (*) indicates significance at the .05 level.

As the result of the significance of powerful others LoC beliefs, an ANOVA was conducted. Results of the ANOVA supported that powerful others did indicate statistical significance, $F(1, 90) = 7.695$, $p < .05$ (see Table 12).

Table 12

ANOVA: LoC Beliefs

LoC beliefs	Group comparison	Type III SS	df	MS	F	Sig
Powerful others	Between	542.630	1	542.630	7.695	.007*
	Within	6487.370	90	70.515		

Note. The asterisk (*) indicates significance at the .05 level.

Null Hypothesis 3 (Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, will not identify with specific beliefs related to LoC, as measured by Levenson's LoCS, as compared to nonvictims, as measured by the NAQ-R) was rejected, and Alternative Hypothesis 3 (Identified victims of workplace bullying, as measured by the NAQ-R, will identify with specific beliefs related to LoC, as measured by Levenson's LoCS, as compared to nonvictims, as measured by the NAQ-R) was accepted, indicating that the victims of workplace bullying in this study did score higher on LoC belief measures. Results indicated that the victims presented significantly higher scores than the nonvictims did in powerful others ($p < .05$). Victims presented a higher mean score on powerful others with a mean difference of 4.84.

Summary

The focus of this research was to address the relationship of personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs to the potential of individuals becoming the victims of workplace bullying. Based upon the analysis of the data, the results suggested that the victims of workplace bullying who participated in this study did display specific personality traits, did have specific problem-solving skills, and did lend themselves to believing in Powerful Others in their LoC beliefs.

RQ1 asked whether there were significantly different personality dimensions between bullied and nonbullied individuals. Null Hypothesis 1 was rejected, and Alternative Hypothesis 1 was accepted, indicating that personality traits, as measured by the NEO-FFI, did significantly affect the chances of workplace bullying victimization. At an alpha level of .05, neuroticism $p < .05$ and extraversion $p < .05$ indicated statistical significance. Victims reported a higher mean score in neuroticism ($M = 3.56$) and a lower mean score in extraversion. Nonbullied participants indicated a higher mean score in extraversion ($M = 2.7$).

RQ2 addressed problem solving by asking whether the victims of workplace bullying used problem-solving skills in appraising and resolving conflict that were different from those used by nonbullied individuals. Null Hypothesis 2 was rejected, and Alternative Hypothesis 2 was accepted, indicating that the victims of workplace bullying who participated in this study did have specific problem-solving skills that were different from those used by their nonbullied counterparts. Statistically significant results were identified between victims and nonvictims in approach/avoidance, $p < .05$ and personal control, $p < .05$. Victims reported higher mean scores in approach/avoidance ($M = 5.22$) and personal control ($M = 2.58$).

RQ3 addressed the LoC beliefs of the victims by asking whether they used specific LoC beliefs that were different from those used by nonbullied individuals. Results supported Alternative Hypothesis 3 and rejected Null Hypothesis 3, indicating that the victims of workplace bullying who participated in this study did score higher on LoC belief measures. Victims had significantly higher scores than nonvictims in powerful

others ($p < .05$). Victims also had a higher mean score on powerful others, with a mean difference of 4.84.

Transition

This chapter included descriptions of the collected data, research methodology, data analysis, and the results. I conducted a quantitative study to examine the potential relationship of personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs to the likelihood of becoming the victims of workplace bullying. The results provided statistically significant evidence to support the research questions. In chapter 5, I presents a discussion of the results and conclusions, along with recommendations for future research and implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Discussion

Each year, organizations in the United States lose millions of dollars to illness, lawsuits, and lack of productivity (WBI, 2010). In its most recent survey (Namie, 2014), the WBI estimated that 65.5 million U.S. citizens had been the victims of workplace bullying. To better understand the victim's role in workplace bullying, I conducted a quasi-experimental, quantitative analysis to determine whether personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs can contribute to the likelihood of such an outcome.

I used Bandura's (2002) SCT and Rotter's (1966) LoC theory as the theoretical framework. Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy posits that individuals are responsible for performing tasks successfully, whereas Rotter's LoC theory posits that outcomes of tasks are based upon performance of behaviors affecting said outcomes (Friedman & Schustack, 2006).

Summary of Findings

In the following subsections, organized by my primary research questions, I discuss the findings relevant to each RQ.

Research Question 1

In the first research question, I asked, "Are there personality traits that are significantly different between bullied and nonbullied participants?" The results showed that the victims of workplace bullying scored higher than nonvictims on neuroticism. These results were consistent with previous research results.

Costa and McCrae (1992), in their discussion of the domain of neuroticism, described individuals with high scores as experiencing disruptive emotions, having adaption problems, and being prone to irrational ideas. More importantly, individuals with high neuroticism displayed less ability to control impulses and have poor coping skills. Glasø et al. (2007) stated that the victims of bullying in their study had higher scores on the Big Five dimensions, appeared more anxious, and displayed more neuroticism and extraversion than participants who self-identified as nonbullied.

Research has shown that individuals who score higher in extraversion tend to display more optimism and enjoyment, and feel more included in their environments (Levenson, 1981). Higher scores in extraversion for nonvictims have not been unexpected. Victims tend to feel abandoned by the workplace setting and often display mistrust and instability, resulting in their leaving the organizations. These behaviors are not those of extraverts. Descriptions of individuals who score high on extraversion have shown that they are more satisfied at work and are more emotionally stable (Nikolaou & Robertson, 2001).

Glasø et al. (2007) reported that the victims of bullying in their study had much lower scores than the nonvictim participants in agreeableness and conscientiousness. There was a similar result for this study, with nonvictims displaying lower scores on conscientiousness, with a mean difference of 1.85 and a minimal mean difference on agreeableness of 0.55.

As Costa and McCrae (1992) described, the facets of neuroticism are anxiety, anger, hostility, depression, and self-consciousness. High scores within these facets

appear to align themselves with victimization. My results yielded high scores on neuroticism for victims and high scores on extraversion for nonvictims. Previous research used as part of this study did not indicate higher extraversion scores for nonvictims. However, the facets of extraversion are relevant to individuals who are social, assertive, independent, and self-assured (Costa & McCrae, 1992), characteristics that are contrary to those of the victims of bullying and might help to explain their greater vulnerability.

Research Question 2:

In research question 2, I asked " Are there specific problem-solving skills that the victims of workplace bullying, in comparison to nonbullied individuals, use in appraising and resolving conflict within the workplace?" The results indicated that the victims appeared to identify with specific skills more than the nonvictims did. Victims scored higher on approach/avoidance and personal control. High scores on approach/avoidance showed a desire to avoid or shy away from problem solving; high scores on personal control identified individuals who felt that they were not in control of their emotions. Because problem-solving skills are integral to coping, these scores indicated that the victims of workplace bullying generally have more limited coping techniques.

These results were consistent with those in studies such as Quine's (1999), in which victims had a tendency to react using avoidance more often than assertive action or help seeking. Victims only responded with assertiveness under specific conditions (Djurkovic et al., 2005). Randall (1997) wrote, "The core problem of the victim is with interpersonal relationships and the lack of mechanisms to be assertive against a would be dominator" (p. 89). Rayner (1997) found that the majority of nonbullied participants

would use some line of support, such as colleagues, union, or management, but participants in the bullied group either did nothing or left their jobs.

The results of this study supported Brodsky's (1976) contention that victims' lack of adequate coping techniques and inability to control emotions when problem solving are tied directly to organizational climate and often are the driving force behind workplace bullying. Brodsky spoke of subjective harassment, in which individuals are acutely aware of the pain associated with harassment in the workplace but might feel helpless in acting upon the incidents.

Research Question 3:

In the 3rd research question I asked "Are there specific LoC beliefs that victims of workplace bullying use when compared to nonbullied individuals?" Results showed that the victims had significantly higher scores in their belief about powerful others, a belief that could have impacted their views of their work environment and could have supported the idea that behaviors or actions are dependent on the perceived control of others (Levenson, 1981). Powerful Others in LoC is an extension of Rotter's (1966) external LoC theory, which contends that individuals view their behaviors and outcomes as the result of fate, luck, or chance.

The results showed that the participants who were the victims of workplace bullying had significantly higher scores on powerful others, providing evidence that the victims felt that others might have been responsible for controlling or dictating what was happening in their workplace environment. When victims present an external LoC as identified by Rotter's (1966) they perceive an absence of control as a predictor of

workplace bullying. According to Rotter (1990), LoC refers to individuals' beliefs about their environment. The first belief is that reinforcement or outcomes are directly associated with behaviors in which consequences or personal characteristics are directly associated with their actions. The second belief is that chance, luck, or control by others is responsible for their outcomes.

The results of this study aligned with Spector and O'Connell's (1994) findings that external LoC job-related stress is the result of job autonomy, interpersonal conflict, and role ambiguity. They also found that individuals with internal LoC experienced less job related-stress, were more satisfied, and had less anxiety at work, whereas those with external LoC were more anxious at work.

The 94 participants who comprised the sample in this study focused on answering questions relevant to personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs of the victims of workplace bullying. The results indicated that the victims of workplace bullying exhibited specific personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs. Personality scores among the victims were significantly higher for neuroticism, suggesting that individuals had poor coping skills and were anxious; the significant scores in extraversion for the nonvictims indicated their independence and self-assurance. The victims' high scores in problem-solving skills were significant in regard to approach/avoidance and personal control. In LoC, the victims scored high in powerful others, meaning that they displayed feelings of helplessness over their situations and believed that outcomes often were left to others or to chance. These results aligned with the literature.

Limitations

This study was conducted at a satellite campus of a college in one town in one southeastern state; therefore, the data and results were specific to this location. Many colleges have larger campuses with more diverse student and faculty populations. They could have provided more potential participants for this study; however, I restricted participation only to students who met the criteria to join the study. This population limited the generalizability of the findings.

The sample comprised 94 participants. The NEO-FFI and NAQ-R have Spanish versions that would have lent themselves to more extensive evaluation of the findings to determine whether they would be valid in a cross-cultural situation. However, no Spanish translator was available, so I only recruited English-speaking students. Another limitation was gender, given that the majority of the students were female. This is not indicative of the gender of all victims of workplace bullying. I addressed this variable by using gender as a covariate to reduce the impact that it could have had on bias.

Research bias was another consideration because all of the instruments I used to collect the data were self-report tools. Even though the students were made aware of the fact that their participation had no bearing on grades and was an activity separate and apart from what they were engaged in at the college, some students might have been reluctant to participate because of the use of the college as a data collection point.

This study was not designed to address gender in regard to workplace bullying, but rather to look at the ways in which personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs might influence the chances of individuals becoming the victims of bullying in the

workplace. Because of the unequal number of females and males in this particular study and the design of this study, I used gender as a covariate. During the analysis of the personality factors, I identified a variance in significance scores in neuroticism as the result of gender. There was a slight increase in significance from .025 to .031 when gender was not accounted for. This increase might have been attributed to the unequal number of male and female participants.

Implications for Future Research

Bullied individuals, according to Notelaers and Einarsen (2012), score above 45 on the NAQ-R. However, scores between 33 and 44 indicate that the individuals have met the criteria of having been bullied, with the one exception being frequency. One of the difficult issues surrounding bullying is not only defining bullying but also determining the frequency of the acts (Leymann, 1996). Future researchers might consider investigating the relationships among individuals who do not perceive themselves as bullied based upon their scores on the NAQ-R, their problem-solving styles, and their LoC beliefs. Future studies also could focus more on the individual victims of workplace bullying who score high on problem-solving skills and LoC beliefs, and the potential relationship between the two. Gender is also a future study implication looking at how gender and high personality scores relate to bullying specifically neuroticism. Another topic of future research could be determination of the impact of cultural differences on individuals' perceptions of being the victims of workplace bullying.

Although I collected information about the participants' employment status, studying this data was beyond the scope of this particular study. Employment, however, has been suggested as a possible factor in workplace bullying. Davenport et al. (2005) mentioned that the victims of mobbing often abandon their career dreams or feel unfulfilled, subsequently turning away from job commitments. Future researchers could address the role of workplace bullying on individuals' desire to work. Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2002) reported that job change can be indicative of how victims handle workplace bullying. Finally, future researchers could study the impact of workplace bullying on productivity.

Social Implications

This study has significant positive social implications for the victims of workplace bullying and organizations. From a proactive standpoint, if the victims could identify their own strengths and weaknesses, this information could potentially prevent negative encounters within the workplace by empowering individuals and helping them to understand how their personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs impact their relationships with others in the workplace.

From an organizational standpoint, the increasing competition for market share and an expanding global economy mean that finding employees who can contribute to productivity is invaluable. Chaudhary and Sharma (2012) described the critical role of motivated and engaged employees in keeping organizations competitive and profitable. Organizations can no longer afford to be reactive in regard to workplace bullying. This study might provide organizations with information that can help them to improve

employee designations, team appointments, or work distribution assignments. By being proactive in dealing with workplace bullying, organizations can save time and money by understanding how to best use their employees' talents in ways that can increase safety and productivity.

Conclusion

Workplace bullying is a destructive force. It crosses all ages, genders, ethnicities, and professions. Bullying has many names, definitions, and parameters. However, the role of victims has historically been obscure, with more of the emphasis placed on the bullies (Glasø et al., 2007). This gap in the literature led me to ask whether specific factors can contribute to individuals being the victims of workplace bullying. This study sought to provide some insight into the factors that contribute to some individuals becoming the victims of workplace bullying. Specifically considered were personality traits, problem-solving skills, and LoC beliefs, all of which are primary contributors to behaviors. Having a better understanding of these contributors to victimization impact on victims might provide the basis for future training related to dealing with workplace bullying. My overall goal was to understand what makes victims, victims. Although much more research is needed, the results of this study shed light on some of the factors that should be considered in the quest to further understand the role of the victims in workplace bullying.

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Appendix A: Overview of Instruments and Explanation of Process

My name is Lynn Walker and I would like to thank you for taking the time to assist me with my research. I am an Organizational Psychology student from Walden University and the focus of this research centers on how individuals relate to each other in the workplace with emphasis placed on negative interactions.

Please feel free to take part in your lunch; you may eat during the research.

Before we begin, I want to quickly review participation criteria that being you are currently employed or have been unemployed for no more than 6 months, are not self-employed and are over the age of 18.

Before we go any further, I want you to take out the first sheet (The informed Consent, please read it to yourself as I read it aloud. After hearing the contents of the Informed Consent, those agreeing to participate will be asked to stay in your seats for information regarding the collection instruments. Those of you who will not be completing the instruments are free to leave the area and I would like to thank you for your interest.

Once everyone is set, I will distribute the packets. You will have a copy of the informed consent in your packet as well. Please do not separate the packet or complete any forms until you are provided with further instructions

I would like to briefly go over the packet, first you will notice that each form and instrument is numbered this is so I can ensure materials are kept together but more importantly to protect your identity. As a participant, you will only be identified as a number that are randomly assigned.

If you would please take out the demographic, form and complete this now.

You are going to be asked to complete 4 instruments that have been tested and validated; they are the Negative Acts Questionnaire, Heppner's Locus of Control, a Problem-Solving Inventory and the NEO-FFI.

These instruments were chosen to get a snapshot of your personality, locus of control, problem solving abilities and experiences within your workplace.

It is important to remember that there is no right or wrong answers, only your feelings, beliefs and experiences.

At this time, I am going to provide a brief overview of each instrument and address any question you might have about them.

The Negative Acts Questionnaire: is a 23-item likert scale with responses ranging from 1- never to 5- daily. Circle the best answer for each question. Because this instrument was developed outside the United States, there may be some language that is unfamiliar. The word Coventry is used in one of the questions the definition for this word is (banish, ignored, ostracized).

Levenson's LOC: a 24-item questionnaire with a scale which ranges from - 3 to + 3.

Answer questions as you feel they must reflect you at the moment.

Problem-Solving Inventory : a 35 item questionnaire which asks how you feel you handle problems overall in your life at work, at home. Write your response number to the side of the question number. The scale goes from 1-strongly agree- 6 – strongly disagree.

NEO-FFI: a 60-question inventory where you bubble in your response be careful to note that the responses go across. This is also based on a scale with abbreviations ranging from SD- strongly disagree- SA strongly agree. For this instrument if possible, try not to

erase. Since these are all self-administered instruments so, you can complete them at your pace once introduction and instructions are completed. Please take your time and read instructions for each instrument, there will be no scoring here today so there is no need to worry about instructions on scoring.

Once you have completed your instruments please place them back together in your packet and return your packet to the researcher. Once you are finished you are free to leave the room. I only ask that you be mindful of others who are still participating.

Each instrument should take between 10 and 20 minutes.

I want to thank you again for your participation in my research and if you are interested in finding out about the results please leave your e-mail or contact information on the sheet located at the front of the room. I would also be glad to provide you with my e-mail and contact information, which will be on the table next to the contact information sheet.

Are there any questions before you start? If questions arise as you are completing the instruments, raise your hand and I will come to you to answer your question.

Appendix B: Permission to Use Negative Attributes Questionnaire-Revised

-----Original Message-----

From: Bergen Bullying Research Group <mail@bullying.no>

To: L24ul@aol.com

Sent: Wed, Sep 30, 2009 6:36 am

Subject: Negative Acts Questionnaire

Dear Ms Walker,

Thank you for your interest in the Negative Acts Questionnaire. With our terms accepted, I have attached the English version of the NAQ, the demographic inventory, a spss database, psychometric properties of the questionnaire and the articles suggested on our website. You do not have to use the demographic questionnaire or the database, but it can be a good idea to use it as a guide for your work, and to see how we have done it.

We are looking forward to receive the data when they are available.

If you have any questions, we will of course do our best to answer them.

Best regards,

Morten Birkeland Nielsen

Bergen Bullying Research Group

Appendix C: Permission to Use Problem-Solving Inventory

Joyce, sorry for my tardy response...too busy these days. Anyway, thank you for your interest in my work with the Problem Solving Inventory (PSI). If it is not too late, I grant you permission to use the PSI in your research; I would like to be informed of the results of your work as you publish or present it at conferences.

I will attach some relevant articles that might be of interest to you.

All the best,

Puncky

Puncky Paul Heppner, Ph.D.

Professor

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Appendix D: Permission to Use Levenson's Locus of Control Scale

hannalevenson@aol.com

Oct 30 (4 days)

to me

you have my permission, Lynn. I wish you the best of luck. Please send me a copy of the abstract for your study and any normative data if you use the scales.
hanna Levenson

Appendix E: Demographics Questionnaire

Please circle the number that corresponds best with your description.

1. What is your gender? a. Male b. Female
2. What is your marital status? a. Married, b. Divorced/separated, c. Widowed, c.
Single/never married
3. What is the highest level of education completed? a. Grad school. b. High school,
c. Trade school, d. Undergraduate degree, e. Masters degree
4. What is your current area of work? a. Health Service, b. Educational/teaching/research,
c. Government, d. Local Authority, e. Administration, f. Pharmaceutical industry,
g. Chemical Industry, h. Energy, i. Laborer, j. Transport, k. Post/communication,
l. Manufacture/ production, m. Owner/manager, n. Clerical, o. Professional,
p. Retail, q. Military, r. Fire/rescue, s. IT/data, t. Media, u. Travel/hotel,
v. Voluntary/not for profit, w. Unemployed, 24.Other.
5. What is your current employment status? a. Full-time, b. Part-time, c. Full-time
Homemaker, d. College Student, e. Self-employed, f. Retired, g. Not-employed
6. In what type of organization do you work? a. Private, b. Public, c. None
7. How many employees work for your organization? a. less than 25, b. between 26-100,
c. Between 101-500, d. Between 501-1000, e. More than 1000.
8. At which level of the organization do you work? q. Worker, b. Mid Management,
c. Senior Management, d. Other

Appendix F: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study of Personality within the workplace. The researcher is inviting participants who meet the following Criterion for participation. 18 years of age or older and have had a minimum time of 1-year fulltime employment within the workforce and do not work independent of other workers. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part

A researcher named Joyce Lynn Walker, who is a doctoral student at Walden University, is conducting this study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to identify how an individual’s personality might affect their relationships within the workplace.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete a series of 4 instruments and 1 demographic sheet
- Each instrument should not take more that 15 minutes. It is estimated, that the entire process will last about 90 minutes
- You will only be asked to submit data during one collection study.

Here are some sample questions:

After I solve a problem, I do not analyze what went right and what went wrong.
Have you been subjected to someone withholding information, which affects your performance?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at Springfield College will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as, thoughts about problems within your current or past workplace, feelings associated with being bullied as well as, those associated with

completing multiple instruments such as fatigue, or stress. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

Describe the study's potential benefits without overstating the benefit to the individual. Participating in this study will let you, take part in research that will grow the information base on workplace bullying and personality of workers.

Payment:

Your participation is voluntary and participants will not receive any monetary or gift compensation for their participation. Grades will have no bearing on your participation.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. In addition, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by the researcher in a locked storage file. Only the researcher will have access to data for review. Collected research will be organized by a coding system. Participant's names will never be used or shared with anyone. Results of data will be calculated on a group basis (not individually) to further ensure the anonymity of the individual participant. Analyzed data will report on collected data without using participant names. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Alternatively, if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via e-mail at xxx@xxx.com or (xxx) xxx-xxxx. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is xxx-xxx-xxx. Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number here** and it expires on **IRB will enter expiration date.**

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

By agreeing to this consent, you as a participant are providing implied consent. Implied consent is an understanding to participate based on the information listed above and your agreement to abide by this. An applied consent is used instead of providing a signature to ensure the protection of your participation.

Appendix G: Research Opportunity

EVER WANTED TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH WELL, HERE IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY.

RESEARCH IS BEING COLLECTED ON PERSONALITY AND INTERACTIONS WITHIN THE WORK PLACE.

HELLO, I AM A STUDENT OF WALDEN UNIVERSITY COMPLETING MY STUDIES IN ORGANIZATION PSYCHOLOGY.

I AM LOOKING FOR MALE/FEMALE PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER AND HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED FOR AT LEAST 1 YEAR TO PARTICIPATE.

PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ASKED TO COMPLETE 5 SURVEYS /ASSESSMENTS REGARDING PERSONALITY, PROBLEM SOLVING, LOCUS OF CONTROL AND INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING OR TO FIND OUT MORE PLEASE CONTACT (LYNN WALKER) (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

RESEARCH SESSION WILL BE HELD

_____ AT _____.